

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

The attributes of God are those distinguishing characteristics which God alone possesses. No creature possesses a single attribute of God.

The attributes of God are as eternal as God is. Therefore, no attribute of God is derived, since such would make God dependent to that degree. Moreover, no attribute of God is acquired, since such would imply that God has existed at some time as an imperfect being.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God. Therefore, the attributes of God, which no creature possesses, are possessed by Him. In this section we purpose to consider the following attributes of God, and show their relation to the eternal "Word," the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

1. Infinity;
2. Immutability;
3. Omnipresence;
4. Omnipotence;
5. Omniscience;
6. Truth;
7. Life;
8. Holiness;
9. And, Love

We do not mean to imply that these nine are all of the attributes of God, but simply use them as illustrative of the subject matter, namely that the attributes of God are possessed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, infinity is an attribute of God. By infinity we speak of that which is without bounds or limits. It is important to remember that God is without bounds or limits, not merely without known bounds or limits. That which has no known bounds is indefinite, not infinite. God is neither confined to the universe, or limited by the universe. Isaiah wrote of Him, "...the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool..."(Isaiah 66:1). Again, it was said of Him, "...the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee..."(I Kings 8:27). Again, "the Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens"(Psalms 113:4).

Under the heading of infinity, we have both eternity and immensity. Eternity is infinity in relation to time, whereas immensity is infinity

in relation to space. God is called "the eternal God"(Deuteronomy 33:27); and being eternal, God's nature is without beginning or end, and contains in itself the very cause of time. David wrote, "...from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God"(Psalms 90:2). He is referred to as "...the King eternal..."(I Timothy 1:17), or "of the ages"(footnote, A.S.V.). Jude, therefore, wrote, "to the only God...be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen."(Jude 25,A.S.V.).

Eternality is characteristic of the Son of God. He said of Himself:

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and last"(Revelation 22:13).

The expression "Alpha and Omega" refers to the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a proper designation of the One who is called "The Word of God"(Revelation 19:13), and the One of whom the Book of Revelation speaks of as, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ"(Revelation 1:1).

The expression "the beginning and the ending" refers to the works of creation. He is "the beginning of the creation of God," the originating Source(Revelation 3:14), since "all things were made by him"(John 1:3). Thus, "he is before all things"(Colossians 1:17). He is "the ending" since "God ended his work which he had made"(Genesis 2:1-3).

The expression "the first and the last" speaks of the eternity of His being. He is "first" since it is true, "before me there was no God formed," and He is "the last" since "neither shall there be after me"(Isaiah 43:10; 44:6,8; Revelation 1:17; 2:8). Thus, "In the beginning was(or, continually was, continuous existence, as we have previously shown) the Word...All things were made by him..."(John 1:1,3). He is "the Father of Eternity"(Isaiah 9:6,7, footnote, A.S.V.) for He both possesses and "inhabiteth eternity"(Isaiah 57:15). Thus, He is "the true God and eternal life"(I John 5:20).

Immensity is infinity in relation to space, and immensity, like eternity, is an attribute of the Son of God. The question is sometimes asked: "Where did God dwell before He created the heaven?" In Romans 8:39, Paul classifies "height" and "depth" as "creature," or "created thing," margin. "Height" and "depth" equal space. But, space is a "created thing." Since "all things were made by him." including space, then He is not bound by space.

Second, immutability is another of the attributes of God. The nature, attributes, and will of God are not subject to change. All change must be to either better or worse. God, however, is absolutely perfect in every respect. Therefore, no cause for change exists in God. Hence, God is immutable. In Malachi 3:6 we have it stated, "for I am the Lord, I change not..." Again, in James 1:17 we have the same thought, "...with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Thus, by immutability, we do not speak of a stereotyped sameness, but the absolute impossibility of deviation, or variation from the course which is best.

Often in scripture one reads that "God repented." Such, however, must always be viewed in the light of the conditional nature of the subject. For instance, a man may either row upstream or down stream. Travel is certainly much easier one way than the other. The stream, however, does not change, but the direction in which the boat is going makes the difference. God's unchanging purity requires Him to deal with the wicked in a different way than the righteous. If the wicked become righteous, God's dealing with them must change. If the righteous become wicked, God's dealing with them must change. The sun may melt the snow, or harden the clay. The change, however, is not in the sun, but in the objects it shines on. The change in God's dealings with man is spoken of as if God changed. But, God no more changes than did the stream, or the sun. Man changes, and God meets Him on the ground of His attributes, holiness, love, truth, etc.

