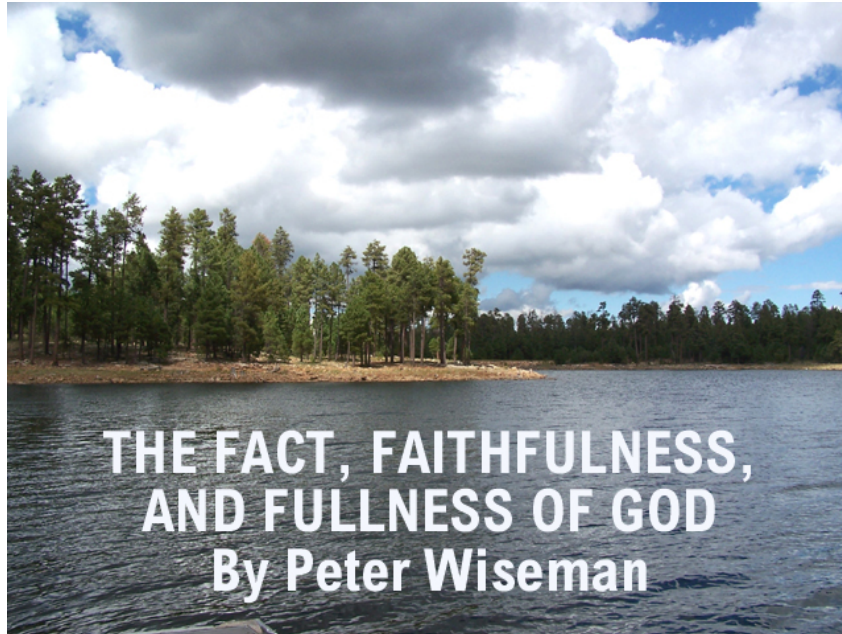


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**THE FACT, FAITHFULNESS, AND FULLNESS OF GOD
By Peter Wiseman**



**Other Books By The Author:
The Peerless Christ
Scriptural Sanctification
Biblical Perfection
Searching The Sacred Scriptures
The Person And The Passion
The Master's Masterpiece On Prayer**

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01 -- THE FACT OF GOD

"Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is; and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Theology comes from two Greek words, theos, God and logos, word or speech; thus it means a discourse or word about God.

Theism is a word used to describe the fact that God is and that He is personal, transcendent and immanent Being." Natural Theism is that treatment of God and His character in the light of reason and nature, called sometimes Rational Theism; sometimes it is called Natural Theology. Christian or Biblical Theism is the science which treats of God, His existence, being and character in the light of His special Revelation -- the Bible; and secondary sources, nature and reason.

The text not only shows the necessity of faith in order to please God but vital aspects concerning Him. We begin with

FIRST, THE FACT--

"He that cometh to God must believe that He is." "I believe in God, the Father Almighty." That is what we say when repeating the Apostle's Creed, and it is a striking assertion, but not an assertion without proof as we shall see. To whom can we go if God is not? It is vital and absolutely necessary that we believe that "He is."

The glorious and comforting truth of the existence of the Supreme: Being is wrought into the constitution of human nature. If given a normal chance, it will blossom beautifully into a full realization of the fact and glory of this truth.

"I BELIEVE IN GOD"

"He is." In connection with the glorious assertion from the Apostle's Creed, "I believe in God," or in thinking about proofs of the assertion, why not say, "I believe in myself?" That is, I believe I am. I am sure that I am; for if I am not, what is there that is? If I am unwilling to allow that I am, then my philosophy becomes a foolosophy and I myself become a fool. I feel myself. I exist as a separate being from other beings and things. Nor is that all; I am an intelligent being, which means more than having two eyes; for one may have two eyes without much between but space. It means more than physical characteristics. It means that I know I exist as a

separate and intelligent being. Who made me? There is but one intelligent answer -- God.

BEING

"God is." "Proofs are many. We have ideas of infinite goodness, truth, and holiness. Are these merely ideas? Or, is there a Being to whom they belong? If they are mere ideas, how can we account for their existence?" The science of existence then, argues that "He is." This is called the ontological argument, argument from being.* [*Bank, Manual of Christian Doctrine, pp 44, 45.]

CAUSE

"God is." The cosmological argument is argument from Kosmos, world. There is a cause for every happening or change. The world is. It is beautiful. Who made it ? It could not have come by chance. What has Mr. Chance made? The world could not have made itself; for if that could have been, the world must have existed before it existed in order to have created itself. That would be an absurdity. Who made it? There is but one reasonable answer -- God.

DESIGN

"God is." There is proof from design -- called the teleological argument. Proofs for intelligent design are many. Take the study of anatomy. A great authority in this field said:

Whoever considers the study of anatomy, I believe, will never be an atheist. The frame of man's body, and the cohesion of its parts, are so strange and paradoxical that I hold it to be the greater miracle of nature."

Consider the law of adaptation as seen in every object, and may be observed in every relationship, in the cloud and in the earth, in the sun and in the fruit, in the breeze and health, in the water and fish therein. Look where one may, there are proofs of intelligent design; such proofs argue a designer, and that designer is -- God.

