A Plain Description Of The Essence
And Attributes Of God

Lewis Bayly

A Plain Description
Of The Essence
And Attributes Of God

Agape Chapel Ministries
P.O. Box 59084
Norwalk, CA 90652
USA

Booklets & Tracts are given freely.
Do not sell!

Web: www.sounddoctrine.net
e-mail: acm@sounddoctrine.net

Lewis Bayly
A PLAIN DESCRIPTION OF THE ESSENCE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD,
OUT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE,
SO FAR AS EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST COMPETENTLY KNOW, AND NECESSARILY BELIEVE, THAT WILL BE SAVED.

ALTHOUGH no creature can define what God is, because he is incomprehensible (Psal. cxliii. 3) and dwelling in inaccessible light (1 Tim. vi. 16); yet it has pleased his majesty to reveal himself to us in his word, so far as our weak capacity can best conceive him. Thus:

God is that one spiritual and infinitely perfect essence, whose being is of himself eternally (Deut. i. 4; iv. 35; xxxii. 39; vi. 4; Isa. xlv. 5–8; 1 Cor. viii. 4; Eph. iv. 5, 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5; John iv. 24; 2 Cor. iii. 17; 1 Kings viii. 17; Psal. cxxvii. 5; Deut. xxxii. 4; Exod. iii. 14; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Acts xvii. 25; Rom. xi. 36.)

In the Divine Essence we are to consider two things: First, The diverse manner of being therein; secondly, The attributes thereof.

The diverse manner of being therein, are called Persons (Heb. i. 3.)

A person is a distinct subsistence of the whole Godhead (John i. 1; v. 31, 37; xiv. 16; Col. ii. 9; John xiv. 9.)

There are Three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Gen. i. 26; iii. 22; xi. 7; Exod. xx. 2; Hos. i. 4, 7; Isa. lxiii. 9, 10; Zech. iii. 2; Hag. ii. 5, 6; 1 John v. 7; Matt. iii. 16, 17; xxviii. 19; John xiv. 26; 2 Cor. xiii. 13.) These three persons are
not three several substances, but three distinct subsistences; or three diverse manner of beings, of one and the same substance and divine essence. So that a person in the Godhead is an individual Understanding and incommunicable subsistence, living of itself, and not sustained by another.

In the unity of the Godhead there is a plurality which is not accidental (Gen. i. 26; iii. 22; xi. 7; Isa. vi. 8), for God is a most pure act, and admits no accidents; nor essential, for God is one essence only—but personal.

The persons in this one essence are but three. In this mystery there is alius et alius, another and another; but not aliud et aliud, another thing and another thing.

The Divine Essence in itself is neither divided nor distinguished, but the three Persons in the Divine Essence are distinguished amongst themselves three manner of ways:

1. By their Names. 2. By their Order. 3. By their Actions.

1. By their Names, thus:

The first Person is named the Father; first, in respect of his natural son, Christ (Matt. xi. 27; iii. 17;) secondly, in respect of the elect, his adopted sons (Isa. lxiii. 16; Eph. iii. 14, 15;) that is, those who, being not his sons by nature, are made his sons by grace.

The second Person is named the Son, because he is begotten of his Father's substance, or nature (Prov. xxx. 4; Psal. ii. 7; Heb. i. 3; Phil. ii. 6;) and he is called the Word—First, because the conception of a word in man's mind is the nearest thing that, in some sort, can shadow to us the manner how he is eternally begotten of his Father's substance; and in this respect he is also called the Wisdom of his Father (Prov. viii. 12.) Secondly, because that by him the Father has from the beginning declared his will for our salvation (John i. 18); hence he is called λόγος quasi λόγων, the person speaking with or by the Father. Thirdly, because he
is the chief argument of all the word of God (Acts xiv. 43; Heb. i. 1; Luke xxiv. 27; John v. 45; Acts iii. 22, 23, 24), or that Word whereof God spake when he promised the blessed seed to the fathers under the Old Testament.

