

# THE GODHEAD OF GOD

---

**M**ANY, apart from the wicked one of Psalm 50, seem to treat **God** as if He were a **man**. This is a tremendous and increasing present-day peril: it invades the whole order of God's creative work and providence, and brings utter confusion. The authority of Scripture is undermined, the gospel is robbed of its glory, and there is discord instead of majestic harmony. Unless God is acknowledged **as God**, everything is in disorder, all is disintegrated. Isaiah asks with holy zeal, "To whom then will ye liken God?" and God Himself repeats the searching question (Isa. 40. 18, 25). If there were more reverence for God, and realization of His glorious majesty, how different everything would be! God is perfect in His attributes, perfect in their completeness, both individually and collectively. Not one is missing, not one is defective. Do we think of knowledge? He knows **all**. I cannot learn completely even a small portion of one branch of knowledge: He cannot be ignorant of anything in all time and space. **We all forget** very much: He can never experience this failure. Nor is it that He has gradually attained knowledge: from eternity He knew the names of all His people, and all their future, their wishes, their

circumstances. Their sins were laid on Christ before they were born, not one being left out.

In relation to Him all **our** thoughts of time fall short: past, present, and future were all equally before Him, or ever the earth was formed. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us (Ps. 139. 6), but any **other** conception would be foolish and infringe on His Godhead, and revelation of Himself, and involve contradiction and impossibilities. And not only does God know all that **is** and **shall be**, but also what would have taken place under **other** circumstances (Matt. 11. 21). The inner thoughts of all, and their reactions to all that comes, or could come, across their mind, are before Him. As soon as we realize that each **present** action of each man is partly affected by his temperament, by his environment, and by expected and unexpected actions of others, and that the temperament has been itself moulded by thousands of circumstances, each of them equally modified by countless activities of others, and that a man's environment has been, from birth onward, the result of Divine providence, acting upon myriads of un-realized details, we arrive at an infinity of problems, **unless we fully recognize the perfect and unlimited knowledge of One Who is absolutely God.** For all these influenced, or influencing, circumstances, and "related" causes, affect the degree of each moral quality of disobedience and thereby of punishment. Human judgment is inevitably based on results and approximations. One man kills another, and is a murderer: another does not kill because he restrains himself by fear of punishment: yet another is hindered by the superior force of an officer of law, or of the one who would have been his victim. How then can human judgment rightly apportion guilt ?

But you say, "A near approximation is sufficient." Yes, for **man**, but not for **absolute** righteousness. If we decide that anything is correct to one millionth part mathematically, the uncertainty is negligible, but with God everything

must be absolute, or it is not “righteous and true” (Rev. 15. 3): the **smallness** of a variation does not enter. Two thousand million persons acting in millions of ways, and themselves influenced by millions, in the past nigh 6,000 years, as well as the present, and likewise by unseen forces, angelical, and demoniacal, are an impossible problem **for all but God**. His perfect knowledge is entwined with perfect wisdom, and perfect judgment in righteousness, and thus we behold the necessary “harmony” of **all** His attributes. Not one of these can be isolated from another. We stand amazed, and adore. We realize, too, the absolute Deity of Christ, to Whom all judgment is committed (John 5. 22, 23).

It is this **blending** of attributes that solves our problems. The history of mankind and the inequalities beheld would overpower, and bring unrighteous confusion as a **finality**, if there were not One of infinite knowledge, and equally infinite wisdom, justice and power, knowing the bent of each hidden mind, and the potentialities of each heart, in each possible environment, and bringing a perfectly **right** goal in each case, causing all things to work together, either for His people’s good, or a just retribution, so that even the wrath of men must praise Him.