MORAL NATURE

"God is." The moral nature of man argues this fact too. It is called, the moral argument. The nature of the cause may be deducted from the character of the effect. The moral nature of man, with all its capacities and necessities, call for a Supreme Being, who is morally and supremely good, and holy. God is at least equal to the necessities, morally and otherwise, of the being He made -- man, and man can be satisfied only in God.

BIBLE SPEAKS

"God is." The most wonderful Book in the world says so. If the Bible is God's special Divine revelation to man -- and we verily believe it is -- then God is, as is obvious from the fact of His revelation. The Bible says, "In the beginning God. . . ." Thus the Holy Scriptures commence with the fact of God.

PROBLEM OF ATHEISM

"God is." To attempt an explanation of the world, life and man without God is surely a greater problem and more difficult than to account for it with God. "The fool hath said in heart there is no God," and the fool's creed is not to be accepted. The finite mind can grasp the glorious fact of God and enjoy His graciousness, His wonderful love, and care, without being able to grasp the infinite. If the finite, as we have seen, could comprehend fully the infinite, then the finite would be infinite, man would be God. Man may know God and enjoy Him but God is ever beyond, ever a challenge to man, yet, always near, always within.

"God is." The question, "Who made God?," involves, to say the least, a contradiction; for if a being created God then God could not be the Supreme but the one who created Him would be God, and this would mean contradiction and confusion. It would become an endless question; for the question would then be who made it? If it were possible for human beings to know all God knows then we would be equal to Him, that would be polytheism, plurality of Gods. We are finite but God is infinite.

"God is." It is a glorious fact, and by this fact atheism, is forever answered; by the fact of the spirituality of the Divine Being materialism is answered; by the fact of the Personality of the Supreme Being pantheism is answered; by the fact of the unity of the Supreme Being polytheism is answered; by the fact of the Trinity of the Supreme Being unitarianism is answered.

"God is." A glorious fact indeed, and to be fully convinced of this wonderful truth, and live as though there were no God, is practical atheism. It is worse than the honest person who has reasoned beyond his intellectual grasp and then says in his heart, "there is no God." Indeed, the septuagint version supports the idea that the person who says "no" to God is the fool; for it reads, "The fool hath said in his heart, No, God."

SECONDLY, THE FACT OF RELATIONSHIP

The most challenging relationship is perhaps the problem of pain, which of course is still a problem. The Word of God, however, has much to say concerning the heavenly Father's relationship to His people in this regard. May we quote four special passages of Scripture:

The first passage is recorded in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, chapter three and verse thirty-three: "For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." The second passage is recorded in the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter sixty-three, verse nine: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them." The third passage is recorded in the second book of the Chronicles, the twenty-ninth chapter, verse twenty-seven: "When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began." The fourth passage is recorded in the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter four, verse seventeen: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

The problem of pain is obvious. It is a problem that neither philosophy nor science can solve. From a Scriptural standpoint, however, the passages we have just read have implications, at least, which help toward a solution.

There is physical suffering which may have been caused by ignorance. Many things could have been avoided had we been better informed. Peter points out the fact that "Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh," that we should arm ourselves with the same mind: "For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin: that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (I Peter 4:1, 2).

Suffering may arise from many causes in that we are in a world of sin and sin and suffering go together.

Let us look at the passages selected for meditation.

THE DIVINE PERMISSION

"Though He cause grief, He will have compassion; for He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." He may cause grief but not without compassion. Should He afflict, it is not willingly. It is not His nature to grieve the children of men, though it may be necessary to give the lesson.

There is a Divine prevention, "I also withheld thee from sinning against me" (Gen. 20:6). "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins" (Psa. 19:13). On the other hand, there is a Divine permission, "My people would not hearken to my voice . . . so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels" (Psa. 81:11, 12). There is also to be sought a Divine purpose, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Psa. 76:10). ". . . for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28).

But why afflict? We must ever remember that man is a moral being. This world is a moral world but with much immorality in it. The fall of man brought a universal suffering, and this necessitated universal sharing. Sin and suffering go together. They are inseparable. Mother Eve's sin had a far-reaching effect and so has every sin. Some person suffers from every sin committed, and often it does not stop with the individual. The sin that came into the world through the fall of our first parents caused the death of the Redeemer on Calvary. He died that we might live.

Then, again in the process of human redemption, as the church shares with her Master, there is suffering by Divine permission. "Christ suffered for us leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps;" not, of course, in procuring human redemption but in carrying on the work of human redemption. Sufferings may be permitted often for reasons known to God alone. Some day He will make it plain.

THE DIVINE PRESENCE

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them." Does it not read, "When thou passest through the water, I will be with thee?" Our hurts are His hurts. God cannot look upon suffering without sharing. This is true whether that suffering is in the children of God or in the world. He feels. God is sorry for us. The nature of God would argue this.

"His nature and His name are love."

His being, what He is, would argue the same fact; His knowledge, what He knows, would confirm this; His holy vision, what He sees, would say the same thing. How could a loving heavenly Father look upon a world of sin and suffering and not share?