The third Person is named the Holy Ghost (Isa. lxiii. 10; 2 Cor. xiii. 14)—First, because he is spiritual, without a body (1 John iv. 13; 2 Cor. iii. 17.) Secondly, because he is spired, and as it were breathed from both the Father and the Son (John xx. 21, 22; Gal. iv. 6), that is, proceedeth from them both; and he is called Holy, both because he is holy in his own nature (1 Pet. i. 15, 16), and also the immediate sanctifier of all God's elect people (2 Cor. iii. 18; 1 Thess. v. 23; 1 Pet. i. 2.)

2. By their Order, thus:

The Persons of the Godhead are either the Father, or those which are of the Father.* The Father is the first Person (Mat. xxviii. 19; 1 John v. 7) in the glorious Trinity,† having neither his being nor beginning of any other but of himself; begetting his Son, and together with his Son sending forth the Holy Ghost from everlasting. The persons which are of the Father are those who, in respect of their personal existence, have the whole divine essence eternally communicated unto them from the Father. And those are either from the Father alone, as the Son; or from the Father and the Son, as the Holy Ghost.

The Son is the second Person of the glorious Trinity, and the only begotten Son of his Father, not by grace, but by nature; having his being of the Father alone, and the whole being of his Father by an eternal and incomprehensible generation; and with the Father sendeth

* Origo essentiae in divinis nulla est, origo personarum locum habet in Filio, et Spiritu Sancto; Pater enim est prior Filio, non tempore, sed ordine.—Alsted.
† Ideo dictur pater ἀναγέννητος et ἀγέννητος.
forth the Holy Ghost. In respect of his absolute essence, he is of himself; but in respect of his person he is, by an eternal generation, of his Father. For the essence doth not beget an essence, but the person of the Father begetteth the person of the Son, and so he is God of God, and hath from his Father the beginning of his person and order, but not of essence and time.

The Holy Ghost is the third Person of the blessed Trinity, proceeding and sent forth equally from both the Father and the Son (John xv. 26; xvi. 15) by an eternal and incomprehensible spiration. For as the Son receiveth the whole divine essence by generation, so the Holy Ghost receiveth it wholly by spiration.

This order betwixt the three persons appears in that the Father begetting must in order be before the Son begotten; and the Father and Son, before the Holy Ghost proceeding from both.

This order serves to set forth to us two things—First, the manner how the Trinity worketh in their external actions; as, that the Father worketh of himself, by the Son and the Holy Ghost; the Son from the Father by the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. Secondly, to distinguish the first and immediate beginning from which those external and common actions flow. Hence it is, that forasmuch as the Father is the fountain and original of the Trinity, the beginning of all external working, the name of God in relation, and the title of Creator in the creed, are given in a special manner to the Father; our redemption to the Son, and our sanctification to the person of the Holy

* Filii Dei est a Deo, quia essentiam absolutam, est quidem a se ipsos et unigenitus, sed ratione pænitentiam, si esse personalis perpetuum generationem Patre existit: ideoque non est a Deo (John vi. 38; v. 19; Mic. v. 1; John i. 1.)

† Therefore (Rom. viii. 9) the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of Christ.

‡ Spiri tus S. Patris, et a Filio procedit, tanquam ab uno et eodem principio, in duabus tantum personis subsistente, non autem tanquam a duobus ac diversis principiis.

refer the events of crosses and disgraces to him who knoweth how to turn all things to the best unto them that love him? (Rom. viii. 28)—if thou art persuaded that God is true, why dost thou doubt of his promises?—and if thou believest that God is beauty and perfection itself, why dost not thou make him alone the chief end of all thine affections and desires? for if thou lovest beauty, he is most fair; if thou desirest riches, he is most wealthy; if thou seestest wisdom, he is most wise. Whatsoever excellency thou hast seen in any creature, it is nothing but a spark of that which is in infinite perfection in God: and when in heaven we shall have an immediate communion with God, we shall have them all perfectly in him communicated to us. Briefly, in all goodness, he is all in all. Love that one good God, and thou shalt love him in whom all the good of goodness consisteth. He that would therefore attain to the saving-knowledge of God, must learn to know him by love: for God is love, and the knowledge of the love of God passeth all knowledge (Eph. iii. 19; 1 John iv.) For all knowledge besides to know how to love God, and to serve him only, is nothing, upon Solomon's credit, but vanity of vanities, and vexation of spirit (Eccles. i. 17.)