Immutability is an attribute of the Son of God. In Hebrews 13:8 reference is made to Him as follows: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." Again, in Hebrews 1:8,10 we have an address of God the Father to God the Son. The Father addressed the Son as both "God" and "Lord." Notice what is said of the Son:

"...Thou...in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they shall all wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou are the same, and thy years shall not fail"(Hebrews 1:10-12).

The contrast here is between the creation and the immutability of the creator. The creator is the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, "...he that built all things is God"(Hebrews 3:4). Therefore, He is God(Hebrews 1:8). Since "...he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house"(Hebrews 3:3), then He is superior to His creation.

"Change is necessary in created things by reason of its inferiority to its Creator. Of the Creator, it is affirmed, "...thou art the same..." But, man, who is a created thing(Genesis 1:26,27;2:7), must undergo change as to both his mind(Acts 17:30) and matter(I Corinthians 15:50,51) in order to be suited to eternity. The first change is accomplished through "repentance and faith" in the Lord Jesus Christ, without works(Matthew 21:28-32; Ephesians 2:8,9). The latter change is accomplished by reason of Christ's return for His own(ITHessalonians 4:13-18). This two fold change, one involving "the inward man" and one involving "the outward man"(II Corinthians 4:16), is seen in John 6:54 in the words, "...hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." When the first change takes place, the second, although future, is guaranteed on exactly the same condition namely, "whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood," which is equivalent to believing on Christ, since things equal to the same thing are equal to each other(John 6:47,54). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ(Acts 16:31). He is God. And, come go with us on the path that leads to glory.

Third, omnipresence is an attribute of God. The idea involved is that God, in the absolute whole of His essence, without diffusion, or expansion, or multiplication, or division, penetrates and fills the universe in all its parts. David wrote, "...whither shall I flee from thy presence?"(Psalms 139:7). In recognition of the idea involved, David confessed, "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there, "verse 8. Read also verses 9-18. Jeremiah, under inspiration, wrote, "Am I a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord"(Jeremiah 23:23,24).

Mathematically the axiom is true, "The whole is equal to the sum of the parts." However, when we speak of omnipresence, we do not mean, "The whole is equal to the sum of the parts," but rather, "every part is equal to the whole." In other words, the whole of God's essence is in each part. God is not composed of material elements which can be divided. The words "invisible"(Colossians 1:15), "spirit"(John 4:24), and "incorruptible"(Romans 1:23) imply that God is not matter. There is no multiplication or diffusion of God's substance to correspond with the parts of His dominions. In other words, the one, or whole of God's essence is present at the same moment in all parts of creation, Therefore, we contend that the whole God could dwell in the man Jesus, and yet penetrate and fill the universe in all its parts, and rule over the same. The eternal "Word" could suffer on earth, yet reign in heaven, dwell in the flesh, yet exist outside the flesh. Jehovah,

although present in the form of the burning bush(Exodus 3:1-14) was, at the very same time, omnipresent. The arrival of man in one place necessitates his withdrawal from another. Such is not so with God.

Christ, therefore, said in connection with this attribute of God, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there(not, I will be, but) am I in the midst of them"(Matthew 18:20). If you have "two or three gathered together in my name" in a dozen different places, or a hundred different places, or a million different places, due to the fact that God is omnipresent, and the eternal "Word was God," then Christ could, and did, say, that wherever such a thing obtains "there am I." From this it follows that the whole Christ can be present in every believer as fully as if that believer were the only one to receive of His fulness. Christ, thus, was standing "on the earth"(John 17:4), yet He spoke of Himself as One who "is in heaven"(John 3:13) at the same time, and "in all"(Colossians 3:11), and in "every two or three gathered together in my name"(Matthew 18:20), and "in the bosom of the Father"(John 1:18). Hence, omnipresent.

The eternal "Word" outside of flesh had the perpetual consciousness of the Godhead, and while united to humanity was subject to humiliation and death. The human eye when open can see, but when shut sees nothing, or very little. Yet, its inherent capacity does not change. So Deity does not change its nature. He knew all men, yet He did not hunger and sleep by miracle. We should not minimize Christ's humiliation because that was His glory. There was no limit to His descent, except that arising from His sinlessness. But, if He was not God, there was no condescension on His part. If He is not omnipresent, then He is not always available to save, or to help.