**Yes, my heavenly Father knows,
And tempers every wind that blows.**

Let the child of God ever remember that it is written, "In their affliction He was afflicted," and "when thou passest through the water, I will be with thee." "I will be with him in trouble, and will deliver him."

**"He sank beneath our heavy woes to lift us to His throne;
There's not a gift His hand bestows but cost His heart a groan."**

THE DIVINE PURPOSE

"When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began." It often happens that the time of suffering is the time of song, and without the suffering there would not be the song. There is a legend of a German baron who built a castle on the Rhine. He hoped for music, so he hung wires from crag to crag, and from terret to terret. Day after day he went to his castle but no music. One day there

came a mighty hurricane and the great Rhine became a tempest. The baron wondering what might become of his castle, went to it and lo, he heard beautiful music. The storm had given the castle a soul and it sang. "When the burnt offerings began, the song of the Lord began." Burnt offering stands for the pouring out of life as the blood was poured out at the base of the altar; so when the life began to be poured out, the song of the Lord began.

Take an Old Testament incident, Abraham offering Isaac. Was it not when Abraham had offered his son, when he had gone through the awful agony of giving his only son, even "taking the knife to slay the child;" was it not then that God spoke and the song began, the song of deliverance? Did not Job pass through the loss of all, lost all but, God. He would not give God up. "The Lord gave," he said, "and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." That is faith. The song of victory came out of his great loss when God doubled up in blessings. It is said, what David learned through suffering he taught in the psalms, in song.

Look into your New Testament and what do you see? When the Son of God stooped to the manger, took a human body, to redeem the world, the heavenly hosts sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men." The heavenly hosts singing over the Redeemer mission, on His way to suffer and die for the world. Look at Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi. They were there with bleeding backs; in great suffering. What did they do? They simply had a class-meeting. Yes, they had such a meeting before the early Methodists. "They sang praises to God and the prisoners heard them." In suffering, they had a song!

There is an aspect of the Lord's suffering exemplary (I Peter 2:21), and His followers should follow Him in this, in the promulgation of Christianity, for the wonderful spirit that took Him up the rugged steep of Calvary to die for the sins of the world must take His followers from Calvary out in the work of salvation, the mission of the great commission. To reign with Him we must suffer with Him. We suffer with Him in the work of human redemption, not of course in its provision. He made the provision. We suffer with Him in temptation, for He suffered being tempted. His children feel as He felt in the matter of the awfulness of being tempted to sin. Christ suffered from the awfulness of sin, absolute holiness coming in contact with sin, caused Him grief. His children share in this. Christ suffered in burden for the lost. His followers should share in this. Indeed Christianity is a religion of suffering, a sacrificial religion; the church of Christ is a suffering institution. This has been the case across the pages of history. Many a song has been heard above the fires of the fagots.

Much of our rich inheritance as Christians has come out of suffering. In a realistic sense this is true domestically and nationally; but in a spiritual sense it is a fact that cannot be denied. Life for life has been the order. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone," so said the Master, and it is true in life. We bleed to bless; we die to live. The work of salvation is not mechanical; it is vital. Bunyan's immortal dream that has blessed millions came from behind Bedford

prison bars. Out of Dr. George Matheson's blindness came one of the greatest hymns of the church:

O love that wilt not let me go.
I rest my weary soul in Thee.
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

"My God," he cried on one occasion, "I have never thanked Thee for my thorn. I have thanked Thee for my roses but not once for my thorns. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my crosses, but I have never thought of my cross as itself a present glory. Teach me the glory of my cross. Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have been my rainbow." Thus spoke the blind Matheson who gave God great service under his handicap. John Eliot must have been thinking on this line when he said, "Prayer and pain through faith in Jesus Christ will do anything."

The question is, shall we take the way of suffering as over against the way of ease? Shall we suffer with Him and know the sweetness of the song that shall come out of such suffering?

"Oh let me suffer with Thee,
My heavenly Father's will.
Dear Jesus, now baptize me
With fire, the Word fulfill."

We have used the following illustration before; but it is so good, we desire to keep it on its mission. Sorry we do not know the author of this incident.

Some years ago a minister in an old England town had a son about fourteen years of age going to school. One afternoon the boy's teacher called at the home and asked for the father. When the father came the teacher said:

"Is your boy sick?"

"No, why?"

"He was not at school today."

"Is that so?"

"Nor yesterday."

"Do you mean it?"

"Nor the day before."

"Well!"

"And I supposed he was sick."

"Well, I thought he was sick."

"Well, I thought I should tell you."

"Thank you," replied the father; and the teacher left.

The father sat thinking. By and by he heard the click at the gate; he knew the boy was coming, so he went to open the door. The boy knew as he looked up, that his father knew about those three days.

"Come into the library, Phil," said the father. And Phil went; the door was closed. The father said: "Phil your teacher was here this afternoon. He tells me that you were not at school today, nor yesterday, nor the day before! We supposed you were. You let us think you were. I have always trusted you. I have always said, 'I can trust my boy, Phil.' But you have been living a lie for three whole days, and I can't tell you how bad I feel about it."

It was hard on Phil to be talked to quietly like that. If his father had spoken to him roughly or had used the strap it would not have been nearly so hard. After a moment's pause, the father said, "Phil, we'll get down and pray." Imagine the effects on Phil.