Kindle therefore, O Lord, the love of thyself in my soul especially, seeing it was thy good pleasure that, being reconciled by the blood of Christ (Rom. v. 9, 10; John xvii. 3, 22; 1 Cor. xv. 8), I should be brought, by the knowledge of thy grace, to the communion of thy glory, wherein only consists my sovereign good and happiness for ever.

Thus, by the light of his own word, we have seen the back parts of Jehovah Elohim, the Eternal Trinity; whom to believe is saving faith and verity; and unto whom from all creatures in heaven and earth, be all praise, dominion, and glory for ever. Amen.

Thus far of the knowledge of God. Now of the knowledge of a man's self. And first of the state of his misery and corruption without renovation by Christ.
First, when a man doth so acknowledge and celebrate God’s majesty, as he hath revealed himself in his word.

Secondly, when, from the true and lively sense of God’s attributes, there is bred in a man’s heart a love, awe, and confidence in God; for saith God himself, “If I be a Father, where is my honour? if I be a Lord, where is my fear?” “O taste and see that the Lord is good!” saith David, Psal. xxxiv. 9. He that hath not by experience tasted his goodness, knows not how good he is. “He” (saith John) “that saith he knoweth God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him,” 1 John ii. 4. So far, therefore, as we imitate God in his goodness, love, justice, mercy, patience, and other attributes, so far do we know him.

Thirdly, when with inward groans, and the serious desires of our hearts, we long to attain to the perfect and plenary knowledge of his majesty, in the life which is to come.

Lastly, this discovers how few there are who do truly know God; for no man knoweth God, but he that loveth him; and how can a man choose but love him, being the sovereign good, if he know him, seeing the nature of God is to enamour with the love of his goodness? and whosoever loveth anything more than God, is not worthy of God; and such is every one who settles the love and rest of his heart upon anything besides God. If, therefore, thou dost believe that God is almighty, why dost thou fear devils and enemies, and not confidently trust in God, and crave his help in all thy troubles and dangers?—if thou believest that God is infinite, how darest thou provoke him to anger?—if thou believest that God is simple, with what heart canst thou dissemble and play the hypocrite?—if thou believest that God is the sovereign good, why is not thy heart more settled upon him than on all worldly good?—if thou dost indeed believe that God is a just Judge, how darest thou live so securely in sin without repentance?—if thou dost truly believe that God is most wise, why dost not thou

Ghost, as the immediate agents of those actions. And this also is the cause why the Son, as he is mediator, referreth all things to the Father, not to the Holy Ghost (Matt. xi. 25, 26, 27; John v. 19–23; xi. 41, 42; xii. 49), and that the Scripture so often saith that we are reconciled to the Father (2 Cor. v. 18, &c.)

This divine order or economy excepted, there is neither first nor last, neither superiority nor inferiority, among the three persons; but for nature they are co-essential, for dignity co-equal, for time co-eternal.

The whole divine essence is in every one of the three persons; but it was incarnated only in the second person of the Word, and not in the person of the Father, or of the Holy Ghost, for three reasons:—

First, That God the Father might the rather set forth the greatness of his love to mankind, in giving his first and only-begotten Son to be incarnated, and to suffer death for man’s salvation.

Secondly, That he who was in his divinity the Son of God, should be in his humanity the Son of man: lest the name of Son should pass to another, who by his eternal nativity was not the Son.

Thirdly, Because it was meetest that that person, who is the substantial image of his eternal Father, should restore in us the spiritual image of God, which we had lost.