The remarkable fact is that anything short of absolute Godhead would neither harmonize with true Deity, nor eliminate errors as to justice and proportion, which, **accumulatively**, would be able to subvert all. A recognition of absoluteness turns every ward of the lock and fits with the full Godhead of God, and thus solving both problems **at once**, demonstrates yet more clearly its appropriateness. And the Book that alone reveals this must be the only consistent Book. The very inspiration of Scripture is thereby Divinely illustrated. All thoughts converge so exactly, and we have an unveiling that is **spiritually** fitting all, in the awe, worship, and gratitude to which it awakens and draws each humble and believing heart. The more we

see of the theme the more we realize that everything comes in line, and is focussed on the **same** point of harmony, and that which glorifies God aright leads man to the true and right attitude, which alone is rich with blessing. Here is the fullest test of truth, which knows no contradiction.

Nature illustrates the need for God's absoluteness. Nothing therein is essential: God made all in wisdom. The moon depends on the earth, the earth on the sun, the sun depends on—what? When I walk across a room, how many **other** motions are involved, unknown to, or, at least, unfelt by me? But God has decreed the **inter**-relation of each and all so that appointed laws of nature, known and unknown, act and re-act to prevent disintegration, and this is the more marvellous since nature bears, in varied spheres, evidence also of an invasion by sin, yet the ravages are restrained, else there would be the undoing of the whole. "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further" (Job 38. 11).

Anything of mere evolution would involve lack of harmony, and thereby civil war in nature, and thus its dissolution; the very complication of **myriads** of forces making this the more self-evident. To conceive millions of blind powers in nature acting, and re-acting, inherently without personal direction, or superintendence, or design, or co-ordination (so that physical events could be foreknown to a minute), would be a greater strain on **credulity** than all else. Nor could a limited Godhead, or a polytheism of opposing divinities, meet the case. The one solution is so appropriate, that it manifests its reality.

Remarkably in history also we view the same twofoldness which we have observed in nature, namely (a) control and purpose, yet (b) the invasion of evil, withal held back from a full catastrophe.

Well may we, like Job, realize our nothingness, and confess our sin (Job 42. 1-6), if we attempt to argue, and so we come to feel that all complaint at our trials would be questioning God, and thus attacking His wisdom. **It is sin.**

Let us live in our appointed spheres as worshippers and obedient children, nor seek vainly to get out of our depths. We are limited, God is unlimited. We can trust Him implicitly. This is what the natural man will not do. He thinks of God as such an one as himself, and boldly criticizes. The redeemed heart is lowly, and adores. How blessed to be in this condition. Here is the only wisdom. God is: God knows all: God upholds all: God will arrange all perfectly: our imperfect judgment and inferences can only bring confusion, and worse. Sin should make us ashamed to argue, grace silences selfish wishes, and Divine quickening leads to true wisdom, that sees the folly of presumption.

May I, in this connection, mention a fundamental fallacy?—"I should not do this, therefore **God** would not." Such words are often heard as to future punishment, but they would apply equally to **past** judgments, and to the very entry of sin. This brings us to the **essential** difference between God and man, so that in certain attributes, as **knowledge** and **judgment**, to imply a parallel with ourselves is usurpation of His throne. It is only in revealed and **appointed** spheres (e.g., kindness) that we have the **appointed** imitation (Matt. 5. 45), and in love to saints (Eph. 5. 1). But in knowledge, authority and righteous government, we cannot, and are not meant to be those who imitate. It is for us to realize God's place and reverently to keep our own. He is **over** all: we are, by nature, His creation, and His subjects—by infinite grace, His children.

In this unveiling of God's glory, all chance and fatalism are set aside. As in nature there are varied and different movements of the same heavenly bodies, at the same time, but ordained and controlled, that chaos does not reign, so God has entwined the outworking of His purpose, and the activities of the will of man, within its permitted sphere, and He deals with each, and all, in perfect wisdom and rightness. No other solution is possible. Philosophy must fall as far short in explaining as science falls short in knowing, but the

believer has the restfulness of **God's own key**, and there the truth stands impregnable. This is the only logical position, but, beyond logic, we have faith in a Person—" Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? "