They got down, and the father poured out his heart in prayer. The boy knew as he listened, how bad his father felt over his conduct. Phil saw himself as he had not seen himself before.

They arose. The father's eyes were wet, and Phil's were not dry.

The father said: "My boy, there's a law of life that where sin is, there is suffering. You can't detach those two things. Now you have done wrong. Your mother and I are in this house like God is in the world. So we will do this: you go to the attic. I'll make a bed for you there. We'll take your meals up to you at the regular times and you'll stay there as long as you have been living the lie -- three day and nights."

Phil said not a word. They went upstairs, and the bed was made; Phil retired; the father kissed him, and left him alone with his thoughts.

Supper time came, and the father and mother sat down to eat. But they couldn't eat for thinking about the boy. The longer they chewed the food, the bigger and drier it became in their mouths; to swallow it was clear out of the question.

They went from the table to the sitting room for the evening. The father picked up the evening paper to read, the mother sat down to sew. Well, the father's eyes weren't very good. He wore glasses, but this evening he couldn't see distinctly; the glass seemed blurred. It must have been the glasses of course. So, he removed them, and cleaned them very deliberately. Then he found that he had been holding the paper upside down.

The mother tried to sew, but the thread broke, and she couldn't get the needle threaded again. By and by the clock struck nine, then ten, their usual hour for retiring. She said, "Are you going to bed?" He answered, "I think I'll not go yet awhile, you go."

"No, I guess I'll wait a while, too." And the clock struck eleven, and the hands worked around toward twelve. They looked up, and went to bed, but -- not to sleep. Each one pretended to be asleep, yet each one knew the other was not asleep. After a while she said, "Why don't you sleep?" He answered, "Well, I just can't for thinking of Phil in the attic."

"That's the trouble with me," she replied. The clock in the hall struck twelve; it struck one, and then two. Still no sleep came. Finally the father said: "Mother, I can't stand this any longer: I am going upstairs with Phil." So he took his pillow, went softly out of the room, up the attic stairs, pressed the latch key softly, so as not to waken the boy if he were asleep, and tip-toed across the attic floor to the corner by the window, and looked -- there Phil lay, wide awake, with something glistening in his eyes, and what looked like stains on his cheeks. The father got down between the sheets with his boy, and they fell into each other's embrace, for they had always been the best of pals; their tears ran on each other's cheeks. And they slept together.

When time for retiring came the next night the father said, "Good night, Mother, I'm going upstairs with Phil; and the second night he slept in the attic with his boy.

The third night came, and it was, "Mother, good night. I'm going up with the boy again," and the third night he slept in the place of punishment with the boy.

Naturally the question might arise, What became of that boy? Well, he became a minister of the gospel of Christ and carried the story of Christ's love to the heart of China.

* * * * *

02 -- THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

"That He is ... a rewarder."

FIRST, THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD IS SEEN IN HIS CHARACTER AS REVEALED BY HIS ATTRIBUTES.

The popular question of the hour, at least, in some quarters, is, "What is God like?" The answer is "God, is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."* [*Westminster Shorter Catechism] He is the infinite, perfect and Supreme Being absolute in every way: a Being in whom all creatures and things have their source, support and end.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF GOD

"God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). He is the "Father of Spirits" (Heb. 12:9). He is the object of worship. He is the sources of all true spirituality, as He is the source of all perfection, goodness, holiness, righteousness and truth. "He filleth all things." "God is Spirit" (John 4:24). God is Light" (1 John 1:5). "God is love" (John 4:16). God was, and is" (Gen. 1:1). "God is eternal" (Deut. 33:27). "God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). God is holy, "I am the Lord your God . . . I am holy" (Lev. 12:44).

HIS ATTRIBUTES AND NAMES

The attributes and names of God reveal His character or what He is like. As to His names there has been a progressive revelation according to Dr. W. B. Pope, as the following reveal:

Elohim and Jehovah, in their Old Testament unity, declare that God is at once absolute and necessary being, and the personal Source and Giver of all Divine life: these are supreme among many other names running through the older revelation. They are continued in the New Testament and consummated by the disclosure of a Name without a name, that of the Triune God made known through the Incarnate Son: the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Trinity.* [*W. B. Pope, Christian Theology, Vol. 1., pg. 249]

The Divine attributes are the statements recorded in the Word of God concerning the nature and character of the Supreme One. "By the Divine attributes are to be understood the full assemblages of those Perfections which God ascribes to Himself in His Word."* [*Pope, Op. Cit., Vol. 1., pg. 287] By His attributes we know Him, also His nature; and God's attributes are equal, that is, one is as great as another, His justice as great as His love. They thus reveal the absolute perfection of His Being.

THE DIVISION OF ATTRIBUTES

These attributes may be divided into natural and moral. The natural are those which do not involve moral action while the latter would, for they give worthiness to all His perfections, rendering Him infinitely lovely, and involve an exercise of the will. As an illustration of the distinction between the natural and moral, it is said, "A man does not will to be six feet high, but he does will to be honest."