In the incarnation, the Godhead was not turned into the manhood, nor the manhood into the Godhead; but the Godhead, as it is the second person or Word, assumed unto it the manhood, that is, the whole nature of man, body and soul; and all the natural properties and infirmities thereof, sin excepted* (Heb. iii. 17, 18; iv. 15.)

The second person took not upon him the person of man, but the nature of man.† So that the human nature has no personal subsistence of its own (for then there

* Infimitates mere privationes non prava dispositionis.
† Humana natura est distinctam individuum à natura divina, eti non sit distincta personas.—Keck. Syst. Theol. lib. iii. page 119.
should be two persons in Christ), but it subsisteth in the Word, the second person: for as the soul and body make but one person of man, so the Godhead and manhood make but one person of Christ.

The two natures of the Godhead and manhood are so really united by a personal union, that as they can never be separated asunder, so are they never confounded; but remain still distinguished by their several and essential properties which they had before they were united. As for example, the infiniteness of the divine is not communicated to the human nature, nor the finiteness of the human to the divine nature.

Yet by reason of this personal union, there is such a communion of the properties of both natures, that that which is proper to the one is sometimes attributed to the other nature. As, that God purchased the church with his own blood (Acts xx. 28); and that he will judge the world by that man whom he hath appointed (Acts xviii. 31.) Hence also it is, that though the humanity of Christ be a created, and therefore a finite and limited nature, and cannot be everywhere present by actual position, or local extension, according to his natural being; yet because he hath communicated unto it the personal subsistence of the Son of God, which is infinite, and without limitation, and is so united with God, that it is nowhere severed from God, the body of Christ, in respect of his personal being, may rightly be said to be everywhere.

3. The Actions by which the Three Persons are distinguished.

The actions are of two sorts: either external, respecting the creatures; and those are after a sort common to every one of the three persons: or internal, respecting the persons only amongst themselves, and are altogether incommunicable.

The external and communicable actions of the three persons are these:

the only author of our life, being, and all the good things we have.

3. To stir us up to imitate the Divine Spirit in his holy attributes, and to bear, in some measure, the image of his wisdom, love, goodness, justice, mercy, truth, patience, zeal, and anger against sin; that we may be wise, loving, just, merciful, true, patient, and zealous, as our God is.

4. Lastly, that we may in our prayers and meditations conceive a sight of his divine majesty, and not according to those gross and blasphemous imaginations which naturally arise in men's brains, as when they conceive God to be like an old man sitting in a chair; and the blessed Trinity to be like that tripartite idol which papists have painted in their church windows.

When, therefore, thou art to pray to God, let thine heart speak to him as to that eternal, infinite, almighty, holy, wise, just, merciful Spirit, and most perfect, indivisible essence of three several persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; who being present in all places, ruleth heaven and earth, understandeth all men's hearts, knoweth all men's miseries, and is only able to bestowed on us all graces which we want, and to deliver all penitent sinners who with faithful hearts seek, for Christ's sake, his help out of all their afflictions and troubles (Psal. xc. 2; 1 Kings viii. 27, 30; Gen. xvii. 1; Job xv. 25; Isa. vi. 3; Rev. iv. 8; xv. 4; Rom. xi. 33; xvi. 17; Deut. xxxii. 4; Psal. cxxv. 8, 9, 17; cix. 11; John iv. 24; 1 John v. 7; Matt. iii. 16; xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Jer. xxiii. 24; Dan. iv. 32; Jer. xvii. 10; Acts i. 24.)

