

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

DOCTRINE - THEOLOGY

Dr. E. C. Bragg

In its limited meaning Theology is the doctrine of God. In its broadest sense it is the science or study of God in all of His character and relation to all of His works. Thus when used in a limited sense theology is employed only of the department which studies the nature and attributes of God; but when used in its broadest sense, through common usage, it has come to designate the whole realm of Christian doctrine

Christian Theology (limited) then is the doctrinal study of the nature and attributes of the Godhead from the complete teachings of the Scriptures.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

A. Some Theories of God

1. Atheism. This theory says, "There is no God." It denies the existence of any God at all. It tries to explain every phenomena by mechanical inherent forces. The universe and all that is in it started by itself, evolved into its present form by itself, and is preserved by itself. It is the "fool" of Psa. 14:1; 53:1 which says, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.

Note: Away back there men were not such as to air their belief or disbelief in God but "said it in their hearts"; they are much bigger fools as they became vain in their own conceits; now they shout it from the housetops as Bob Ingersoll did.

2. Skepticism and Infidelity. These two terms Closely linked with the first term of atheism, for they mean to doubt or disbelieve the existence of God. A skeptic may not be atheist in actually denying the existence of God, but he is very close

in that he is very doubtful that there is one. There is little choice between the words "atheist" and "Infidel." The word "Infidel" is very interesting in that it savors of being untrue, untrue to every Instinct of the soul and every sense perception of the universe.

3. Agnosticism. This theory says there may be a God; but if there is, He cannot be known. He must forever be the Unknown and the Unknowable. It is a creed of negation. The root word from which agnosticism is taken can also mean "ignoramus." After all, both simply mean, "I don't know," It denies that God has ever or ever will or, in fact, can reveal Himself to man, It therefore denies that the Bible is the revelation of God, While claiming to know nothing, It claims to know all things. For while claiming it can know nothing of God, it claims to know so much about Him as to dogmatically state His inability to reveal Himself to His creatures. IT IS MERELY A REFINED INFIDELITY. There is very little choice between no God and one unknown, as far as His relations to man and the effects of such beliefs upon man's moral and spiritual conduct

4. Deism. This view acknowledges that there is a God and that He is the Creator but denies to Him any personal interest or intervention in the world after that, It holds the mechanical self-sustaining theory: God created, then withdrew. He left resident forces, which carry on in His absence. God wound the universe up like a clock and left it to run itself, to work out every detail, and then to run down. God made the universe, then rested ever since.

This theory molded much of the philosophy of the great thinkers of the past two centuries. There is little warmth in the belief in an absentee God who has no interest in the affairs of this world, much less of any individual in it, who set the thing going, then left it for other business away out among other universes or farther, and who cares nothing for what way the universe takes in its course. Such a theory cannot admit of a revelation such as the Bible.

5. Polytheism. This is the theory of plurality of gods. Most heathenism or most idolatry is a religion of polytheism or "many gods." God said of Israel in her idolatry, "As thy cities, so are thy gods." This is the Tutelary God System. Each city had its own god, each household its special protection god. There is said to be over 300 million gods in India.

As one man said, "Man is certainly stark mad; he can't make a flea, and yet he will be making gods by the dozens.'

6. Pantheism. This is the identification of God with nature, There is but one universal substance which is God; everything you see is but a manifestation of God. God is all, all is God, The place the Bible gives to God above and transcendent to His works, pantheism confuses and identifies God with His works. God is working in nature but God isn't nature.

7. Theism. This is the true Bible position. It teaches the existence of as personal Creator

8. Monotheism. This teaches the singularity of God. There is only one God. This is the teaching of the Bible, Deut. 6:4. It is of interest to note that roughly speaking the population of the world is divided into polytheism and monotheism. The Mohammedans, numbering probably 400 to 500 millions, the Protestants numbering some 200 millions, and the Catholics numbering over 200 millions are all monotheistic (along with the Jews). These total nearly half the world's population of two billion. The rest of the world is polytheistic (You can number the atheists with a child's highchair counter. Only the educated ignoramus says There is no God.") For those who accept the Scriptures as the final court of appeal, there could be no other teaching than the monotheistic. There could be but one Almighty, one infinite, one all-wise.

B. Some Proofs of God's Existence

The intuitional idea of God. That is to say, the idea of God is an intuition of the moral reason, this means that it is direct knowledge of God. To understand the force of this argument we must consider briefly what intuitional knowledge is. For full understanding there must be a study of psychology; but for our purpose here we shall just consider what intuitional knowledge is not, and what is the nature and criticism of intuitions.

a. Intuition or first truth is not mental image making. Nor is it that power of painting mental pictures of either forms we have seen or an imaginative combination of many different parts of images. These are all the results of experience of observation.

b. Intuition furnishes no innate concepts. A concept is an idea formulated from experience, a notion. You cannot picture a notion. You cannot picture a rose but not the general notion of a rose. The newborn babe, for example, knows nothing in their abstract forms, concepts of such ideas or concepts as personal identity, self-consciousness, time.

c. It is not a truth written prior to consciousness upon the soul; that would make the soul a material substance and it isn't.

d. Intuition is not a product of observation and reasoning, but it only arises in the soul after observation and reasoning. It isn't a knowledge which blooms full-grown without observation nor full-grown at the first conscious moment.

2. Therefore, an Intuition is a primary truth, developed by observation and reasoning but not produced by them. They are truths, which need no proof but are self-evident. They require no mental process, Illustration: I see a book, and I know it occupies space. I don't arrive at that by reason, but I know it and wouldn't try to put anything else in its exact place without first moving the book.

So with the intuition of right and wrong I see a brutal wretch jump onto a cripple and beat him unmercifully. The sight might give occasion for the intuition thought, "That is wrong," but it doesn't put the sense of wrongness in the soul. That is an intuition already there and needs but the occasion for it to act. Such is the idea of God, It isn't arrived at by studying the Bible, for many tribes who haven't heard of the Bible still believe in God. The fact is the Bible couldn't have been given unless there had been first in man that intuition idea of God to which it could appeal. Neither could its ethics and moral laws blind the soul except the soul had the intuitions of moral rectitude of right and wrong. That is the reason why the Bible sets up no system of argument to prove the existence of God but appeals directly to the soul, revealing the God the soul already believe exists.

The Criteria of Intuition. An intuition may be tested by a three-fold test.

a. Self-evident. That is, it carries its own proof and admits none. Many of the great philosophies of the past few centuries have outraged reason by denying many of the things Intuition accepts as self-evident, such as the existence of matter, of force, and of God. And from that they have denied the existence of the soul and of man himself. They argue, "All I know of matter is what I can experience with the senses."

How do I know they really exist? Maybe they exist only in my mind, and I am conscious of only the actions of mind; therefore, how can I be sure the mind really exists?" Men like Alexander Bain and Dugald Stewart and other philosophers, wavering in a gaze of speculation, deny to us any intuitional knowledge; from that they deny even existence. Man has never before thought to question some intuitional truths; they accepted them and started from there to other arguments. It was left to latter day speculators to think up a negative essence of nonentity. Intuitional truths need no proof nor in truth can be proven. I know that I am, and I never think of proving it.

b. Originality or necessity. That is, it is necessary, for it must be believed. It cannot be doubted without leading to contradiction or absurdity. It outrages the very constitution of the mind to deny them. In fact, their necessity can be shown by the fact that to prove that they don't exist, you must use themselves. You have to make the witness testify to the fact that he doesn't exist. So for illustration, to argue from that same universal intuition is absurd.

c. Universality. That is believed by all men everywhere, wherever normal. It might not always be clear as in an infant or savage, but it is intuitional. Now the intuition of God meets these requirements. In the study of cause and effect there is the necessity of believing in God. The mind demands that every effect have an adequate cause. Here is necessity and originality. The teleological evidence of design takes our minds unerringly to the thought of a Designer. The presence of moral obligation demands that we believe in a holy authority, a God of righteousness who has written His moral law in our very natures. And the universality of the idea of God gives evidence of intuition in man, pointing ontologically to the existence of God.

4. External proofs of God's Existence.

- a. The Cosmological Argument.
- b. The Teleological Argument.
- c. The Anthropological Argument.
- d. The Christological Argument.

1. The Bible must be accounted for.
2. Miracles must be accounted for.
3. The influence of Christianity must be accounted for.
4. Christ must be accounted for.
5. The fact of conversion must be accounted for.
6. Fulfilled prophecy must be accounted for.

C. Man's Natural Ignorance of God.

1. The Cause and Nature of his Ignorance.

We have noted that man was created with a mind that has certain elements, which intuitively recognize God. He has a moral nature, which should respond to any revelation of God. Man was made to know God. His attributes of faith, worship, reverence, prayer, rectitude, and intelligence should lead him to recognition of God and come to some true knowledge of Him. Why then is the universal testimony of observation that nowhere has anyone, by the unaided human reason, come to a pure conception of God? It would seem that the healthy mind, with the wealth of testimony from the realm of nature, with the image of God stamped upon its own laws reflecting the moral nature of God, would to a mature, pure knowledge of God, But has this ever been the case? Observation testifies the opposite and so do the Scriptures, "The world by wisdom knew not God." I Cor. 1:21; so also Rom. 1:19-24.

Why this ignorance? What influences are at work in the human heart and upon the human mind to cause man to sin against his own nature and remain ignorant of what he ought to know and should know of God? It isn't because atheism is the universal principal. Atheism is but exception. The whole world worships but at the altar of the

"unknown God." Even with the light of revelation man doesn't think rightly of God save where there is the special grace of the Holy Spirit illuminating the soul. The testimony of heathenism is that their conception of God is not just immature but erroneous and mostly degrading. Max Muhler's testimony of the sacred books of the Orient says, "They were not only erroneous but downright immoral," Many parts could not be translated into the English, they were so rotten. Civilization hasn't brought to man a better conception.