THE NATURAL ATTRIBUTES

1. Unity -- God is one (Deut. 4:35; 6:4).
2. Eternity -- Past and future existence without end. "The eternal God" (Deut. 33:27).
3. Omnipresence -- Existing everywhere (I Kings 8: 27). "Tell me where God is," said an atheist to a child, "I will," was the answer, "if you tell me where He is not." "The fullness of Him that filleth all things" (Eph. 1:23).
4. Omniscience -- or knowledge of all things and all events (II Chron. 16:9; Acts 1:24; 15:18).
5. Omnipotence -- All power; used according to His purpose and not in a way repugnant to His nature. "With God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). See also Rev. 1:8.
6. Immutability -- "I am" (Ex. 3:14; John 8:58).
7. Invisibility -- "The only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto" (I Tim. 6:15, 16; See also Ex. 33: 20-23 ; Heb. 11:27).
8. Incomprehensibility -- Cannot be grasped by finite conception (Job 11:7, 8; Rom. 11:33).

THE MORAL ATTRIBUTES

1. The wisdom of God (Rom. 11:33; I Cor. 3:19).
2. Goodness of God, a disposition to communicate the highest happiness (Matt. 19:17; James 1:17).
3. Holiness of God (I Pet. 1:15, 16; Rev. 15:4).
4. Justice, the expression of holiness by action (Deut. 34:4; Rev. 20:3).
5. Mercy, a disposition to pity, and forgive (Rom. 8:32; Eph. 2:4).

6. Truth or perfect veracity (II Tim. 2:13; Titus 1:2).* [*See Theological Compend, Rev. Amos Binney, Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn., pp. 80-86]

SECONDLY, THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD IS FURTHER REVEALED BY HIS NAMES

1. Elohim -- "adorable, strong," usually plural, denoting perhaps the Godhead (Gen. 1:1; used scores of times in Gen.).

2. Jehovah -- "Lord," "Self-existent, The Being," "I am, I am that I am" (Ex. 3:14).

3. Shaddai -- "The strong, the Mighty One, Almighty, All Sufficient."

4. Adon -- "Lord, Supporter, Judge, Master."

5. El-Elyon -- "The Most High, The Supreme."

There are names full of significance with reference to His people. Here are a few:

1. Jehova-Jireh -- "The Lord will provide, the Lord will see to it" (Gen. 22:14).

2. Jehovah-Taidkenu -- "The Lord is our Righteousness" (Jer. 23:6 ; 33:16).

3. Jehovah-Rophi -- "The Lord is my Shepherd" (Psa. 23); "I am the good Shepherd" (John 10:11).

4. Jehovah-Ropheka -- "The Lord is Thy Healer;" "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Ex. 15:26).

5. Jehovah-Shalom -- "The Lord send peace" (Jud. 6:24).

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

Think of the highest type of intelligence and justice that could be found in judgeship, and you have the best human analogy that could be given from this standpoint. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne" (Psa. 97:2).

Whatever may be said to the contrary concerning the character of God, the fact remains that the Revelation of God proves that He is love, that He does not will the death of any but that all may be saved (Ezek. 18:32; 33:11); that in all things that may come to humanity, God, consistently with His Being and the liberty of human being, wills and works for the good of all and the glory of His name. "I know the thoughts which I think toward you, saith the Lord: thoughts of good and not of evil. That you might have an expected end, a hopeful end" (Jer. 29:11).

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

Think of the greatest human character in human history, the greatest combination of the highest intelligence, in ethics, in moral and religious values, and you have a mere human analogy of God, inadequate though it be. It is the best we have, but God is that and plus. Our Lord Jesus Christ put it correctly when He said, "If ye, then, being evil (human, natural) know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:13). The expression, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give," reveals most clearly what we are trying to say. "How much more!" That is the challenge.

Think of the highest type of motherhood and fatherhood and you have a human analogy of God: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" (Isa. 66:13). A mother may forget . . . but not the Lord. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Psa. 103:13). The Psalmist had it correctly when he said, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (27:10).

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

His people should answer. How would God live if He were living in our community? Look at His people. At least, that should be the order. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The followers of Christ should so live that Christ could say to the world, "He that hath seen my followers, hath seen me." To take the Apostle's Creed on our lips Sunday morning and not exhibit the Apostle's character on Monday is nearer hypocrisy and profanity than Christianity; for to acknowledge the existence of the Supreme, and then live as though He were not, is, as we have seen, practical atheism. Followers of Christ, "Ye are God's workmanship" (Poems). "Ye are the epistles of Christ read and known of all men." "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." "Ye are" in order that ye may "shew forth", the praises (excellencies) of Him." Christians are not only proofs that He is but also what He is, what God is like. Sanctified human personality is God's medium of unanswerable proof.

God is a most compassionate, most understanding, most long-suffering, most considerate and most loving heavenly Father! He wills the highest and best for all human beings in time and for eternity and does the best possible, consistently with His Being and the liberty of His children specifically and the human race generally, to effect that good. Do not blame God for the bad"! He is too wise to err, too good to be unkind, too holy to do wrong."