The ignorance of this true knowledge of God makes many to make an idol of the true God, and is the only cause why so many profess all other parts of God's worship and religion with so much irreverence and hypocrisy:—whereas, if they did truly know God, they durst not come to his holy service, and coming, serve him with fear and reverence: for so far doth a man fear God as he knoweth him; and then doth a man truly know God, when he joins practice to speculation: and that is,
the same thing. There are therefore no quantities in God, by which he may be said to be so much and so much; nor qualities, by which he may be said to be such and such; but whatsoever God is, he is such and the same by his essence. By his essence he is wise, and therefore wisdom itself; by his essence he is good, and therefore goodness itself; by his essence he is merciful, and therefore mercy itself; by his essence he is just, and therefore justice itself, &c. In a word, God is great, without quantity; good, true, and just, without quality; merciful, without passion; an act, without motion; everywhere present, without sight; without time, the first and the last; the Lord of all creatures, from whom all receive themselves, and all the good they have, yet neither needeth nor receiveth he any increase of goodness or happiness from any other.* 

This is the plain description of God, so far as he hath revealed himself to us in his word.

This doctrine, of all other, every true practitioner of piety must competently know, and necessarily believe, for four special uses:—

1. That we may discern our true and only God from all false gods and idols; for the description of God is properly known only to his church, in whom he hath thus graciously manifested himself (Psal. clxvii. 19, 20; Jer. x. 25.)

2. To possess our hearts with a greater awe of his majesty, whilst we admire him for his simpleness and infiniteness; adore him for his unmeasurableness, unchangeableness, and eternity; seek wisdom from his understanding and knowledge; submit ourselves to his blessed will and pleasure; love him, his love, mercy, goodness, and patience; trust to his word, because of his truth; fear him for his power, justice, and anger; reverence him for his holiness; and praise him for his blessedness; and to depend all our life on him, who is

* Exhibet omnia, accipit nihil; ipsumigitur bonum, est Deus ipse semper.—Trismeg. serm. ii. Plin.
in the Trinity, is neither the Son nor the Father, but the Spirit proceeding from both; though there is but one and the same essence common to all three. As therefore we believe that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, so we likewise believe that God is the Father, God is the Son, and God is the Holy Ghost. But by reason of this real distinction, the person of the one is not, nor ever can be, the person of the other. The three persons, therefore, of the Godhead, do not differ from the essence but formally; but they differ really one from another, and so are distinguished by their hypostatical proprieties. As the Father is God, begetting God the Son; the Son is God, begotten of God the Father; and the Holy Ghost is God, proceeding from both God the Father and God the Son.

Hence it is that the Scriptures use the name of God two manner of ways: either essentially, and then it signifieth the three persons conjointly; or personally, and then by a synecdoche it signifieth but one of the three persons in the Godhead; as the Father (1 Tim. ii. 5), or the Son (Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 16), or the Holy Ghost (Acts v. 4; 2 Cor. vi. 16.)

And because the divine essence (common to all the three persons) is but one, we call the same Unity. But because there be three distinct persons in this one indivisible essence, we call the same Trinity. So that this unity in trinity, and trinity in unity, is a holy mystery, rather to be religiously adored by faith, than curiously searched by reason, further than God has revealed in his word.

Thus far of the diverse Manner of being in the Divine Essence; now of the Attributes thereof.

Attributes are certain descriptions of the Divine Essence, delivered in the Scriptures according to the weakness of our capacity, to help us the better to understand

Of all these attributes we must hold these general rules:—No attributes can sufficiently express the essence of God, because it is infinite and ineffable.

Whosoever, therefore, is spoken of God, is not God; but serves rather to help our weak understanding, to conceive in our reason, and to utter in our speech, the majesty of his divine nature, so far as he hath vouchsafed to reveal himself to us in his word.

1. All the attributes of God belong to every of the three Persons, as well as to the essence itself, with the limitation of a personal propriety. As the mercy of the Father is mercy begetting, the mercy of the Son is mercy begotten, the mercy of the Holy Ghost is mercy proceeding: and so of the rest.

2. The essential attributes of God differ not from his essence; because they are so in the essence, that they are the very essence itself. In God, therefore, there is nothing which is not either his essence or person.