Forth, omnipotence is another attribute of God. It is the power of God to do all things, consistent with His own infinite perfection. God is "omnipotent"(Revelation 19":6), thus "almighty"(Genesis 17:1; Revelation 1:8).

It is important at this juncture, to keep in mind that God is almighty, yet there are things that God absolutely cannot do. God exerts no power over things that are contradictory to His own attributes. The question has been asked, "Can God build a house so high that He himself cannot jump over it?" God, however, who created "height" and "depth"(Romans 8:39), thus space, is not bound by space. Nothing, therefore, contains God, but God contains all things. The question is a contradiction to what God is, and God exerts no power over things contradictory to His own attributes. Can God cause Himself to cease to exist? Eternality is an attribute of God. To cause Himself to

cease to exist would be to ask God to do something that is contrary to what He is, and God exerts no power over contradictory things. I was talking to a religious man, intent on proving that God today performs miracles exactly as He did in the apostolic age, who asked me, in supposed support of the idea, "Don't you think God can do anything?" The man was startled when I answered, "No! God cannot do anything!" In Hebrews 6:18, one thing God cannot do is "lie." God is a "God of truth." Therefore, for Him to lie would be contrary to what He is, and God exerts no power over such contradictions. Can God sin? "God is holy." Therefore, for Him to sin would be contrary to His own holiness. And, that He cannot, and will never do. To do much of what God is challenged to do, things contrary to the very nature of God, would not prove omnipotence, but impotence.

Another fact often overlooked is that omnipotence does not mean that God exerts all His power to do any one thing. If God could be compelled to use all His power then one might find a situation that was beyond God's power. God can absolutely do "all He will," but has never done "all He can." He has never used all His power to do any one thing. How much of God's power was exerted when He said, "Let there be light: and there was light?" Was it less than when he "created the heaven and the earth?" Or, more than when He raised the dead? Or, equal to the exertion of His power when He divided the Red sea? The things that God does are awesome, yet He is described as doing them with the greatest of ease. Just think of what was done with merely "the finger of God" (Luke 11:20)! Just think of what was done when "he spake" (Psalms 33:9)! In demonstration of the matchless power of God, Job said, "Lo, these are parts of his ways..." (Job 26:14).

Some people deny that Christ was omnipotent because, they say, there were things that He could not do. But, the truth is, the greatest demonstration of God's power is the ability of God to exercise power over His power. The restraint of power is the proof of power. Does "non-existent" power equal "unexerted" power? Omnipotence in God, and especially in the Son of God during the days of the flesh, does not exclude, but properly implies the power of "self-limitation." The Psalmist wrote, "Who is like unto thee our God...who humbleth himself..." (Psalms 113:5,6). Scripture answers, "...Christ Jesus...equal with God...humbled himself..." (Philippians 2:5,6,8). Men must learn that self restraint is really true power for, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Proverbs 16:32). We are more like God, great in power, when we limit ourselves for love's sake.

It was unmistakably the power of Christ, and His resolve to do His

Father's will, that proved Him to be "God manifest in the flesh." He did not do certain things, true enough. But, it was not because He did not have the power to do otherwise. It was due to the fact that He came to do His father's will. And, what He did not do was His Father's will. When He hung on the cross, a group of "chief priests" and "scribes" said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Mark 15:31). Do the words, "himself he cannot save" amount to some defect in Him? Think now! Could He really save Himself? The answer is a resounding, "no!" The power to save himself existed, but it was unexerted. Therefore, He said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matthew 26:53,54).

The devil tempted Him, saying, "...If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4:3). Did He not have the power to do this? Or, was the power unexerted? And, why? Christ came into this world to do His Father's will. He spoke, and acted at all times in accordance with the will of His Father. He could multiply bread and fishes to feed the multitudes, but He could not, and did not, act independently of the Father's will. Thus, when Satan challenged Him, He refused to cast off His dependence upon the Father, and said, "...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Therefore, what He did do, and what He did not do, is no reason to see some kind of inferiority. Those who do have a case with God the Father, not the Son for the Son did only, and always, the Father's will. To do otherwise, either more or less than, would have proved Him to be less than what He was, "God manifest in the flesh."