THIRDLY, THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD TO REWARD THE "DILIGENT SEEKER"

"A rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

God rewards the diligent seeker, hence the seeker that is diligent is the only kind of a seeker rewarded. That condition is clear.

The seeker after God, then, must rely on and have unshakable confidence and faith in God as a Rewarder: the conviction that God is as truly a Rewarder as that He exists.

The seeker after God must realize the confirmation of the truth that God is a Rewarder of the diligent seeker. Paul, in his prayer for the entire sanctification of the Thessalonians, said that God is faithful and would do it (I Thess. 5:23, 24). Saint John, in his letter to the church, said, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and lust to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1:9). When one confesses his sins, he has the right, on the basis of God's faithfulness and justice, to accept forgiveness. The same principle holds good as to righteousness, and cleansing.

The seeker must be diligent in the sense of earnestness and persistency. "Ask," says the Master, "and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." (Luke 11:9). A glance at the content will reveal the fact that such asking, seeking and knocking must be with sincerity and persistency. Because of his importunity, "his sincerity plus persistency, (for so the original indicates) he will arise and give him as many as he needeth." Read the first thirteen verses of this eleventh chapter of Luke.

The diligent seeker will find, for God rewards such. "Thou shalt find him, if Thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. 4:29). "Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye search for me with all your heart." (Jer. 29:13). The time, the moment, then, when the diligent seeker finds God is when he seeks with all his heart. Do you thus seek? If so, look up and let your faith function". The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple" (Mal. 3:1).

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03 -- THE FULLNESS OF GOD

"That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19).

"Filled" is an outstanding word in the New Testament. "Baptism" is considered to be a historic word; "anointing" a power word; "earnest" a prophetic word; "sealed" a property word; but the word "filled" is an experience word.

FIRST, FILLED AS ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Acts 2:4, " and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

Is the Holy Spirit received as the gift of God the Father (Luke 24:49) through His Son (Acts 2:33) at the time of the "new birth," or by a subsequent experience as to time?

Galatians 4:6, Romans 8:9, appear to be the chief passages used to support the former position.

There is no question concerning the fact that the Holy Spirit bears a close relationship to the regenerated person, for the "new birth" is of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5, 6), as is "Sanctification" (Romans 15:16): but the question remains, what is that relationship? Does it include the gift of the Holy Spirit in His fullness? Much emphasis is laid upon Galatians 4:6 to prove that it does.

While there could not be any division in the personality of the Holy Spirit, it is well to realize that relationships with the same person may greatly differ. One may know Christ, for instance, as the Saving Christ, and not know Him as the Sanctifying Christ or the Healing Christ; one may know Him historically and not know Him experientially; and there are degrees of a more intimate knowledge of Him. In like manner, one may know the Holy Spirit in His regenerating office, assuring, and leading, and yet not know Him in the gloriousness of the gift of His fullness. A human analogy, though inadequate, we know, may be seen in the fact that a person may come to one country from another in quite different offices; as a private citizen, as a counselor or as an ambassador with all the authority and power of his government and country which he represents. In Galatians 4:6, "Because ye are sons," may suggest the basis upon, or reason, why the Spirit was thus sent forth. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth . . ." Considering the context there is revealed a new aspect of the Trinity to the redeemed soul: "God sent forth His Son" and "God sent forth His Spirit" (Vs. 4-6). So "not of bondage again to fear," but of "adoption whereby we cry Abba Father." Romans, chapter eight is a discussion on the Holy Spirit's work and office, and verse nine is one of the aspects of the Holy Spirit's relationship to a believing soul. If one has not the life-giving Spirit, he is none of His; if one has not the mortifying Spirit (v. 13), he is none of His: and so on through the many relationships of the Spirit revealed in the chapter.

As to the gift of the Holy Ghost being for believers there can be no question. The band of apostles and disciples in the upper room was truly a band of believers; a noble band indeed. Our Lord's intercessory prayer, recorded in John 17, would prove this. There are at least ten proofs enumerated in this prayer in support of the vital and Christian experience of His apostles and disciples. The Spirit in which they went to the upper room (Luke 24:52, 53) is truly Christian. When the Holy Spirit fell upon them, they were "sitting" (Acts 2:2), praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:53). The Ephesians, who received the Holy Spirit, were believers (Acts 19:1-4), so were the converts at Samaria (Acts 8:12-17), and the same must be said about the house of Cornelius (Acts 9:34-48); for "Cornelius was a just man and one that feareth God

with all his house." He prayed to God always (Acts 10:2, 22). His prayer was heard. He had memorialized the throne of God by "prayer" and "alms" (Acts 10:31).

An objection will very likely arise here on the basis of Acts 11:13, 14: "Tell thee words whereby thou and thy house shall be saved." In chapter 10:36, the words of an angel to Cornelius concerning Peter were, "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." It seems to us that in view of what the Word says concerning the character of Cornelius and the fact that the blessed Holy Spirit was given to him and his group as He was given to the apostles and disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts 15:8, 9) it would be good exegesis to interpret Acts 11:14 in the light of Acts 10:6. Anyway, is it not a fact that there is such a thing as "saved to the uttermost?" (Hebrews 7:25). It may be well to realize that the voice Peter heard, "Spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15).