3. The essential attributes of God differ not essentially or really one from another, because whatsoever is in God, is one most simple essence, and admits no division, but only in our reason and understanding, which being not able to know earthly things by one simple act, without the help of many distinct acts, must of necessity have the help of many distinct acts to know the incomprehensible God. Therefore, to speak properly, there are not in God many attributes, but one only, which is nothing else but the Divine Essence itself, by what attribute soever you call it. But in respect of our reason, they are said to be so many different attributes; for our understanding conceives by the name of mercy, a thing different from that which is called justice. The essential attributes of God are not therefore really separate.

4. The essential attributes of God are not parts or qualities of the divine essence, nor accidents in the essence, nor a subject, but the very whole and entire essence of God; so that every such attribute is not aliud et aliud, another and another thing, but one and
he can will, and do more than he willeth or doth (Matt. iii. 9; xx. 53; Rom. ix. 18); or actual, by which God doth indeed whatsoever he will, and hindereth whatsoever he will not have done (Psal. cxxv. 3.)

5. Majesty is that by which God, of his own absolute and free authority, reigneth and ruleth as Lord and King over all creatures visible, and invisible (1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12; 2 Sam. vii. 22; Rev. v. 12, 13); having both the right and propriety in all things* (1 Chron. xxix. 14); as also such a plenitude of power, that he can pardon the offences of all whom he will have spared (Rom. ix. 15; John iv. 11); and subdue all his enemies, whom he will have plagued and destroyed without being bound to render to any creature a reason of his doing (Luke xix. 17; Psal. ii. 9; cx. 1); but making his own most holy and just will his only most perfect and eternal law.

From all these attributes ariseth one, which is God's sovereign blessedness or perfection.

Blessedness is that perfect and unmeasurable possession of joy and glory, which God hath in himself for ever;† and is the cause of all the bliss and perfection that every creature enjoys in its measure.

There are other attributes figuratively and improperly ascribed to God, in the holy scriptures, as by an anthropomorphosis, the members of a man, eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, feet, &c.; or the senses and actions of a man, as, seeing, hearing, smelling, working, walking, striking, &c.: by an anthropopathia, the affections and passions of a man, as, gladness, grief, joy, sorrow, love, hatred, &c.; or by an analogy, as when he is named, a Lion, a Rock, a Tower, a Buckler, &c., whose signification every commentary will express.

* Hinc Deus dicitur, αυτοπάθειας.
† Deus est Shaddi, sive αυτοπάθειας, non solum quia Ipse nihil desiderat, sed etiam quia nihil in eo desiderari potest. Creaturas fecit perfectas in suo quaque genere, ergo Ipse perfectissimus est in se et per se.—Soc. Exerc. 146, sect. 2. (Mark xiv. 61; Acts xvii. 25; Rom. xi. 35, 36; 1 Tim. vi. 15; Matt. xxv. 35; James i. 17.)

the nature of God's essence, and to discern it from all other essences.

The attributes of God are of two sorts, either nominal or real.

The nominal attributes are of three sorts: 1. Those which signify God's essence. 2. The persons in the essence. 3. Those which signify his essential works.

Of the first sort is the name Jehovah (Exod. xv. 3), or rather Jehovah,* which signifyeth the eternal being of himself, in whom, being without all beginning and end, all other beings both begin and end (Isa. xlii. 8; Psalm lxxxiii. 18.)

God tells Moses (Exod. vi. 3) that he was not known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by his name Jehovah. Not but that they knew this to be the name of God, for they used it in all their prayers, but because they lived not to see God effecting in deed (Exod. vi. 3) that which he promised them in graciously delivering their seed out of Egypt, and in giving them the real possession of Canaan's land, and so to be not only God Almighty, by whom all things were made, but also performing in deed to the children that which he promised in his word to the fathers, which this name Jehovah especially signifyeth. And for this cause Moses calls God first Jehovah, when the universal creation had its absolute being (Gen. ii. 4.) And this admirable name is graven on the decalogue's forehead, which was pronounced upon the Israelites' deliverance, to be the rule of righteousness, after which they should serve their Deliverer in the promised land.

This name is so full of divine mysteries, that the Jews hold it a sin to pronounce it; but if it be no sin to write it, why should it be unlawful to pronounce it?