Fifth, omniscience is an attribute of God. It is God's perfect knowledge of all things past, present and future. God's knowledge, like omnipotence, does not embrace the impossible and self contradictory things. His knowledge is free from all imperfection as distinguished from knowledge derived through the senses. His knowledge is immediate and eternal as comprehended in one timeless act of the divine mind. There is no sense, no memory, no growth to God's knowledge. Humanly speaking, man can attend to several things at once. But, god attends to all things at once, past, present and future. David wrote, "Many, O Lord my God, are thy...thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee...they are more than can be numbered" (Psalms 40:5). Anything that has succession to it "can be numbered." God's "thoughts" of us are "more than can be numbered" because there is no succession to God's thoughts. In other words, there is never a time when God is not thinking of us. Read Psalms 139:1-18,

especially verses 17,18.

The Lord Jesus Christ is omniscient. He knew what was in the heart of man(John 2:24,25). When certain ones were "reasoning in their hearts," saying nothing audibly, the Lord Jesus revealed the very thoughts in their hearts(Mark 2:6-9). See also Luke 7:39,40. There, one "spake within himself," verse 39, as man often does, "And Jesus answering said unto him," verse 40. To know the heart is a prerogative of God only(Jeremiah 17:9,10; I Samuel 16:7). Jesus Christ knew the heart(Revelation 2:19,23). Therefore, He is God, and omniscient.

He knew Judas as "the traitor" before the betrayal ever took place(John 6:64). He predicted that betrayal(John 6:70,71; 13:21). He knew of, and predicted, Peter's denial before it ever took place(John 13:37,38). He knew of Peter's death in old age(John 21:8). He knew of the catch of fish(John 21:6). He knew Nathanael before they ever met(John 1:47-49). He knew of the life of the Samaritan woman before they ever met(John 4:16-18,29). He knew of the death of Lazarus long before He ever arrived in Bethany(John 11:11-14). He knew of the destruction of the temple(Matthew 24:1-2). He knew the whereabouts of the "ass" and "foal"(Matthew 21:2). He knew what the subsequent conversation would be before it ever took place(Luke 19:30-34).

In Mark 6:45-52, "he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida." Mark reports that it was "even," verse 47, and "the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land." John adds, "it was now dark"(John 6:17), and that the disciples "had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs," verse 19, which is several miles. Now get the picture: It was completely dark(John 6:17). The disciples were in the middle of the sea(Mark 6:47), several miles from shore(John 6:19). They found themselves in a turbulent "sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary"(Matthew 14:24). Yet, "he saw them toiling in rowing"(Mark 6:48). None, but an omniscient God could so do.

Sixth, truth is an attribute of God. Truth is that attribute of divine nature in virtue of which God's being and God's knowledge eternally conform to each other. God is truth because He only truly knows. God is truth because He is the truth known. The knowledge of truth is the knowledge of God. Thus, God is not only "a God of truth"(Deuteronomy 32:4), but He is also "the only true God"(John 17:3). Men know themselves partially. God knows Himself fully.

One may speak the truth, as did the apostles and prophets inspired of God. One may walk in the truth, as many of God's children. But,

only One ever said, "I am the...truth"(John 14:6). When Christ said, "I am the...life," more is meant than just "I am the living One." Likewise, when He said, "I am the...truth," more is meant than just "I am the truthful One." Christ is not merely "the truth" of expression, but He is "the truth of being." Things like veracity and faithfulness manifest "the truth" of God to His creatures, but they presuppose "the truth of being."

In God's infinite faithfulness, we have the solid ground of confidence that He will perform what His love has led Him to promise all who "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." Inasmuch as His promises are predicated upon, not what we are, or have done, but upon the finished work of Christ, our deficiencies do not invalidate them so long as we "believe the record God gave of His Son." God's faithfulness is the obvious correlate to our faith; and because of "the truth" of His being, and the manifestation of it to us, we, therefore, expect that all past revelations, whether in His word, or in His laws that govern nature, will never be, in the light of future knowledge, contradicted. No mere creature said, "I am the...truth." The One who did was very God.

Seventh, life is an attribute of God. Life is a simple term, but difficult to define. When we speak of life, we do not speak of derived life, but life as to its source. In that respect, the source of life is in God. The Son of God said, "I am the...life." No creature, exalted or otherwise, could make such a claim, and Jehovah Himself could make no greater claim. The ordinary oath of Jehovah was, "...As I Live..."(Isaiah 49:18). The, He is the "I am," the "living God"(Exodus 3:14; Jeremiah 10:10). Jehovah said, "For whoso findeth me findeth life..."(Proverbs 8:35). Thus, "...he is thy life..."(Deuteronomy 30:20).