Even where the Bible is had as a universal book, the unconverted man, instead of thinking straight about God, makes Him to be a capricious creature, who can do no evil or no good, who forgets his sins (Ps, 10:1), a creature "altogether like unto himself" who will lightly pass over sin and one who will take every vile creature into His pure heaven, no matter his incorrigible heart. He will not grant to God even the measure of his own sense of moral rectitude. Now, why is this prevailing ignorance, when it is in man's very nature to know God?

There is a two-fold influence in operation upon man: (1) man's own depraved nature (2) and Satan. Whenever man tries to imagine God, his thoughts are tainted by the dirty window of his soul through which he has to visualize God and by the archenemy of God, Satan. He started his battle with man by slandering the character of God in the garden. He threw doubt into the mind of Eve as to the goodness of God by insinuating that God was holding from them something they needed. "Yea, God knoweth that in the day thou eatest thereof ye shall be as gods." He used another lie, "Yea, hath God said," He succeeded so fully in his first attempt that he has been using the same method ever since.

a. So the first cause considered is Satan. Satan seeks to insult the majesty of God. He hate the Godhead' and all He stands for. He is a liar from the beginning and a blasphemer ever since. Why do we have the universal swearing?

Why is there blasphemy against the name and character of God in profanity every day? Satan controls the minds and hearts. We see more of it day by day. In popular music, in modern cults and isms the name of God is blasphemed. Satan seeks to infuse in man his own corrupt views of the Godhead. He cannot impart to us a new nature, as the Holy

Spirit can but he doesn't need to. He finds ready at hand in man a fallen nature already suited to his purpose. He is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2) "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of hem which believe not" (II Cor. 4:4).

As Satan cannot utterly destroy from man the remnants of the image of God, such as the moral law and intuition of God's existence, he corrupts and perverts. He has the heathen fetish worshipers cringing ~ a fearsome, angry, cruel, hateful God. He has the old Romans drinking arid degrading themselves before a god of lusts and vice, deifying every human immorality. He had the warlike nations of northern Europe with blood soaked swords bowing before warlike gods of Thor and Baldwin.

He has the modernistic Protestants of our day bowing before a weak-kneed God who has no moral backbone, powerless either to help His own, or punish the evil doer. He has even been so successful as to cause the philosophers to deny God's personality, power, and even existence.

b. On top of the activity of Satan must be added the tendencies of the depraved human nature. It is only through that, that Satan can work. Without that ally within, Satan could have no power over man. He cannot force and is only able to accomplish his purposes as man freely and willingly obeys him. As God does not outlaw our freedom when offering salvation, Satan cannot go beyond, it when carrying out his purpose. We must see that man's depravity is a disease of the soul and mind--a disease which affects the whole man. It enters into the thinking, the feeling or affections, the motives, the will and in fact, the whole man. It is no wonder then that we have the many vile, degrading abominations man has practiced as sacred methods of worship.

Man has always made his creeds to suit his morals, makes his creeds as an ideal to attain. He patterns them after the corruption of his own soul; It is no wonder them after the corruption of his own soul; it is no wonder that he grovels in a mire of spiritual filth out of which it is impossible elevate and only plunges him deeper into every unnatural practice.

In the sphere of thought or mind, "They became vain in their imaginations" Eph. 4:18 R.V. "Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, harden heart". Sin throws a cloud over the mind and darkens even the natural light it has. In affecting it is vile; in human relations, degraded. The awful catalog is found in Rom.1:21-32. In his spirit. he enthrone Satan instead of God, in body he practices impurity Ps. 14:2,3; Isa. 1:6. T The whole man is sick with the virus of sin.

2. The Question of Heathenism.

Does their ignorance of God carry moral responsibility? Is heathenism a misfortune or a crime? Some think God should pity rather than punish the heathen. Some evolutionistic modernists will go so far as to say that we all were in the same state at one time in the forward march of evolution.

"Idolatry is but the innocent mistakes of childhood." Others say, "They are sincere, and God will count their sincerity." Some well-wishers who mistakenly think God is like themselves try to say what God "ought to do" and what "He ought not to do." God too good to send them to hell who never heard the gospel. There are a number objections to such a theory of the condition of the heathen. But there is one primary primary underlying error in such reasoning, they mistake the real secret of man's ignorance of God. Instead of a real desire on their part to find and honor Him as God, every belief and act of their worship degrades, insults, and "glorifies Him not as God." Instead of their heathenism and ignorance being a misfortune, it is a heinous crime; and instead of God overlooking it, it is a marvel of grace that them to allows them to live for a single day. The heathen are creatures exactly like us. They have the same intuitions, moral and spiritual faculties, and same rational and religious tendencies. They differ not one whit from us in their original make-up. It a wilful perversion of the character of God is excusable in us, it is in them. Where can even enlightened human reason give countenance to the heinous crimes done by heathenism in the name of religion; brutal lusts, immoral acts, homicide, fratricide, infanticide? These are all done in the name of God, Can they find that in their natural religious intuitions? How unnatural and

monstrous. How it outrages every instinct and intuition, which marks even the heathen as human being. It wasn't by following the God-given intuitions of the soul that they conceived such lies. It was by what Peter calls, "This they were willingly ignorant of." First, "the darkening of their foolish hearts;" or when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God. Then they changed His glory into images and vileness, they first had to reject the true knowledge of God in the soul.

The heathen are not only not true to their own natures but are not living up to the light of natural revelation, the lights of nature, as it reveals God. There never has been a missionary to my knowledge returning from the field who will say, "The heathen are living up to that knowledge they have." Rom. 2:14 tells us that they have an accusing within, their own conscience meanwhile accusing or excusing one another. Probably the greatest proof of their need of a higher revelation and compulsion of souls by the gospel and its power to save, is to be found in our own natures. Can an one here in so called civilized nations live up to what he knows is right, his duty toward God? Does he arrive at right representations of God without the Gospel?

Can anyone here be saved without the Gospel? How much less can those who are not even surrounded by the indirect influences of the Gospel?

The Scriptural presentation of the condition of the heathen as lost is clear, "alienated from the life God" (Eph, 4:17-19); "enemies of God by wicked works (Col. 1:21) "children of disobedience " (Eph. 2:2; 5:6) "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph.2:3) "without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).

The whole book of Roman is an argument stating the fact that all men are without excuse and guilty before God.

In the first chapter, after declaring the power of the Gospel to save all who believe, Paul gives a terrible indictment of the heathen world and an appalling picture of its wickedness and corruption. They are declared to be without excuse because of the measure of light given through external revelation of nature and internal revelation of

their own natures, that is, their consciences (1:19,20). In Chapter two, Paul shows the philosopher and Jew guilty by reason of the light received and rejected. In Chapter three, the verdict is given: the whole world guilty before God--verses 12,13. But immediately afterwards come these words: "How then shall they call upon Him of whom they have not believed? And how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?~ (vv. 14,15); for the universality of man's lost condition - of Psa. 14:2,3.

Heathenism is the consummation of human depravity. It is sin in full bloom in the intellectual, moral and religious nature of man. It is the complete degradation of God's work in man. It is the last stage of prostitution of the God-given instincts and intuitions of the soul. It is the great object lesson to all men of the course of sin and capabilities of sin. It brutalizes man and shamefully degrades his Creator, then complacently says, "I have done no harm."

As far as their sincerity goes, it but further extenuates their crime. It shows a lower level of degradation. They believe their own lies. To think that they could honor God with what would degrade a man is to slander and insult God. Heathenism is not a misfortune but a crime, the ultimate crime of idolatry. They are lost and need the same Saviour the civilized man needs.

It is no wonder that the cause of missions is pushed back to a relatively small place in our modern program. It is no wonder that the modern church has but the aim of education, hospitalization, and civilization for the heathen, rather than giving them Christ. The belief in the lost, damnable state of the heathen is the well-spring of the missionary effort. Cut the belief of out, and you cut the artery of missions. Unless I believe them lost without Christ, I shall not agonize in prayer for their salvation. I shall not sacrifice for sending them the Gospel, which would if rejected, damn their souls.

No, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and "there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.." Heathenism reeks with every form of degrading habits, abominable practices, unmentionable cruelties and crimes, every form of moral corruption freely tolerated and indulged, all offered in

worship to God. "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all nations that forget God."

II. THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

A Limits of our knowledge of God. It is the best part of wisdom to approach the subject of God's nature with humility and healthy realization of our ignorance and limitations. There are two dangers to avoid; that of assured finality and complete wisdom on the one hand and the vagueness of inexcusable ignorance on the other. There are those whose attitude is, "We are the people, and wisdom will die with us." a rushing to the front with exact definitions, positive explanations, and complete revelations of the Godhead, claiming to explain every mystery. There is no such thing as theology as a science, and exact knowledge, Within Himself, in His essence, He must remain to our finite knowledge as incomprehensible and only revealed to us through His works.

In the fullness of His person, "He dwells in a light unapproachable." With minds bearing every infirmity and weakness of fallen man, only catching faint gleams of light as from the far-off sun we need to confess, "We see through a glass darkly." On the other hand, there is the danger of agnosticism which says, "Nothing can be known of God." This type of wilful ignorance would exclude any conception of God. It only says that our conception is partial, incomplete, and finite, but also that there is no conception possible.

The truth lies between these two extremes. God is known and yet unknown. In His infinite perfection of being He dwells in the thick darkness. The mind cannot think of Him as He is in Himself. But through the impartations of some attributes of His in man, some revelations in nature, and through the Holy Scriptures, He has manifested enough of His incomprehensible reality for faith to rest upon.

We can only know these things which we have experience. The only knowledge we could have of God, of His personality and perfections, is that which we have of ourselves. You may see the accommodations or divine revelation to this fact throughout the Bible; for there God is always revealed unto us as acting with human methods. It speaks of the ears of the Lord, the eyes of the Lord, the hands of the Lord, the feet of the Lord, always

as though He had a body like ours. But the Scriptures teach the contrary. It is the accommodation of Scripture to the weakness of the human mind to understand anything or think anything of which it has not had experience., So it is with the other attributes of God; they are compared to ours. But when you ascribe to God any of our own attributes of personality you must divest them of all human infirmities, weaknesses, or imperfections, expand them into infinity and ascribe them to God. Man sits for the mental portrait of his Creator. He is made in the image of God; and though marred by the fall, many of the lines still remain, This is isn't to say that God is just as man, only extended into infinity, a Super-man. But the part of God revealed to man is after the pattern God made man. How much is there of God ruling His universe and communing with Himself, which cannot be revealed to man because of man's limitations and lack of faculties, only God knows. It probably is as infinite as God Himself is.