This holy name of God teacheth us—

First, what God is in himself; namely, an eternal being of himself.

* Jehovah non habet plurale, et in scripturis soli vero Deo tribuitur.
Secondly, how he is unto others, because that from him all other creatures have received their being:

Thirdly, that we may confidently believe his promises, for he is named Jehovah, not only in respect of being, and causing all things to be, but especially in respect of his gracious promises, which without fail he will fulfil in his appointed time, and so cause that to be which was not before. And so this name is a golden pledge unto us, that because he hath promised, he will surely, upon our repentance, forgive us all our sins (Isa. xlv. 7; John xi. 5; xii. 26; xiv. 2, 3; Job vi. 40;) at the time of death receive our souls, and in the resurrection raise up our bodies in glory to life everlasting.

The second name denoting God’s essence is Ehejeh; but once read (Exod. iii. 14) of the same root that Jehovah is, and signifieth I am, or I will be; for when Moses asked God by what name he should call him, God then named himself Ehejeh, Asher Ehejeh, I am that I am, or I will be that I will be, signifying, that he is an eternal, unchangeable being: for seeing every creature is temporary and mutable, no creature can say, ero qui ero, I will be that I will be. This name in the New Testament is given to our Lord Christ, when he is called Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Revel. i. 8.) For all time, past and to come, is always present before God. And to this name Christ himself alludeth, John viii. 58, “Before Abraham was, I am.”

This name should teach us likewise to have always present in our minds our first creation, present corruption, and future glorification; and not content ourselves with, I was good, or, I will be good, but to be good presently, that whenever God sends for us, he may find us prepared for him.

The third name is Jah, which, as it comes of the same root, so is it the contract of Jehovah, and signifieth things which he willeth (Josh. xiii. 14; Psalm cxlix. 6; Numb. xxiii. 19);* effecting and performing all things which he hath spoken in his appointed time.

(6.) Patience, whereby God willingly forbeareth to punish the wicked, so long as it may stand with his justice, and until their sins be ripened (2 Peter iii. 9; Romans ii. 4; Genesis v. 16.)

Ad pensam tardus Deus est, ad premia velox;
Sed pensare solet vi graviore moram.

(7.) Holiness, whereby God’s nature is separated from all profaneness, and abhorreth all filthiness (1 Peter i. 5; 1 Thessalonians iv. 3; Hebrews xii. 14; Mark xv. 9); and so being wholly pure in himself, delighteth in the inward and outward purity of his servants, which he infuseth into them.

(8.) Anger, whereby is meant God’s most certain and just will in chastening the elect (Psalm cxi. 23, 29, 40, 41; Numb. xxv. 11); and in revenging and punishing the reprobate, for the injuries they offer to him and his chosen; and when God will punish with rigour and severity, then it is termed wrath, temporal to the elect, eternal to the reprobates (1 Corinthians xix. 2; 1 Thessalonians i. 10.)

4. The Power of God is that whereby he can simply and freely do whatsoever he will (Genesis xvii. 1; Psalm cxviii. 3; Matthew vii. 2; Mark xvi. 26; Ephesians i. 11), that is agreeable to his nature; and whereby, as he hath made, so he still ruleth heaven and earth, and all things therein. This almighty power of God is either absolute, by which

* Veritas est harmonia tum intellectus et verborum cum rebus, tum etiam rerum iparum cum Ideis in mente divina. — *Keckermann. * Veritas Dei in verba, fides Dei dicitur, quod certo fiant, quae ab ipso dicta sunt. * Item constantia, quia seententiam non mutat.—Polian.
‡ Deus potest omnia que contradictionem non implicat.—*Aqu. * i. qu. 28, art 3, 4. * Omnia potestia excludit omnes defectus, qui sunt impotentia, seu, possis mentiri, mori, peccare, &c.
poseth them to serve his own most holy purpose and glory.*

3. The will of God is that whereby of necessity he willeth himself as the sovereign good (1 Tim. ii. 5; Rom. ix. 19; Eph. i. 5); and (by willing himself) willeth most freely all other good things which are out of himself.