Christ is life as to its source for "all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made"(John 1:3). Christ is life to the spiritually lifeless for "life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life"(I John 5:11,12). And, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"(John 3:36). Christ is life to the physically dead "for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth...unto the resurrection of life, and...unto the resurrection of damnation"(John 5:28,29). Christ is life in relation to spiritual enjoyment for He came, not only that believers in Him "might have life," but "that they might have it more abundantly"(John 10:10).

Christ is "the life," and that which truly lives is without sin.

Life is the opposite of death, and in the scriptures there is a direct correlation between sin and death, and life and holiness, Paul spoke of "death by sin"(Romans 5:12). Whatever truly lives, as God does, does so because sin has never found place in Him. Christ said, "...the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me"(John 14:30). The scriptures abundantly testify to the fact that Christ was "without sin." See II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 1:18,19; 3:18; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 9:14; Matthew 27:4,19; John 8:46; 19:6; Luke 23:41; Acts 3:14 as cases to point. Therefore, the cause of death was not in Him.

Eighth, holiness is an attribute of God. Holiness is absolute purity. In holiness, we have both what God is, and what He wills. The passive precedes the active, that is God is pure before He wills purity. Verses like II Corinthians 7:1 teach us that "holiness" is the opposite of "filthiness," or impurity.

It is very difficult to fathom a holy God. This is something that most people completely ignore, especially in God's dealings with man. The Psalms declare, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne"(Psalms 97:2, A.S.V.). Moses asked, "who is like unto thee...glorious in holiness..."(Exodus 15:11). The angelic order of "seraphims" incessantly cry, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts"(Isaiah 6:3).

The moral attributes of truth, love, and holiness are more zealously and jealously guarded by God than omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. As great as the attribute of love is, holiness is greater. Why? Because, love is the train, but holiness is the track it runs on. Love cannot direct itself. It is under bonds to holiness. Justice and righteousness is that treatment of God's creatures which conforms to the purity, or holiness of His nature. Righteousness demands from all moral beings conformity to the moral perfection of God, and justice visits non-conformity to that standard with penal loss, or suffering. "All his ways are justice: A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he"(Deuteronomy 32:4, A.S.V.).

Jesus Christ was "holy"(Hebrews 7:26), yea even "the Holy and righteous"(Acts 3:14, A.S.V.). He alone could say, as Jehovah's righteous servant, "I do always those things that please him"(John 8:29). He never taught error. He never sinned. He never prayed, "forgive me of my sins." He never offered any sacrifice for his own sins. He was God.

In scripture "grace and truth" are linked together(John 1:14), as with "mercy and truth"(Psalms 85:10). Many people speak of "mercy" and

"grace" as if both are divorced from "truth." God, however, is only able to be gracious in offering mercy to sinners because the basis of so doing is in complete harmony with the holiness of God. God will not overlook sin because He is indifferent to it. The cross of Christ proves conclusively that God is not indifferent to sin for He "spared not his own son, but delivered him up" (Romans 8:32). Christ was God. He lived in flesh for some 33 years, and demonstrated His claim to be true. He was without sin. He came for the purpose of dying on behalf of sinners. The justice of a holy God demanded death as payment for sin. When Christ died, the justice of a holy God was completely satisfied because a perfect sacrifice was made. Thus, on the basis of justice satisfied, and not at the expense of God's holiness, He is able to offer "mercy." Christ paid the penalty of sin, which is death. But, more importantly, He alone was qualified to do so. If He was not God, He could not save Himself, much less any one else.

In His person, and death, you have available a way of escape. If you refuse the offer, you will stand before this very Holy God whom you reject, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." God has no other plan. If you leave this life outside of Christ, outside that shelter provided you, the final scene of Revelation 20:11-15 will be your lot. John there wrote, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God..." (Revelation 20:11). Who is this God? In John 5:22, we read "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement unto the son." Thus, "the Son" of John 5:22 is the "God" of Revelation 20:11, the "me" of Matthew 7:22. And His word to men is:

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John:12:48).

Ninth, love is an attribute of God. John wrote, "...God is love" (I John 4:8). Love is that attribute in virtue of which God is eternally moved to self-communication. Notice the following thoughts:

1. Love precedes creation and is the ground for it;
2. Holiness requires atonement, and love provides it;
3. The love of God is shown in His eternal giving;
4. Love seeks for its object the very best, and the very best is God;
5. Love causes to sacrifice, and sacrifice causes suffering;
6. And, God not only gives of Himself, but gives Himself.