Moreover, such an exegesis would be in harmony with the many passages of Scripture which prove that the Gift of the Holy Spirit is to believers, not to sinners. Concerning this very people, Peter said, in Acts 15:8, 9: "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." The house of Cornelius, then, received what the apostles and disciples received on the day of Pentecost, and if the house of Cornelius received both the "new birth" and "the baptism of the Spirit" at the same time, then they received the two-in-one or all at conversion, which is neither in harmony with the Scriptures nor with Christian experience. Neither Dr. Adam Clarke, nor Rev. John Wesley, during their long ministry, ever knew of one receiving both experiences at the same time.

Our Lord Himself, was very emphatic on the distinction in question, when He said to His apostles and disciples, "Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not neither knoweth Him" (John 14:17). The world, the unsaved, can, if it will, receive Christ, for it reads; "Whosoever will may come:" but it (the world) cannot receive the Comforter. Indeed, it is a Biblical and historical fact that Christian believers, subsequent to their "new birth" experience, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The gift of God the Father for the world was His Son (John 3:16); the gift of God the Father (Luke 24:49), through His Son (Acts 2:33) as shed forth on the day of Pentecost, was the gift of the Holy Ghost for the church. The unconverted receives Christ, the believers receive the Holy Ghost. "As many as received Him (Christ) to them gave He the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12): to the believers (brethren) at Ephesus, the question is, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:1, 2). The sinner receives Christ for salvation from sin; the believer receives the gift of the Holy Ghost for purification (Acts 15: 8, 9), guidance, comfort (John 16:13, 14), power (Acts 1:8), and all that this glorious Paraclete brings to the human soul when He is thus received. After the people of Samaria had "received the Word of God" and were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:12-17).

An objection has been raised that the Samaritans were not converted under Philip's preaching because it says that Simon believed and was baptized. But there being a hypocrite in the revival, one who may believe by mental assent and follow the converts in water baptism, does not disprove the fact of the conversion of the others. Does it not read, "Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." Many cases of healing are enumerated in verse 7. In verse 8, it reads, "And there was a great joy in that city." That sounds like a glorious revival. Indeed, their going on and receiving the Holy Ghost would prove conversion. The matter of believing may be very shallow (Luke 18:13). It may be just mental, and not heart-belief: "Devils believe and tremble" (James 2:19).

Thus: the clearly revealed fact that whatever may be said about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the new born soul, the regenerated, the fact remains that believers may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost in His glorious fullness for purity and power. The question for believers is, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:1, 2), the order has been and still is, first, "birth" then "baptism". The order may be illustrated further from the statement of John, "I baptize you with water. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire" (Matt. 3:21). I give you the outward, He will give you the inward. I give you the sign, He will give you that for which the sign stands. I baptize with water, He with the Spirit.

Pentecost has long since ceased to be a mere historic feast. Since the Pentecost recorded in Acts 2, it has been an outstanding Christian event -- a crisis in the life of believers; the great typical institution passed into its fulfillment; the institution commemorating the giving of the law issued into the giving of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; the blessed Holy Ghost given to the church, Christian believers. Thus now the Pentecostal experience is a vital and important event in the life of the church. That it is for all there can be no doubt, for Peter said, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39).

There has frequently been associated with the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit peculiar conceptions as to one's actions on receiving the Holy Spirit. Peter's statement on the day of Pentecost, "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose," seems to have been the chief basis for such conceptions. The writer on one occasion listened to a message likening the Spirit-filled man to a drunken man. There were, of course, some good comparisons, some good truth; but, for the most part, it was, to say the least, poor Biblical homiletics: a misconception of the experience of the upper room; an over-emphasis on the external. Signs there were and manifestations of God's presence, and we have no disposition to question and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. We welcome such. But, after all, signs and emotional manifestations are external. They vary; they come and go; but the Holy

Spirit comes to stay- He will abide with you forever." The true Pentecostal experience is to be filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:4). This is vital, and the most important; not the "sound," even from heaven; not "cloven tongues like as of fire"; not the "shaking" of the place; not even "speaking with other tongues"; but, rather and conclusively, the Holy Spirit filling them, abiding within, to live in them, speak and work through them. When the storm is on, when the clouds hang low and are dark, when reverses come, when we are misunderstood, when the emotional nature goes on strike, when, so far as feeling is concerned, one may not feel as religious as at other times; "when the enemy comes in like a flood," the blessed Holy Spirit is there, assuring and comforting by His Presence.

The inwardness of the Christian Pentecostal experience is marked by a new sense of personality, Divine Personality indwelling human personality. It is not the matter of "it" or "things" but fellowship with a Divine Person, filled and controlled by that Person.

The experience is marked by a new sense of purity. Strife has ceased within, the war in the soul is over, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has liberated, has conquered (Rom. 8:2). The heart is purified, "They purified (aorist) their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8, 9). The two outstanding characteristics in the early apostolic church were "great grace" and "great power" -- the moral purity aspect as well as the power aspect (Acts 4:33). The apostle Peter is a good illustration of the difference before and after the day of Pentecost.