Here rests the limitations of our knowledge of God. Further into His infinite essence we cannot go. Our knowledge is but analogous. We mean, for instance, when we say that God has knowledge, that there is in Him a relation analogous to what that same term means in us; not the same kind of knowledge but only by analogy. Two is to four what three is to six. They are by no means identical, but they bear the same relation. Two is half of four, and three is half of six. So there is an analogical relation between what we call knowledge among us and what the Bible means by the knowledge God has. when we try to realize what God's knowledge is, our minds stagger. We can only say that His is perfection.

His faculties of thought are not as ours; He has no need of memory. He knows without succession, knows all things without reasoning, comparison, or me, He is not limited in knowledge by time so it is with every attribute we ascribe to Deity. They bear a relation to the same thing in us, but they are different and incomprehensible. His infinite perfections are veiled under finite symbols. We see but the shadow, and that obscurely. We can have no idea of how much we shall know of a living God when "we shall know as are know."

B. God's Personality

In discussing the personality of God and the nature of God, we are to settle the age-long dispute between the Pantheists and such modern thought on the one hand, and the clear Biblical portrait of God on the other. Pantheism denies the personality of God. Much of philosophical speculation has dismissed the personality of God, and a lot of modern atheistic science has ruled out a personal God and placed the laws of nature and the forces of nature in His place. This is purely mechanical outlook on the universe. We readily admit the mystery that surrounds His majestic person. We understand that the human mind cannot fathom the depths of His nature. Simonides, the poet, when questioned by Hirs, the King, concerning the nature of God, demanded a day to consider before answering, When the question was presented to him the following day, he asked another day of thought, and so on until finally the king demanded to know the reason for his procedure. He answered that the longer he thought upon the subject, the greater the difficulty of giving a satisfactory answer. The Bible declares the same thing. Jobs says, "Behold, God is great and we know Him not, neither can the number of His years be searched out." Again, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as Heaven. What canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." These are the words of Zophar (Job. 11:17), but are a confession of man's ignorance.

In the first consideration of the personality of God, a few things need to be considered. First, what constitutes the personality? What do we understand personality to be? Second, is it proven that God exercises these attributes of personality? Thirdly, some added considerations.

1. Attributes of Personality.

These have been divided into three:

a. Intellect - Constituting the power of thought, reasoning, memory, reflection, perception. Attached to this attribute is that of self-consciousness.

b. Sensibility - The power of feeling, not physically, but emotionally, those sensibilities of the soul. All the various degrees and modes of love, hatred, compassion, and spiritual affinities.

c. Volition - The power of choice, freedom of will, involving conscience. Within this definition of personality resides the moral attributes. To be a person is to be one who feels a responsibility for his own actions; one who knows right from wrong.

Every one of these attributes reacts self-consciousness. A person has the power of standing up and saying, "I know," or "I love" or "I will." These are all denied to brute creations of blind force. I cannot rationally ascribe them to laws of nature nor forces of nature nor to plants or animals. Plants have life and degree of sensibility. The brute has some perception and motion, exhibiting some crude mental workings, which denote low intelligence. But the differentiating attribute attached to all men is that of self-consciousness in every act. Neither does any sense of responsibility of right and wrong, choice of moral ends, show itself in animals. Only man can say, "I," "me," "mine," "myself," and all of the personal pronouns; in this he resembles the Creator. Herein is the act of murder a transgression of an eternal canon set by God upon the sanctity of human life. Throw away the element of personality from man, and killing him would be no more serious than killing a hog, or cow or any beast. It is only as his personality reflects the image of his Maker that his life becomes a sacred trust to himself and others. Herein is he made in the image of God, not in physical constructions.

2. Is it proven that God exercises these attributes of personality?

a. Intellect.

We have considered the Teleological argument, showing intelligent design and supervision in nature. But the Scriptures affirm the fact that God exercises every mark of intelligence, and that to a perfect degree of omniscience. He not only knows, but knows all things.

In Isa. 1:18, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord." Here God is wanting to enter into a mental contest with man, intellect to intellect, Here is affirmation of

reasoning in the Godhead. In relation to the sum total of knowledge of wisdom, I Cor. 1:24 "the wisdom of God"; Rom. 11:33 "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out." Thinking, Jer.31:20; knowledge, I Sam. 2:3. These are but a few of hundreds of instances in the Bible where acts of intellect are ascribed to God. Again we are reminded that they are transcendent to our own conception of what the terms mean. They are accommodations to our limited understanding, but they are analogous. There are mental actions in God, which bear some relation to those same actions in us, He is perfect in thought, reasoning, and knowledge. But His perfection doesn't in anywise invalidate the conclusion we infer that He has intellect.

b. Sensibility

There are thousands of passages, which speak of God's feelings, but we shall mention but a few. Probably one of the plainest is Psa. 103: 8-13. Here is mercy, anger, pity. The wrath of God is spoken of many times: Num. 16:46; in the Psalms, a number of times-- 2:5; 58:9; 88:16; 89:46, etc.

In the New Testament---John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; anger, Psa. 7:11; Deut. 29:24; pity and mercy, Jas. 5:11; love--you would have to quote the whole Bible to give them all: John 3:16. It is of interest to note that the Old Testament has more references to the "wrath of God," the New Testament to the "love of God." It wasn't until Jesus came, the love of God in human form, that man saw the love of God--Psa. 91:14; Hos. 14:4; I John 3:1, etc. Affinity of like natures or affinity of personality to personality--John 6:44; Christ, John 12:32; Jas. 4:8. These true refined sensibilities reside only in personality.

c. Volition

The power of free choice, or self-determination, is ascribed to God. Psa. 115:3--"Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased." Choose, Isa. 14:1 or Isa. 49:7, Acts 22:14; Eph. 1:11; Jas. 2:5. Again His freedom, Isa. 46:10-11. A very clear passage, Dan. 4:37; Rom. 9:13-23. And certainly all of the attributes of righteousness, holiness, moral judgment ascribed to God in the Scriptures are a part of His volitional nature.

3. Some added considerations concerning the personality of God.

a. The many acts of God, apart from those considered above, are evidences of His personality; such as God speaking, God writing with His finger on the tablets of stone, writing upon the wall at Belshazzar's feast, the many active verbs denoting action in the last chapters of Job, all of the physical actions accomplished with purpose.

It is only in recognition of His distinct personality that there is any possibility of the love, parental relationship, and communion spoken of in the Bible between God and man. These elements of prayer, worship, and dependence can only be between personalities. You cannot love, or fear, or adore, or pray to, or commune with, or worship a blind force, or a law, or a part of nature.

b. The Spirituality of God. God is Spirit as opposed to Anthropomorphism. John 4:24 leaving out the article, which isn't in the original--"God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Because we think of the body when we call anyone a person, we have confused personality with corporeity, physical body, a material substance, in this section we want to consider the question as to the nature of God's existence. Has God a body? Has God a body like ours?

GOD IS SPIRIT. The question naturally arises, "What is spirit?" Is there anything in the realm of our understanding to aid us to understand pure spiritual existence? Here we meet the difficulty of comprehending the meaning of pure spirit. It is outside the whole realm of our experience. We have considered the fact that God has reality of existence and possesses distinct personality. But He dwells in a different form of man. While it is impossible for us to imagine pure spirit, still there are some considerations from the Scriptures, which help us.

1) Spirit is invisible reality, without material or physical properties Lk. 24:39. This portion are the words of Christ concerning Himself after His resurrection, distinguishing His own glorified flesh with that of spirit form: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. These words are a very plain revelation of the negative qualities of spirit, incorporeal reality. A spirit has no physical members or properties. Spirit is invisible to physical eyes. The simple

statement of John 4:24, "God is spirit," tells us the mode of God's existence. He doesn't live in a physical body, limited in action to the body's motions and bodily activity. Note Num. 16:22--title, "The God of the spirits of all flesh;" likewise in Heb. 12:9, He is called, "The Father of all spirits. He is the Father of all spirits in the sense that they spring from Him and are like Him. He is contrasted with the Egyptians in Isa. 31:3-- That the Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit.

This argument is based on the assumption that God is pre-eminently spiritual. The third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is substantially the same with the Father and the Son. He is spirit, so must the Father and the Son be Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in redemption in us and for us and through us, yet is invisible, not revealing unto us any physical properties. Indeed He could not be physical and still indwell the Christian.

2) When the Scriptures ascribe spirituality to God as a mode of His existence, it denies of Him the properties of matter--or declares immateriality to Him. Hence, He is not a being who can be contacted with any of our five physical senses. Nor can He be pictured in our imaginations. Hence He gave the command in Deut. 4:15-18, not to make any likeness of Deity. What likeness could be made of Him? In fact God condemned such image making as ascribing man's corrupt image to God. Rom. 1:23. Here is the folly of idolatry whether it be an idol as only an image of God or thought to be God. It is the same error in both cases. Every image is false in two ways. It tries to represent Him who is life itself with that which is inert, as dead. Again it tries to represent free activity by that which is a victim of stern necessity.

3) The spiritual essence of God alone accounts for the attributes of perfection in the Godhead. A material being cannot be infinite. For if a part of matter anywhere could be infinite, there wouldn't be any possibility for a finite matter to exist. For matter fills space and excludes all other matter from that space which it fills.

Therefore, no other matter could co-exist in the same sphere with that matter. But if God is infinite, He can be in the same space with all other existence. Our conception of matter is that it can fill but one space at a time. It must be located in time and space.

4) Because God is spirit, He can commune with our spirits Jn. 4:23-24. It is only as spirit that God can communicate with His intelligent creatures His will. He can enter their souls, warm and irradiate them with tokens of His favor, or depress and alarm them with tokens of His displeasure. It is only as spirit that He can indwell the saint co-inhabiting the body with our spirits.