In God's omniscience, we find both foreknowledge and

predestination. Without deviating, let me say that foreknowledge is not predestination. The knowledge of God is not the cause of all things, inasmuch as God knows of evil things, yet they do not come from Him. Foreknowledge has no influence on our deficiencies. The cause is in man himself, not in God. God has perfect knowledge of the future, yet that knowledge does not interfere with free will. God foreknew the fall of man. The holiness of God requires conformity with His infinite perfections. Love provided the solution. Thus, the Son of God stood "...slain from the foundation of the world"(Revelation 13:8), and in time He was "...delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God..."(Acts 2:23). Thus:

1. "God is love"(I John 4:8);
2. "The Word was God"(John 1:1);
3. "Love seeketh not her own"(I Corinthians 13:5);
4. "I seek not my own...but the will of the father which hath sent me"(John 5:30);
5. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"(Philippians 2:8).

In I Corinthians 13:4-8 we have given many characteristics of love. "God is love," and Christ is "God." Therefore, all of the things that love is, Christ displayed as no other could do. This "love" of which we speak is subject to "holiness." Thus, it is the right kind of love. This "love...doth not behave itself unseemly," and "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but...in the truth"(I Corinthians 13:5,6).

God's love takes into account the highest interests, and makes infinite sacrifice to secure them. Love is subject to the law of holiness. Therefore, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"(Isaiah 53:6). Love desires only the very best for its object, and the very best is God. God's love is shown in His giving, and not only giving, but giving Himself, and of Himself. It was Jehovah Himself who was "pierced"(Zechariah 12:10). Thus, it was "God" who "purchased with his own blood"(Acts 20:28). Love does not do for what it can receive, but rather for what it can give. And, "it is more blessed to give than to receive"(Acts 20:35). Love is unstained by selfishness. Love denies self, and rejoices in pain, suffering and sacrifice when this brings good to those loved. Thus, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him" because "he shall see his seed," the ultimate spiritual "seed" produced by the death of Christ (Isaiah 53:10). And, the Lord Jesus Christ "who for the joy set before him," the joy of saving others, "endured the cross, despising the shame"(Hebrews 12:2). Had Christ avoided suffering, the cross, and the shame, He would have done such at the expense of man who is "the image of God." The highest blessedness is the sacrifice

associated with the souls of others. History teaches us that man so feels for sufferers that he is willing to die with them, if need be. How much more of God, who is the absolute goodness? "In all their affliction he was afflicted..."(Isaiah 63:9). How sober, and soul searching, are those words of our Lord, "...inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"(Matthew 25:40).

God has suffered from the beginning in all who have suffered. He was "slain from the foundation of the world." God took the world upon His heart, entered into the fellowship of its suffering and became the supreme burden bearer, and leader in self-sacrifice. Had Christ, the Son of the living God, acted in any other way, He would have been less than what He is. "God is love."

No creature possesses one attribute of God, much less several. The attributes of God are exactly that, "the attributes of God." They are those distinguishing characteristics that make God what He is, and all others what they are. Jesus Christ possessed the attributes of God. Therefore, He is God.

In discussing the attributes of God, it is important to note that His attributes may be divided into two classes:

1. Absolute, or Immanent attributes;
2. And, Relative, or Transitive attributes.

By Absolute attributes, we speak of those attributes which respect the inner being of God, things involved in God's relations to Himself, and which belong to His essential nature independently of His connection with the material universe.

By Relative attributes, we speak of those attributes which respect the outward revelation of God's being, things involved in God's relations to the creation, and which are exercised in consequence of the existence of the material universe, and its dependence upon Him.

Within Absolute attributes we find such things as spirituality, infinity, and perfection. "Spirit" describes the divine nature, and that nature is not limited by, or confined to the material universe. Within Relative attributes we find such things as omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. Those are things that God is in relation to creation.

Christ revealed God. And, in His example we have a life that was

essentially an exhibition of supreme regard for a holy God, and of supreme devotion to His holy will. He saw nothing good except what was in God(Mark 10:18), and He did only what He saw the father do(John 5:19,30). To be Christlike is the sum of all duty, and God's infinite, moral excellence is the supreme reason why we should be like Him.