And here is the explanation of the activities and power of prayer. Indeed it was a question regarding this that was used of God to lead to these meditations: Do our prayers change God's will, or do they only affect the one praying subjectively in his spiritual condition? The latter would be a precious " only ", but neither question fully deals with the mystery of prayer. Not only are we in praying **brought to** a blessedly new standpoint, where God shows and gives us what would **not** have been ours in our earlier standpoint before the praying, but He still hearkens to the voice of a man, and **answers** prayer remarkably. Yet He does not answer with surprise, re-arranging His purpose, but from eternity He knew all, and incorporated the prayers of His own in the working out of His purpose. **Limited** knowledge would make this impossible: the question comes up through a **natural** tendency to interpret anything from **our** standpoint of **our** limitations. As in other matters, the realization of the absolute Godhead of God removes the difficulty. The problems are caused by explaining God in terms of ourselves. How then will this affect our praying? First, it will increase our confidence. If we thought we could change **God's** will, we should be afraid to pray. But our prayer acts as our moving in a room, without **our** thought of the **other** complex movements of the universe, in many of which we are sharing. **We** are concerned with crossing the room and responsible for **that**: so in prayer likewise we are responsible to pray according to the **revealed** will of God, and shall receive His answers as we are intensely in earnest. His many workings, secret to us, are safe in His authority, wisdom, love, and might. They are never a hindrance to heart-prayer and holy importunity, any more than other movements of the earth, and of the solar system make us sit still, or careless as to our activity in walking wherever it is

God's will to go. To say "I will simply let the earth move me", or to wait till we understand all, would be impossible madness for a normal living man: so in the matter of prayer, for one alive in Christ Jesus.

And thus we reach the unveiling of God's sovereignty and human accountability. These are entwined by One Who has **absolutely** perfect attributes to comprehend and entwine them. From the **human** standpoint we should mutilate one or the other, and conceive of contradictions; and the present tendency of the religious world is to exclude God and make man central. But the Divine and supernatural standpoint is vastly different. We are not to occupy ourselves with all the prior and unseen movements of God, whether we (to revert to the appointed parallels of nature) walk across a room, or bring the Gospel of Christ to a lost soul. To know **how** all motions are co-ordinated is **NOT OUR RESPONSIBILITY**. We **cannot** grasp all: the human mind **cannot** explain all: nor are we meant so to do. But we are privileged, and responsible, to worship and pray, and work, and speak, and live to lead souls to Christ. Are we in **earnest** as we should be? We would be much more earnest. Yet it is a joy to rest on One Whose boundless mercy has reached us, and Who has included the fruit of such mercy, manifested in our loving obedience, to bring others to the same knowledge of the same Saviour. We give thanks for electing grace: it never hinders our godly intensity: rather we are stimulated not to be discouraged for "He shall not fail nor be discouraged" (John 6. 37). His sovereignty in command impels us: His sovereignty in promise refreshes us: His sovereignty in all satisfies us.

The theory that prophecy of man's actions (as of Judas or Antichrist), relieves such of accountability is a strange misunderstanding. Prediction of what **shall** be has no necessary **effect on** its occurrence, for He Who declares knew it **would** occur, in any case. Any questioning of this criticizes His Godhead. And if His overruling of the per-

mitted actions of men is His controlling of the results of the will which is theirs in His wisdom, and he knows exactly what proportion of choice, and relation of every pre-disposing cause and attendant circumstance, there is in every action, to deny His perfect declaration of their accountability is presumptuous infringing of His Godhead. And it is the more manifestly wrong so to do, for the one who criticizes is confessedly quite ignorant of the proportion of personal choice. Thus, a little reflection will bring us to see that the recognition of God's unlimitedness in every attribute prevents any conflict of different parts of His ways, and causes a possibility of harmony which the believing heart realizes is more than a possibility, even a certainty. Then, with God's servant of old, moved by the Holy Spirit, we shall say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever. Amen." And then the added exhortation fills our heart and lips, as those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 11. 33; 12. 1).

P. W. HEWARD.