5) God may manifest Himself in visible form, as the angel of the Lord of the Old Testament-Gen. 16:7-10, 13; also Ex. 24:9,10; 33:18-22; Isa. 6:1. But do these contradict Jn. 1:18--"No man hath seen God at any time"?

The fact is that no man hath seen God at any time but only manifestations of God; not His true essence but only manifestations of God, as Christ is God manifest. Yet could they see His Godhead? Can you see my spirit? You but see manifestations of my spirit as it manifests itself through my human body, but the real essence of my life is veiled behind those same physical manifestations. When man saw the Christ, they were not conscious of my specialty in Him marking Him as a revelation of Deity. Even as when the Lord came to Sodom, the Sodomites didn't recognize His Deity. There is no contradiction of God's essence as spirit when it speaks of Him showing Himself in Ex. 33:18-23. For in that very manifestation He declares, "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live." Note, He uses the sense of His face as His essence. As in Ex. 24:9-10, "They saw the God of Israel," God accommodated Himself to human infirmities by giving a physical manifestation; for by no other method could He reveal Himself to human perception. God was careful to warn Moses later, "They saw no manner of similitude when the Lord spoke to them in Horeb out of the midst of the fire." Deut. 4:15

c. A consideration of Anthropomorphism. The opposite idea of God's essence held by many is that He dwells in a literal body of flesh and bones. Their teaching of God's corporeality is called anthropomorphism or anthropathism. They literally interpret those Scriptures, which predicate of God bodily functions and organs. It was first taught by the Bebionites, by many disciples of Secinus, the Egyptian monks, and the sect of Adians. It flows mostly among ignorant people who have a low conception of God's attributes and existence. The Musselites hold that God is a man and has a physical body like man.

This idea has led them to repudiate the doctrine of Trinity. It is impossible to conceive of God being a Trinity and still hold to anthropomorphism. The conception of material body as ascribed to God arises out of a literal interpretation of every portion of the Scriptures, where it speaks of God having or using human bodily organs such as: "The ears of the Lord are not heavy." "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro." "His arm is not shortened." They say that means He has those literal organs and members. They use that portion of Scripture we have already considered where Moses saw the Lord.

But probably the most used is Gen. 1:26, "and God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." They say that image and likeness of necessity be physical, bodily image--in fact, very facial image. They forget that the greatest similarity between God and man is not, nor could be physical. The spiritual and moral likeness as transcends the physical. Man's personality is patterned after the Almighty; so His power of reason, loving, and willing are marks of the image of God remaining, like the walls and pillars of a destroyed city, marking its former purpose. It is the invisible soulish spiritual nature of man which is made in the image of God, as from the following consideration"

1) It is that portion of man that is eternal. The physical goes back to dust, but the soul is eternal. Ecc. 3:11 - "Thou hast set eternity in their heart."

2) The word "image" and "likeness" in the New Testament are used of many other than physical properties. In fact, they are used to designate the new creation in the converted man. Col. 3:10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of HIM that created him." The new man made in God's image here couldn't be physical, and no one would so declare. It is the new nature born within the believer, yet it is made in God's image. The nature of this new nature is described in Eph. 4:23-24,-- "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God (or like God) is created in RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS." Here is the image of the new man--righteousness and true holiness. That is how it is in the image of God. This new nature salvation imparts, adds no new physical properties to the convert, but morally and spiritually man is patterned by creation after the true God, this pattern

being marred and partly effaced by the fall. By salvation he is recreated after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness.

Tertullian, the early church father, wrote in combating this teaching, "Divine affections are ascribed to the Deity by means of figures borrowed from the human form, not as if He were endued with corporeal qualities. When eyes are ascribed to Him, it denotes that He sees all things; when ears are that He hears all things; the speech denotes His will; nostrils, the perception of prayer; hands creation; arms, power; feet, immensity; for He has no members and performs no office for which they are required, but executes all things by the sole act of His will. How can He require eyes who is light itself? Or feet who is omnipresent? How can He require hands who is the silent creator of all things, or a tongue to whom to think is to command? Those members are necessary to man but not to God, in as much as the counsels of men would be inefficacious unless their thoughts put their members in motion; but not to God, whose operations follow His will without effort.

A careful reading of the Word of God will show that the writers carefully guard against the perverse application of their bold metaphors when they ascribe human actions to God. II Chron. 32:8-- "With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us." Job. 10:4--"Hast Thou eyes of flesh, or seeth Thou as man seeth?" His arm is not an arm of flesh, nor His eyes human eyes. These uses of human metaphors are mere condescension to human infirmity. They show by analogy that there are acts of God as well as attributes of God, which correspond to those, which we employ those members for. How else could it be said of God so that we would know what is meant, that God hears, if the metaphor of ears were not used? It merely symbolizes to us the ability of God to see and know, even as His hands and arms symbolize power, and bowels, compassion. In this connection it may be noted also that no organs are ascribed to God similar to those by which we perform the mean and disreputable bodily functions. Neither are those ascribed to Him which signalize our infirmities or weaknesses. To eat and sleep, assimilation or digestion of food is not ascribed to Him. Only those organs by which we ascribe knowledge or learning, such as the eyes, ears, and minds. Of those by which communication is possible, such as the mouth, lips, tongue, but not of taste. So also those members, which signify power and strength such

as the arm and hand. But never are any members or organs ascribed to God which would serve only a sense existence or low physical being, such as touch or taste.

It may be readily seen from the foregoing considerations the impossibility of the anthropomorphic conception of God, the ascribing to God bodily existence. His omnipresence is incompatible with corporeal existence, for a body localizes. It is incompatible with the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Scriptures say nothing of a disincarnation preceding the incarnation. He tabernacled among us physically only after taking the form of human flesh. The ascribing unto God of a body is the grossest conception of the mode of divine essence. GOD IS SPIRIT AND MUST SO BE WORSHIPPED.

C. The Unity and Trinity of God

In the consideration of the person of God there are two elements of revelation, which must be studied. That is the unity of God and the Trinity of God. The terms are contradictory only to our finite knowledge of God. While they entail mysteries too deep for the human understanding, still they are the subjects of divine revelation and are subjects more for faith than reason.

1. The Unity of God. The Scriptures teach emphatically the oneness of God. There is but one God. Deut. 4:34; 6:4; Isa. 43:10. and very plainly, Isa. 44:6; 45:5; so also the New Testament teaches the oneness or unity of God. I Tim. 2:5; Mk. 10:18; and Jesus quoting Deut. 6:4 in Mk. 12:29. This monotheism of divine revelation satisfies the soul for a fit object of faith and worship. and answers the dictates of a reason for a single Almighty cause for all existing effects. All nature is monotheistic. Whether man studies the stars through a spectroscope or studies over a region of earth, there is a singularity of composition and a uniformity of laws, which tell to reason a singular divine Creator and Sustainer.

2. The nature of the divine unity: the Trinity of God.

a. Definition: It is clearly revealed in the Scriptures that in this Divine unity, in this one Godhead, there is a multiplicity of persons.

The word "person" is a somewhat modified word when ascribed to each of the three persons of the Godhead. It is the only word the human language has which could be used to designate the Trinity, of the one God. The distinctions between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are of a personal nature. To each is ascribed deity, and each has distinct operations and offices. The Trinity of God is the tri-personal existence of God as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And so when calling each of the three members of the Godhead a person, we are meaning exactly the same thing as when we call three people each a person. For each of three human beings has a unity and specific peculiarly his own; while each of the Godhead shares with each other member the same essence or unity of personality. This undivided essence of the divine nature belongs alike to each member of the Godhead. Each possesses all the substance and attributes of the Deity. The plurality of the Godhead is not a plurality of essence, but a plurality of personal distinctions. The one indivisible essence subsists in three modes, one God manifesting Himself in 3 persons. This is not to say numerically that one is three and three is one, but that God is one in essence, but three only in respect to the distinctions of that essence. For the human mind to comprehend fully the mystery of the triune existence of God would necessitate the human mind to be infinite and deity itself.

b. Not Tri-theism. We may see that this revelation of the Trinity of God is not tri-theism, or three Gods. In His essential essence God is one. The orthodox position is called Trinitarianism. The Athanasian Creed gives the creed clearly of Trinitarianism: "We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance." It is in this sense that we can understand the immanence of one divine person in another, which permits the work of one person of the Trinity with possible exception to be attributed to another. For example, Christ is localized in a glorified human body, "seated at the right hand of the Majesty on, high, waiting until His enemies be made His footstool", but through the presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer, Christ is said to indwell the believer. The Trinity is within the saint in the presence of the third person of the Trinity--John 14:17, 23, so the Son does the work the Father sent Him to do. But the order is never reversed. There are certain offices ascribed to each member of the Godhead, but usually the Trinity is in operation in each case. As in creation, the Father willed, the Son made, the Spirit brooded.

c. The Scriptural proof of the Trinity of God. It is patent to the thinking of any reasonable person that a clear explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity is impossible. We may draw illustrations from around us, but they do little more than throw faint light upon the subject; and some of them commonly used only obscure rather than enlighten. We may speculate, but lacking anything within us with which to liken the Trinity or any faculty with which to comprehend the Trinity, we find ourselves just as insatisfied after a long chain of reasoning. The doctrine of the Trinity belongs to the realm of faith, not speculation. The impossibility of a satisfactory answer to the many questions concerning the Trinity arises: from the very nature of the case. First, because God is Spirit and our minds belong primarily to the physical world, there will always be difficulties and mysteries when we try to conceive of spiritual things in the form of physical thought. This applies not only to the doctrine of the Trinity but to all other deep spiritual truths of the Word of God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned".

In the second place, a perfectly satisfactory answer to the question is impossible because God is infinite and we are finite. God dwells in the light that no man can approach unto; any philosophical explanation of God coming from the finite would of necessity fall far short.