There is a new passion: a clean, Spirit-filled heart is a passionate heart, The early group would welcome death for the cause of Jesus Christ; indeed, Peter, it is traditionally reported, felt unworthy to die like his Lord, so he requested that he be crucified with his head downward and his feet where his hands should be. They lived unto death; with hearts aflame with constraining love, they bled and died for their Lord. We sing, "Let me burn out for Thee," but they did it. We have words, they had deeds.

There is a new power -- the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit. The promise was, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses (martyrs) unto me" (Acts 1:8). Power to die for the Lord; power, not power from institutions, not power from wealth or influence, not from learning, not from ability, but power from "on high"! Power to pray, power to labor, power to suffer, power to accomplish, the power of the Holy Ghost !

In the eyes of those who are drunk with the cares of this life, drunk with pleasure -- yes, in the eyes of the professors without the possession, the mere nominal church members -- people of this poise may be looked upon as being a little off, although, according to God's standard of fullness, they are quite on; peculiar (not odd) for Christ's sake. It is the poise revealed in the mind of the Master which Christians are exhorted to have (Phil. 2:5).

May God fill His people today with His Spirit and thus make possible the fullness of life in Himself so needed in our day!

SECONDLY, FILLED AS A LIFE

Eph. 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The idea is live filled with the Spirit, as in the Spirit-filled life. Thus this fullness is marked by a new poise, a new evenness of equilibrium, a new balance. Negatively, "not drunk with wine wherein is excess" but, positively, "filled with the Spirit." That full life is a balanced life; marked by a careful and wide-awake attitude, "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." It is a life marked by carefulness as to time, "redeeming the time," gathering up the precious moments; marked by praise and thankfulness, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." It is marked by submission one to another (Eph. 5:19, 20). Greater than home missions and greater than foreign missions is submission!

In his prayer for the church at Philippi, Paul prayed that their "love may abound" -- love in action; abound "in all knowledge and in all judgment"-Intellectual love; that they may "approve things that are excellent" -- Ethical love; that they "might be sincere" -- Spiritual love; but his climax was reached by the expression, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God" -- Experiential love (Phil. 1:9-11).

For the Colossians, Paul prayed, "That ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might (as a result of being thus filled) walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father" (Col. 1:9-12). To be thus filled makes this glorious Holy Ghost life possible.

In his prayer for the church at Ephesus, after offering some petitions for great and mighty things for this church, such as a grant from God that they might be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may indwell them, he reaches the climax in the expression: "That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:14-19). To "be filled" is important, provided we are filled with the right thing; to "be filled with God" is truly rich and wonderful; but to "be filled with all the fullness of God" is more wonderful still! It is beyond our finite grasp. One has said that this expression "utterly bewilders the mind and confounds the understanding" It is experiential but not so understandable.

God wants his people to be filled with Himself! How disappointing to God, then, must be the emptiness of many of His so called followers! Many who profess to be filled with the Spirit reveal by their actions that they are filled with worldly ambitions and other things rather than with the Spirit. No person, minister or

layman, can accomplish without this Divine fullness. There is no substitute for it. Dr. Samuel Chadwick has well said, "The blunders and disasters of the Church are largely, if not entirely, accounted for by the neglect of the Spirit's Ministry and Mission. The morass of speculation about the Bible takes no account of the Holy Spirit. It regards inspiration as negligible, and insisted upon interpreting Revealed Truth by no standards save those of history and literature. Miracles are condemned without trial. Prophecy is dismissed without inquiry. Revelation is ignored without reason. Under the plea of breadth, all truth is thrust into uniform ruts." This wonderful fullness honors God and in return is honored by God: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, said the Lord" (Zech. 4:6): "not by . . . nor by . . . but by my Spirit"!

LASTLY, FILLED BUT HOW?

Some have said, "True Mr. Preacher, but how may I be thus filled?"

There are four specific conditions that must be met. They are:

1. One must know Christ as Saviour: for the Holy Spirit is God's gift to believers through His Son (Acts 1:4, 8; 2:33).

2. Obedience: Acts 5:32, "And so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him." Have you been obedient? Are you now living a life of obedience to God? If you are not obedient you are not eligible for to receive the blessed Holy Ghost.

3. One must appropriate by faith this Gift of God: Gal. 3:2, "Receive ye the Spirit by the works of the law or the hearing of faith?" Acts 15:8, 9, "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost; even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." The act of faith is vital and absolutely necessary in order to receive the blessed Holy Spirit; for faith is the currency of the Kingdom of heaven.

4. Then comes the life of abiding; "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." There must be the living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit. Faithfulness to light; faithfulness in devotion; faithfulness in prayer; faithful in the study of the Word of God; faithfulness in labors for Him; and

"A faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe!

"That will not murmur or complain
Beneath the chastening rod,

But, in the hour of grief or pain,
Will lean upon its God;

"A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt;

"That bears, unmoved, the world's dread frown,
Nor heeds its scornful smile;
That seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile;

"A faith that keeps the narrow way
Till life's last hour is fled,
And with a pure and heavenly ray
Illumes a dying bed.

"Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste, e'en here, the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home."

You must be able to say with Paul, "I live by the faith of the Son of God."

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THE END

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