This the reason why the Bible nowhere gives an explanation of the Trinity. Those who deny the doctrine say it isn't taught in the Bible. The nature of the case doesn't permit any clear explanation in the Bible. How could the Bible give a clear, doctrinal, lucid, detailed discourse on the Trinity when we couldn't understand it? But the Bible does teach the doctrine of the Trinity by implication, by clear distinctions in places where all three are said to be working, and by the use of plural nouns and pronouns.

Some of the proofs of the Trinity:

1) The Scriptures recognize three persons as God.

(a) The Father is recognized as God, Jn. 6:27, I Pet. 1:2.

(b) The Son, Jesus Christ, is recognized as God, Jn, 1:1, 18; Titus 2:13

(c) The Holy Spirit is recognized as God, Acts 5:3, 4

2) These three are so described that we must conceive of them as three distinct persons.

(a) Distinctions between the Father and the Son. Christ is the begotten, and the Father is the begetter (Ps. 2:7; Jn. 1:14). The Father is the sender and Christ the sent (Jn. 10:36. Christ speaks of the Father as "another" (Jn. 5:32, 37).

(b) The Father and the Son are distinguished from the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16,17). He is sent from the Father as a gift (Jn. 15:26) And sent from both the Father and the Son (Jn.14: 26; Gal. 4:6.

3) The use of the word "one" where speaking of the unity of God is a compound word denoting compound unity and not simple unity, as in Deut. 6:4; Mk. 10:18. This can be seen from other places where the word "one" is used where its compound nature is seen (Gen. 2:24. So the Greek word for one in Gal. 3:28, etc.

4) The noun for God often used in the Old Testament is plural. "Elohim," yet used with a singular verb "bara" (Gen. 1:1)

5) The use of plural pronouns in the Godhead. "Let us make man," Gen. 1:26; 11:7; so also Gen. 3:22; also in the commission of Isa. 6:8.

6) The passages where God is said to be speaking unto God and sending a member of the Godhead (Zech. 2:10,11. Jehovah speaks of Himself as sent by the Lord, Jehovah of hosts. There are those we have already referred to of Christ and the Holy Spirit sent, and the Godhead talking to each other (Ps. 110:1) is explained in Acts 2:34.

7) The many places where all three are mentioned either as active or present, or in benediction, as at the baptish of Christ (Lk. 3:21,22). The baptism command, Matt. 28:19. So the benedictions (II Cor. 13:14)

D. The Names of God

One of the methods used in the Scriptures to reveal the nature and perfections of God is the use of personal and attributive names. Names have long since ceased to have personal meanings in the Occident or western civilization. They are merely means of pointing out individuals, just names of things and persons. But in the Orient and Near East from the beginning of history and even to the present time, names do more than distinguish things or persons. They have meanings connoting or signifying qualities in the object or person. Every name in the Hebrew Old Testament not only distinguishes, but may be interpreted into the English meaning; and many times further light upon Scripture is obtained. For illustration, the name Jacob was given to him because of his act of taking Esau's place, and it fits his whole life until changed later by the power of God. Jacob means supplanter, and we see it fits him when stealing both the birthright and blessing from Esau. But when God met him at Bethel (house of God) and at Poniel (the face of God) and wrestled with him and prevailed against him, his name was changed when his nature was changed; he became Israel (prince with God).

So the names of God are not just arbitrary signs pointing out God but are each a new revelation of the nature of God. This is also true of the many names of Christ. It is true of the names of Satan and of the anti-Christ.

There are no less than ten names of God in the Old Testament and many compound names made up of combinations of these ten names. These ten names are: El, Elohim, Eloe, Sabaoth, Eloh, Eser-leje, Adonai, Jah, Jehovah and Shaddai.

But Eloah and Elohim are the same, one being the plural or compound name intimating the Trinity. Sabaoth is not really a name but used with another of the proper names. Jehovah, Enyah, and Jah are variations of the same name, Jehovah. The two most often used and most important are Elohim, rendered God in the English, and Jehovah, rendered Lord.

The great names of God are used to signify His perfections:

1. Elohim. This word comes from two Hebrew words, El meaning strength or the strong one, and Alah, a verb meaning to bind oneself with an oath or to swear as with an oath. It is the first name used for God in the Bible (Gen, 1:1). It was He who spoke the earth into existence. He spoke and it was so. It is the plural word denoting in the very first verse of the Bible the Trinity of God.

The etymology of the word Elohim seems to come from two meanings of the word Alah. One has the meaning to reverence or worship or adore. According to this meaning God is placed before us from the very beginning as the only true object of our worship. As our Creator He has the right to demand our allegiance.

The other meaning of the word Allah is to swear as an oath. This gives us the Trinity as engaged in an eternal covenant. This is the covenant-keeping God. It shows that with an oath the three members of the Holy Trinity, back from an eternity entered into covenant as regards the creation and redemption of man. We read of Christ as constituted a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek by an oath. We read of the "blood of the everlasting covenant." We read that Christ was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. So the full meaning would seem to be the Trinity as the only object of man's redemption. In its various forms this name for God is used some 2600 times in the Old Testament.

2. Jehovah. This is the other most used name of God in the Old Testament. It is the most sacred name to the Jews since the exile into Babylonian captivity. The Jewish Talmud says that the angels of heaven dare not utter it and denounces fearful vengeance upon any so bold as to blaspheme it. No Jew would pronounce that name of God. They seem to have derived their superstition of the name from Ex. 6:2,3--"And God spake unto Moses and said unto him, 'I am the Lord (Jehovah) and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them.'" He is declaring that they didn't know the true import of the name. That quality of God's character was not revealed unto the patriarchs. It doesn't mean that they didn't know the name, but there was something in the name that they had never realized in God.

The name Jehovah signifies the essential nature of God as the one infinite, eternal, and unconditioned God. It, of all the names of God, incorporates all of the perfections of God as the only true self existence in the universe. All else derives its existence, but He is alone the underived, self-existent one, complete within Himself. The name comes from a form of the verb "to be". When God uses the name of Himself, He uses the first person of the verb 'to be'--Ehyeh, I Am, or Will Be, Ehyeh, I am what I am, or I AM what I will be. It is the name as that spoken by Christ. "Who was, and is, and who is to come." It expresses the absolute plenitude of being. It includes eternity, self-existence, immutability, simplicity, omnipotence, omniscience; in short, the consummation of all possible perfection. In relation to Israel, as God spoke to Moses, "Tell them I AM hath sent you." It implies His ability to fulfill His promise. It signifies the all-inclusiveness of the source of every blessing and work of God. He is contained within Himself, and being all-sufficient, can keep His promise and fulfill His every word. Here see the richness of the prophecy of Christ, "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord (Kurios-Jehovah), to the glory of God the Father,"

Every being shall know at last that Jesus is at one with the Father, that He is the great "I AM", the eternal, self-existing God. It is this name Jehovah that God bears a distinct relationship to man. It is the name of God in redemption. It first meets us in relation to man when God stood before the sinning pair in the garden (Gen. 3:8) and covered them with skins. The first distinct revelation of Himself as Jehovah was in connection with the redemption of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 3:13-17). In God's redemptive relationship to man, Jehovah is compounded with other names to signify His suppliance for every need.

God's Personality.

In discussing the personality of God and the nature of God, we are to settle the age-long dispute between the Pantheists and such modern thought on the one hand and the clear Biblical portrait of God on the other. Pantheism denies the personality of God. Much of philosophical speculation has dismissed the personality of God, and a lot of modern atheistic science has ruled out a personal God and placed the laws of nature and the forces of nature in His place. This is purely mechanical outlook on the universe. We readily admit the mystery that surrounds His majestic person. We understand that

the human mind cannot fathom the depths of His nature. Simonides the poet, when questioned by Hievo the King, concerning the nature of God, demanded a day to consider before answering. When the Question was presented to him the following day, he asked another day of thought, and so on until finally the king demanded to know the reason for his procedure, He answered that the longer he thought upon the subject, the greater the difficulty of giving a satisfactory answer." The Bible declares the same thing. Job says "Behold, God is great and we know Him not, neither can the number of His years be searched out." Again, "Canst thou by searching find out God?' Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as Heaven, What canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." These are the words Zophar (Job.A1:7), but are a confession of man' s ignorance.

In the first consideration of the personality of God, a few things need to be considered, First, what constitutes the personality? What do we understand personality to be? Second is it proven that God exercises these attributes of personality? Thirdly, some added considerations.

These have been divided into three.

a. Intellect - Constituting the power of thought; reasoning, memory, reflection, perception. Attached to this attribute is that of self-consciousness.

1. Jehovah-Jirer - "The Lord will provide," i.e. a sacrifice for sin Gen. 22:14.

2. Jehovah - Rapha - "The Lord that healeth"--cure for sin Ex. 15:26

3. Jehovah - Nissi - "The Lord our banner"--victory over the flesh Ex, 17:8-15

4. Jehovah - Shalon - "The Lord our peace"--Judges 6:24

5. Jehovah - Raah - " The Lord my Shepard" Psa. 23

6. Jehovah - Shammoh - "The Lord is present"--in eternity God dwelling with His own

7. Jehovah - Tsudkenu - "The Lord of righteousness"--in the regeneration Jer. 23:6

3. Adonai. It is spelled with a capital first letter and then small letters in Authorized, while Jehovah is always spelled with capitals all the way through. It means master and in some forms is used of men, but when spelled one way only it is used of God. It spells God's ownership, lordship, dominion. This is the word the Jews substituted for the Jehovah name.

4. Shaddai or El Shaddai. Sometimes one way and sometimes the other. It is translated Almighty or Supreme. It signifies the all-sufficient One in relation to man's need, the God who is enough. In the Hebrew the word shad signifies the breast as the nourishment of the babe's life. In applying it to God it would then mean the nourisher, the strength-giver, the satisfying portion.

5. There are descriptive adjectives with a superlative sense, which are usually compounded with other names to signify perfection.

1) Ellyon - the most high one, "high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity". It simply means the Supreme God, highest of all beings.

2) Olem - everlasting God, not just to signify His eternity, but the God over everlasting things.

3) Sabbaoth - When combined with Yahwe or Jehovah-Sabbaoth, Lord of host--I Sam. 1:3. God over angelic hosts, heavenly hosts, God of warfare occurs in the Old Testament more frequently in the crisis of Israel's need Ps. 46:4, 11. When each name of God is understood and contemplated as belonging to our Heavenly Father, how much our conception of Him is increased; and of our Saviour, who is the "express image of Him."

III. The Nature of God As Revealed By The Attributes of God.

A. The Nature of Attributes.

When we wish to come to a closer determination of the nature of God, we are confronted with the question, is there any sense in which God may be defined? In our previous topics in the Doctrine of Theology in which we considered "the limits of our knowledge of God," we saw from the very facts of the case how impossible it is to define, circumscribe, analyze, or represent in human language God as He is in His absolute essence. Curil of Jerusalem said, " Our highest knowledge is to confess our ignorance."

But though in His essential essence He remains "the high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity," the one who alone 'dwells in a light unapproachable,' still He has been pleased to give some manifestations of Himself, which reveal certain qualities of His nature. There is a threefold process of reasoning which helps us to arrive at a clearer conception of God's nature. In the contemplation of the works of God we see certain attributes of God, and from these we arrive at the clearest conception of the nature of God possible to us in our present state. That this is the Scriptural way may be seen from a number of passages, some of them already considered. "The heavens declare the glory of God"--the works in the skies show His glory. "The things that are made (reveal) His eternal power and Godhead" Rom. 1:20.

It is thus we arrive at the estimate of the real unseen character of any individual. When we see a man doing benevolent acts, we arrive at a conception of his truthfulness and honesty. We say, "That is an honest man." That is, the character, holy acts, and words must be derived from a principle of holiness. They are attributes of a principle of God's nature. He is holy, not only because the Scriptures so state, but they teach in many ways that holiness is attributed unto God. So the definition for "attribute": The attributes of God are those distinguishing characteristics of the divine nature which are inseparable from the idea of God and constitute a basis for His manifestations to His creatures. They are called attributes because we are compelled to attribute them unto God.

Here we see the importance of searching the Scriptures to determine most which attributes are revealed, for they give us the only light of the nature of God which He has seen fit to give unto us. They are not just certain things we attribute unto God but are

definite outward manifestations of God. They display unto our finite minds definite qualities residing in the Godhead.

B. The Attributes of God

There is considerable difference of opinion among theologians as to the classification of attributes. They arrive at practically the same amount of attributes and finally get them all in and accounted for, but their divergency has more to do with their philosophizing on the attributes. They recognize them all but hardly know how to classify them. Many of them use terms, which they themselves are hard to define. But there is one line of agreement, which seems to pervade the most of the theological classifications of the attributes.

They divide them unto those, which reside in God in His relation unto Himself, what He is only to Himself. They are the attributes commonly called incommunicable, metaphysical, quiescent, position, absolute. The other set of attributes has been variously called relative, communicable, transitory, active, negative, derivative, natural. These last signify God in His relations to His works and to man and are called "communicable" because He is said to have given them to man, but in truth only in an analogical way. They are not the same attributes but only something like unto them, bearing an analogy to them. The relations are the infinite and the finite.

Dividing all the schedules of attributes, the first or incommunicable or absolute attributes, are modes of God's being; while the transitory or communicable attributes are properties of God's nature or determining properties. The former gives all the ideas of God's necessary existence, eternity, infinity, immensity, independence, and immutability; around the second are intelligence and will, or all those perfections which could be included in the idea of a perfect spirit.

Dr. Hodge in his "Outlines of Theology" gives a classification of the divine attributes, which removes all of the objections against the common classifications.

1. Those attributes which equally qualify all the rest: infinitude (that which has no bounds); absoluteness (that which is determined either in its being or modes of being, or action by nothing whatsoever without itself. This includes immutability).
2. Natural attributes. God is an infinite spirit, self-existent, eternal, immense, simple, free of will, intelligent and powerful.
3. Moral attributes. God is a spirit infinitely righteous, good, true, and faithful.
4. The consummate glory of all the divine perfections in union--The beauty of HOLINESS.

This outline recognizes that the absolute attributes of God qualify every other attribute. They pervade and qualify each manifestation. For illustration: God is not wise and infinite, but He is infinite in His wisdom. So He isn't just immutable and wise, but His wisdom is immutable, etc. We shall follow this distinction throughout.

1. The absolute attributes or modes of God's existence. We might call them the universal and all-pervading attributes, for they characterize the whole being and every manifestation of God.

a. Independence...with reference to self-existence, the grounds of His existence or being.

b. Eternity...with reference to the duration of His existence or being.

c. Immensity...with reference to the extent of His existence or being.

d. All-sufficiency...with reference to the content of His being.

e. Immutability...with reference to the identity of His existence or being.

These are all badges of His deity, separating Him from His creatures and works by an impossible chasm. They are the incomprehensible elements of His nature. They are the disparagements between the infinite and the finite. We shall never understand them, but with heads uncovered and shoes off our feet, we worship and adore, confessing with

Job, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me"; or the Psalmist (139:6), "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain unto it." He is speaking of God's omniscience and omnipotence.

There is one other consideration before we separately consider these attributes. It is that of infinity: what is meant by infinity? It is the conditioning word of every one of the attributes of God, especially of those absolute attributes. We say not only that God is holy; not only wise, but infinitely wise; not only is He powerful but omni-powerful, or infinite in power. What is the meaning of infinite? When we ascribe infinity to God we simply mean that He has attributes without limit.

We aren't affirming that He has no known limits or bounds but that He has no limits or bounds at all. The difficulties of trying to determine any bounds of God's nature is not because of human weakness but because there are no bounds. There can be no increase nor can there be anything taken away. Whatever element exists at all in the divine being exists there not in degree but in illimitable perfection. It cannot be measured, analyzed, or increased. This infinitude doesn't mean that God included in His nature every element actual, possible, or conceivable. Some say, objecting to infinity of God, that there are two contradictions to this truth. One, "if God is infinite, then He must have all things in His nature, evil included." Second, "if God is infinite, then all things are included in His essence and there is no finite existence at all". We won't enter into any philosophical discussion of this theme but to say this to the first objection: God isn't the sum of all things mathematically, just adding up all things. God is the source of all things positive; but when He made finite things, He placed self-limitations upon His own essence by creating and allowing other essences than Himself. There is in God no weakness, folly or evil. The infinity of the opposite qualities exclude these from His nature. To the second objection, God has limited Himself by creation the finite. It is a self-limitation. But He is in no case dependent upon any finite condition or reality.

a. Independence

Independence, self-determination, necessary existence, absolute being are all means of expressing the same thought, that is, that of denying a cause. All other things to our

minds demands a cause. But not God, for God never began to be. His existence depends upon no outside cause nor in truth any cause. No combination of elements nor of superior will ever caused His coming into being, nor shall any cause ever cause Him to be reduced into nothingness. He is because He is. Ex. 3:14--"I AM THAT I AM." By His very name "Jehovah", God has revealed unto man this attribute of independence, underived existence. How the mind staggers when it tries to understand such excellency of existence, but faith believes because it is necessary to believe it, not only because it is a subject of divine revelation, but also it is a necessary truth.

Caused existence demands uncaused existence. After all, it is just as much a mystery to our finite minds to comprehend caused as uncaused existence. How can we understand how something could be made out of nothing? Creation is as dark to us as God's own uncaused being. "The fact of creation and the fact of a Creator we can easily grasp, but how the one came to be and other always was is beyond our compass" (Thornwell).

There must be a cause itself uncaused. To think of an infinite chain of finite causes is foolishness. You would have a universe of creatures and no Creator, a universe which never had a beginning, made up of every part which had a beginning. How is that possible? The mind is never at rest concerning creation and the existence of the finite until it rests in the belief in the INDEPENDENT GOD.

The Scriptures assert God's independence in a number of ways, first, in His name Jehovah, the "I AM." Rev. 1:8--"I AM Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty." It is needless to site all of the passages, which assume or declare this truth. Every passage, which speaks of God creating all things teach His independence. This attribute, as do the other absolute attributes, pervades every other attribute. He is independent in His knowledge. He has no teacher and has nothing to learn. He needs no counselors; His wisdom is original. In power, nothing is derived; He gains no energy by assimilation and dissipates none by acting. He does what He wills among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say, "What doest Thou?" So

with every attribute as grounded in His very nature, they are as absolute in their independence as relying upon no exterior supply, nor can they be diminished by usage.

b. Eternity

This has reference to the duration of God's being. As creatures of time, eternity is a deep mystery to us. When we try to understand eternity or define it, we must always merely mathematically pile age upon age, period upon period, and arrive at no closer estimate, for we still must conceive of the pile having a top. Each age that we think of time without limit than we think of a place where there is no space. Thornwell has aptly put the truth in this form: "We deny to God the possibility of age or decay; He is neither young or old. Beyond these negations we cannot go, but these negations impress us with the conviction of transcendent excellence. They assert an absolute immortality, which surpasses all power of imagination or thought. Time with its own remorseless tooth destroys everything around us; kingdoms rise and fall; generation succeeds generation to the regions of the dead; trees wither and fade and perish; the mountains falling cometh to nought; nature herself waxes old like a garment and is ready to vanish away. But the eternal God remains fixed in His being, the same yesterday, today, and forever. His years fail not. How delightful to think, in the midst of universal change and desolation, that there is one Being who liveth and abideth forever-- one Being who, when the heavens shall be rolled up as a vesture, the sun blotted out, and the moon and stars bereft of their brightness, can lift His awful hand and swear by Himself, "Behold, I live forever!" Were all the creatures annihilated by a single blow and the void of nothing take the place which is now fulfilled by teeming universe.

The Scriptures are abundant in their expression of God's eternity--Psa. 90:2,4; Psa. 102:24-27 (very expressive); Isa. 57:15 "For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity whose name is Holy." (I Tim. 1:17)

c. Immensity

Immensity is reference to the extent of God's being. It has to do with God's relation to space as eternity has to do with His relation to time. It implies that God, in the fullness of

His essence, is present to every point of space in every point of time. When we speak of the omnipresence of God, we mean His immensity in relation to His creature.

It is His presence to them, but His is also where His creatures never have been, are not now, nor ever shall be. Here again we meet the deep impenetrable mystery of the Godhead. Immensity is just as incomprehensible as eternity or independence. We are not only creatures whose every part of existence depends upon environment and creative power and whose years are but a span, whose life is swift as a weaver's shuttle, today we are here and gone tomorrow, but we are also creatures of confinement in a limited point of space. Our thoughts may take them wings and wander, (especially in a classroom), but our personality is localized to a point exclusive of all other space. Even our spirits are in one place in a sense that they are nowhere else. So it is of angels; they must travel from one place to another to accomplish the ministry entrusted to them. Even though spirit is mystery, too, yet in its essence or presence they are here and not there--localized to a point in space. This is true of all created beings as well as material substance. God alone is everywhere in His infinite plentitude, filling all space with no possibility of extension, nor confused nor mixed with His creation. He pervades all things and every point of space and beyond space but is never mixed with or confused with His creation. There is no point of space where one can point a finger or extend a thought and say, "God is not there." Not that matter filling that space is part of God, but He as spirit is in the same space. Though He fills all space, He is distinct from the other created objects in that space, as though He dwelt isolated in a separate, inaccessible region.

This is not the irradication of His power, so that He merely influences or changes or controls all things by intermediate agencies; but He is there in the very essence of His personality. No doctrine of Scripture is taught any more emphatically than God's immensity. Jer. 23:23,24--where it speaks of Him filling all heaven and earth; Psa. 139:7-10--where it speaks of the impossibility of going where God isn't. Amos 9:2; II Chron. 6:18--God cannot be contained by any locality. Matt. 28:20--Christ with His disciples always, everyone unto the end of the age.

How superior this testimony of the Scriptures to God than heathen idolatry, which made their gods local deities, circumscribed by space, and conditioned by circumstances. What a proof of the divine inspiration of the Bible.

There is a special sense in the Bible in which God is said to be present. It is God being especially present in one place as a manifestation of His rebuke or His favor. As when the cloud rested over the Tabernacle, or He dwelt in the temple of Solomon or indwells the believer. In this sense we pray, "Our Father who art in Heaven." Also when it speaks of Christ at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit abiding with the Church. So also God is said to withdraw and hide His face. Not that His essential presence is diminished, but the marks of His favor withheld. God is in Hell, revealing the tokens of His displeasure and justice. In these particular instances God is said to be present locally in a definite place. It is not to say that He is confined to that locality, or that He is there any more than anywhere else, but only that His special manifestation or personality is thus said to be there for specific purpose of blessing, or special working of judgment. While He is spoken of as being in a certain place, He is still everywhere else just as fully.

d. All-Sufficiency.

The all-sufficiency of God has reference to the contents of the divine Being. He contains within Himself the fullness of perfection and blessedness. Nothing can be added to Him nor can be diminished. He can never want. He is sufficient for Himself, and for all His creatures. No wonder the Scriptures say, "If God be for us who can be against us?" Acts 17:24 clearly teaches this truth. When you consider the thought of God's existing from all eternity past, until He made man, a puny counterpart made so much lower than the angels, reflecting even in His perfection but an infinitesimal part of His maker. Man adds no new glory to His Maker, by his redemption and worship, but merely gives God opportunity of displaying the riches of His grace.

The Scriptures are rich in their presentation of the other great truths, so in this one there is no attempt merely to set forth the doctrine but it is woven throughout the Scriptures in promise, prophecy, and precept. "My grace is sufficient for thee." Every prophecy

carries the guarantee of the God who gave it to also see its fulfillment. Every promise He has made He is able also to perform. How wonderful the thought, that though we are weak, and without spiritual resources, sufficiency is of God. Here are treasures which never could be measured, unlimited. He is "Our Satisfying Portion."

e. Immutability.

The thought of God's immutability has to do with the permanent identity of God's being. The unchangeableness of His essence, Thornwell aptly says, "That which never began and can never end, to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken, which knows no succession and is dependent upon nothing without, is evidently incapable of change." Change is a badge of our weakness, It is a sign of finiteness. It implies causation. Change is brought about by new conditions, environment, and plans. Old plans are invalidated by unforeseen conditions. Change is brought about by adding or subtraction. Change must be for better or worse. So it is easy to see that the perfect, complete, all-sufficient God cannot be touched by change. It is the simple dictate of reason caused from our former considerations. There can be no decrease or increase, not can there be deterioration or progress with God. If He could change for the better, then He couldn't be already perfect and He could not change for the worse and still be the infinite God. This self-evident truth is also abundantly taught in the Scriptures.

Mal. 3:6--Here is the simple statement, "For I am the Lord: I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Psa. 102:25-26--God is here set over against the changing, decaying creation, quoted Heb. 1:12.

Jas. 1:17--Here is the New Testament counterpart of Mal. 3:6. The Revised Version is clearer. "Every good gift (or giving) and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning."

There are a few questions to be answered in the consideration of this truth, they are seeming contradictions to it, but are answerable and in no wise detract from it.

1. The first and most natural is the anthropomorphic representations in Scripture which imply change. Such as the representation of God as regretting, changing His purpose, repenting, and grieving. First, we are to remember that they are anthropomorphisms, not implying any change in God's essence, but a change in His providences. They are to what these same changes mean in us. So when we read, "It repented the Lord that He had made man" Gen. 6:6, we need to keep in mind the opposite Scripture, Num. 23:19, "God is not a man, that He should lie, neither the Son of Man that He would repent." The change is not in god, but must lie in a change of His dealings with man, Caused by a change in man. God's immutable holiness and justice makes Him to treat the wicked different than the righteous. So when a righteous man forsakes his righteousness and does wickedness, his righteousness is not remembered, so also when a wicked man forsakes his wickedness and does righteousness, his sin is not remembered Ezek. 3:17-21; 18:22-27. There is no change in the divine essence, causing His change of dealings, but a change in man, The sun isn't fickle, nor changed because it will melt the wax, while it hardens the clay.

2. So also the abolition of the Messianic dispensation and the ushering of grace was no change in God's plan, but the carrying out of His plan. They were all included in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

God's sending of His Son into the world to die, wasn't a hurried makeshift, to patch up an unforeseen effect in the Mosaic economy, but was all a part of the eternal, unchanging unchangeable plan of God.

3. It has been alleged that creation established a new relation of God as Creator and necessitated His taking of a new relationship, but creation added nothing new to God's essence, nor can I conceive of it adding anything to His willing of creation. For believing in His knowing of all things.

It is well to remember that immutability is not immobility. God's unchangingness is not of statuary impassiveness nor immobility, but that of freedom and infinite activity. His infinite immutability includes within itself all the changes He Himself has willed from all eternity.

There is a vast amount of difference between willing a change, and changing the will. The former the Scriptures affirm of God constantly needs not to change His mind. He who can perfectly do all things without mistakes, or failures, need not to re-plan and reconstruct, except where His infinite will has allowed finite powers the ability to obstruct. Even the allowance of the divine will to finite freedom of will is included in God's immutability by His foreknowledge.

God's immutability is the grounds of all our hopes and expectations Heb. 6" 11-20. "Every promise is in Christ 'Yea and Amen' to the glory of God." Where is no yea and nay. How marvelous to know there is no deception in God, no changing, Throughout all eternity His purpose will not change, holiness will not turn to iniquity, justice to cruelty, nor goodness and mercy to oppression. What He is today

He was yesterday and shall be forever. It is blessed to know a life hid with Christ in God and rest upon His immutability. His immutability is the pledge of His faithfulness.

2. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD AS PERSONAL SPIRIT

We may affirm of God the absolute attributes without thinking of them as belonging to a person. But we cannot affirm of Him knowledge, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, love, and mercy without implying by those very terms that He is a personal God. The absolute attributes are the attributes of pure being, the infinite perfections of God, while the second classification we have chosen, that of personal attributes, reveals God as having personality.

We have divided the attributes of personal spirit into two classifications; those of intellect and those of will; or those grounded in the intellect, and those grounded in the moral nature of God.

a. The Attributes of Intelligence

There is one attribute, which includes every attribute of intellect in the Godhead. It is generic, that of omniscience, though reason and wisdom can be separated from it as separate workings of God's perfection of knowledge.

1. God's knowledge then is eternal. There never was a period when God knew less than He knows now, nor ever shall be a period when He will know more, He never learns and never forgets. He increase nor decrease can come to His knowledge.

2. His knowledge is intuitional. "He knows in one simple act." There is no need of the mental processes through which we reach conclusions and thought. He needs not to reason in a chain, in order to reach a conclusion. He knows all things past, present, and future in one simultaneous, infallible act. Instantaneously His intellect conceives in present reality the stretches of eternity past, includes every act within creation, every thought of intelligence, and everything outside of creation, and everything yet to come forever. Is it to be wondered at that the man of God of old said, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high that I cannot attain unto it." How weak our knowledge is in comparison.

God's omniscience includes:

1. A knowledge of Himself, and He only knows Himself. No archangel nor heavenly creature has that knowledge. God is just as mysterious and majestic and incomprehensible and possible more so to the heavenly creatures as He is to us. God knows every infinite counsel, every mysterious infinite perfection of His own austere Being to perfection. How different from man who doesn't even know himself.

2. God knows all things past. Every thing that has ever been done, by Himself or His creatures. Every feeling, volition, or thought. So like-wise, everything present. Jesus said, "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground but that the Father takes note of it." Not an atom can change composition, not a leaf fall to the ground, not a spot in all creation, or outside of creation where God for all we know may be carrying out other works far transcending these, but that He knoweth them all together.

3. God knows all contingent things. Things that have been. Things that would be under another set of actions or volitions. Here arises the question of man's freedom of will and God's foreknowledge. How can such knowledge of mine comprehend how I can freely choose, yet God foreknow my choice? It isn't fatalism, because it isn't necessity, only God's infinite wisdom and foreknowledge knowing what course I shall pursue. For

human finite, limited reasoning to try to reduce to clear explanation this divine truth is folly. It is a truth belonging to the saint, and for the increase of faith rather than reason.

a. Reason.

Though this attribute could be included and is included in omniscience, still it can be classified separately. Man has two mental processes. That of discursive by which man rationalizes, perceives things. It is the conscious mental activity of thought. Then man possesses intuitional knowledge. That knowledge which is innate within his soul. This is the only process of reasoning we can ascribe unto God. He has no need of logical processes.

b. This attribute is included also in omniscience. This is the attribute by which God chooses and uses the best possible means to a desired end. It is possible for man to have correct, accurate abundant knowledge and poor judgment or wisdom. But God's infinite wisdom enables Him to choose the best possible means.

The Scriptures are abundant in their proof of the Omniscience of God. Acts 15:18 declares that "All his works are known unto Him from the beginning of the world." His understanding is said to be infinite (Ps. 147:5). He knows all men's thoughts, his words and his ways (Ps. 90:8), our sins and secret iniquity (Psa. 38:9), our inner most soul anguish (II Chron. 6:30), our hearts are known unto Him. So also spoken of Christ in John 2:25, "He needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man." And in the former verse, "He knew all men." He knows the future and what man will do (Isa. 46:10; 48:3-5. Other portions for further study of the subject: I Chron. 28:9; Psa. 44:21; Heb. 4:12 and many more. All prophecy shows God's omniscience.

b. The Attributes of will.

We use the word "will" to denote the attributes of God grounded in His moral nature.

1. Omnipotence.

By omnipotence we mean the ability of God to do all things that He willeth. He can carry out any determination of His will, without expending His power. His power is not wasted

by usage. He expends no energy by acting. The primary example to our finite minds of God's omnipotence is seen in creation, the making of something from nothing. It is not the mere adding of one thing to another, the multiplication of acts of power which bring to our minds the thought of God's omnipotence, but the very act of willing something into existence and it is performed. The omnipotence of God does not carry with it the ability of God to do self-contradictory things. There are foolish quibblings brought forth in opposition to God's omnipotence. Such as, "Can God make a thing to be a lie, and the truth at the same time? Can God make a past event not to have taken place? Can He make something that is, not to be, and still as existing? Can He make the mountains separate in entity without a valley between them?" Can the things contradictory to God's very nature, such as lie and steal, change or die? These things are not objects of power nor are they in the scope of power any more than time is the same as space or sound is in the scope of vision. The fact is that no possible thing we can conceive could possibly be the test of God's omnipotence. His omnipotence, as every other perfection of His nature, is measurable only by God Himself. His power is infinite as well as His very nature. God not only can do all things, which we can possibly conceive, but after we reach the limit of our comprehension, He still can do infinitely more.

The greatest example, we have stated, is in creation. "The worlds made out of nothing" (Heb. 11:3). But there are innumerable other Scriptures, some with simple statements such as Christ made, Matt. 19:26, "With God all things are possible." Jer. 32:17, 27; Job. 42:2; Lk. 1:37. The word omnipotent as used in Rev. 19:6 and God's name of Almighty have the same meaning. It is seen in the preservation and sustaining of the universe as well as its creation. It not only took omniscience and omnipotence to create, but it takes omnipotence and omniscience to "uphold all things by the word of His power." What comfort there is in the knowledge we have of God's infinite power. We are persuaded that what He has promised He is able to perform.

2. Love.

There are many other attributes of God incomprehended by this attribute of love. What is meant by the love of God? There is certainly an analogy between God's love and our love, and yet His love is not only greater than our love but different than our love. Our

love is so much a sentiment, which comes and goes, and varies with different circumstances, but God says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." God's love includes Himself and all the creatures of His fashioning. Even those unworthy of His love. He loves the sinner, while His holy nature hates his sin. Love is one attribute both of man and God hard to be defined. It is more in God than an attitude, but His very essence, which pervades every action and work of His hand. He loves because He is love; and it is His love, which made Him give His Son for the whole world, to pour out Himself in sacrifice for erring man. And yet His infinite love is tempered and fused with His infinite holiness. While God so loved the world, yet in consistency to His attributes of justice and holiness He could not save it in its sin, and by merely setting aside the sin, but must in pure justice to His other attributes, interpose His marvelous plan of redemption based on expiation. He did not so love the world that He saved it in contradiction to His other attributes, but in perfect justice with His other attributes. It is here we see the infinite wisdom and matchless grace of salvation's plan.

Included in the love of God are many active elements, or expressions of the one love of God. These other expressions seem to be but various modes of the one element of love in God, expressing itself to His creatures.

a. Goodness. Some would make goodness as a separate attribute of God, but to me it is but the active love of God in doing for His own creatures. Even the wicked partake of His goodness. In fact, the Scriptures declare that it is the goodness of God, which leadeth men unto repentance. "He causeth the rain to fall upon the just and the unjust." This is God's love giving good things unto men. "Every good gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of light (Jam. 1:17).

b. Philanthropy. This word occurs in Titus 3:4 and denotes the kindness of God toward men in general. The attitude of love.

c. Pity or Compassion. The response of love to an object of suffering and misery. "As a Father pitieth those that fear Him" Psa. 103:12; Jas. 5:11.

d. Mercy. This is love condescending to objects of compassion. It is active love working to alleviate the condition of the object of pity.

e. Forbearance, Longsuffering, Patience. This is love staying the execution of sentence of punishment to give room for repentance. It is love putting up with the bad manners of the one loved. How often the Scriptures speak of the longsuffering of God. How His love must have stayed the execution of sentence against a sinning, evil-mannered, rebellious race, whom His justice would have annihilated. Of Israel, it is spoken, "God suffered their evil manners in the wilderness, How patiently God forbears the dealings with unthankful, unholy men, and how sweetly patient He is with His own, remembering but that we are dust.

f. Complacency. This is the love of God enjoying and delighting in the objects of His love. God wants our love. He wants us to love Him. Under Law He demanded it, but under grace He infuses it into our souls by the entrance of His own loving Holy Spirit! Until His own love is reflected in our hearts.

These various elements of love reveal to us how God can love the sinner with infinite good will and kindness, so that he provides escape and restoration for him, while not loving him with complacency. God's anger is never of malice, nor ill-will. It is displacency. Thus He is said to be, "Angry with the wicked," yet He loves sinners.

3) Holiness.

Holiness is purity of essence. The absence of every impurity and defilement, and the positive source of all purity and the absolute standard of right,

God's will not only contains all power, but the absolute preference for all moral right and good. There is no moral impurity or imperfection. He is the highest good. It is not that He conforms to an external standard of right, but His is the highest standard of moral perfection. He is holy. Holiness is not merely a negative element by which we deny to the Godhead certain condemnations and imperfections found in us, but it is a positive element or attribute of the Godhead. But when we seek to define it, we are met with the same mystery surrounding the other attributes. There is a blaze of intense light which overwhelms the soul. When the Scriptures speak of the holiness of God's people, the primary meaning is perfect spiritual health. The health of God in the soul. It is the antithesis of all that sin does to man, and stands on the opposite pole from sin. But

holiness in man is certainly not the moral perfection it is in God. God commands, "Be ye holy, for I the Lord thy God am holy." Here He is asking us to be like Him in respect to holiness. The holiness of God is original; His very nature. Our holiness begins and ends in God's imparted nature within us, but the holiness of God is grounded in His own nature.

So whatever God does, says, wills, is infinitely pure, right and holy because He is the author, and becomes by that virtue, the standard of excellency. Hence this divine rectitude of righteousness of God is the source of all righteousness, and purity in all of God's creation. It would not serve our purpose to tabulate every portion of the many, which declare the holiness of God. It is the song of the special angels of the throne who cry day and night before the throne of God, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts." (Isa. 6:3). It is the song of the four living creatures of Rev. 4:8, hundreds of times He is called "The Holy One of Israel." It would be profitable for one who has never done so to take a concordance and look up each passage where God's holiness or righteousness is mentioned.

4) Truth

Though truth is included within the attribute of holiness, yet it deserves separate mention as the Bible speaks often of it. It has both the meaning of the veracity of God and the source of truth.

a. God is truth in that He is the real God, and not merely imaginary as the gods of the heathen.

b. God is truth in His veracity. Made every man a liar but God the truth. He is faithful to keep every promise, and reward every work of righteousness or sin.

c. God is truth because He lacks nothing of perfection. All truth finds a fulfillment. He is the grounds of all truth. Without Him everything could be doubted as having no reality. No wonder philosophy in denying the reality of God has come to deny all other truth.

God's faithfulness is bound up within this attribute. The Scriptures affirm, "It is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). Every dealing of God with man is bound up within His truthfulness. In Ps. 138:2, He declares through the Psalmist--"Thou hast magnified thy word above thy name." The Holy Spirit is called, "The Spirit of Truth." (Jn. 14:17). In I Jn. 5:6, "Spirit is Truth," and in I Thess. 5:24, "Faithful is He that calleth you who will also perform it." Besides these, hundreds of them.

5) Justice

Justice is also a phase of holiness as is truth. Justice is the demand of holiness by which God deals with His creatures in conformity of the purity of His own nature. It is the demand of God's holiness, for moral perfection in His creatures, and punishing of non-conformity. We see it in the words of Abraham, "Will not the God of the whole earth do right?" Gen. 18:25. God must act always in conformity with His own nature. He must demand moral rectitude in His creatures, and must punish punitively the refraction of His laws. God does not punish sin, in order to reform the sinner, nor primarily to defer others from sinning, but because His infinite holiness requires Him to. He must be true to His own nature. If He should allow sin to go unpunished it would stain the secret of why God must provide salvation by the substitution of His Son for us. The blow fell and God's justice, Deut. 32:4; Psa. 11:4-7, 19:9; Rom. 2:2-16; II Pet. 2:9; I Jn. 1:9.

The End