The will of God, though in itself it be but one, as is his essence, yet in respect of the diversity of objects and effects, it is called in the Scriptures by diverse names; as,

(1.) Love, whereby is meant God's eternal good-will (1 John iii. 1), whereby he ordaineth his elect to be freely saved through Christ, and bestoweth on them all necessary graces for this life (Psalm lxv. 7) and that to come, taking pleasure in their persons and services (Gen. iv. 4).

(2.) Justice is God's constant will (Rom. ii. 5; 2 Thess. i. 6, &c.; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Deut. vii. 9, 10), whereby he recompenseth men and angels, according to their works; punishing the impenitent according to their deserts, called the justice of his wrath; and rewarding the faithful according to his promises, called the justice of his grace (Rom. ix. 15, 16; Ezek. xvi. 6).

(3.) Mercy, which is God's mere good will (Psalm ciii. 8, &c.; Tit. iii. 4) and ready affection to forgive a penitent sinner, notwithstanding all his sins and ill deserts.

(4.) Goodness, whereby God willingly communicates his good with his creatures† (Psalm cxlv. 7, 9, 16; Matthew xvi. 17); and because he communicates it freely, it is termed grace.

(5.) Truth, whereby God willeth constantly those

* Intellectus scientia et sapientia in Deo non distinguuntur.—Tit. ii. 3. Nam sapientia in homine est habitus intellectui impressus, qui de Deo dici non debet, cujus intellectus est ipsa sapientia.—Kocherm. Innumeris filiis Dei ipse eduxit et ipse vocavit. Hebr. iv. 13. Neque ipse salutem, nec salutem praebet. Hence the Platonists term God ἰδεῖν, all-eye, seeing all.
† In creaturis multa inventur bona, ergo Creator multo magis est bonus. Imita ait homines, ipsum bonum.

OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

Lord, because he is the beginning and being of beings.* It is a name for the most part ascribed unto God (Psalm lxviii. 19; ci. 18; cxv. 1, 48; cxvi. 1, &c.; cxvii. 1, &c.; cxviii. 1, 9; cxv. 17, 18; cxvi. 19; cxviii. 5, 14; cxv. 34), when some notable deliverance or benefit comes to pass according to his former promise; and therefore all creatures in heaven and earth are commanded to celebrate and praise God in this name Jah.

The fourth is Κύριος, Lord, used often in the New Testament: for κύριος, or κύριος, signifieth I am. Hence κύριος signifieth the first essence of a thing, or authority. When it is absolutely given to God, it answereth to the Hebrew name Jehovah, and is so translated by the seventy interpreters: for God is so a Lord, that he is of himself Lord of all. This name should always put us in remembrance to obey his commandments, and to fear his judgments, and submit ourselves to his blessed will and pleasure, saying with Eli, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," 1 Sam. iii. 18.

The fifth is Θεός, God, six hundred times used in the New Testament, and the profane writers commonly. It is derived ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεῶ, because he runs through and compasseth all things; or ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶν, which signifieth to burn and kindle—for God is light, and the author both of heat, light, and life in all creatures, either immediately of himself, or mediate by secondary causes. This name is used either improperly, or properly. Improperly, when it is given either figuratively to magistrates, or falsely to idols. But when it is properly and absolutely taken, it signifieth the eternal essence of God, being above all things, and through all things; giving life and light to all creatures, and preserving and governing them in their wonderful frame and order. God seeth all in all places; let us therefore everywhere take heed what we do in his sight.

Thus far of the names which signify God's essence.

* Deus est causa causarum et ens entium.
The name which signifies the persons in the essence, is chiefly one, Elohim.

Elohim signifieth the mighty Judges; it is a name of the plural number, to express the trinity of persons in unity of essence. And to this purpose the Holy Ghost beginneth the holy Bible with this plural name of God, joined with a verb of the singular number, as Elohim Bara, Dii creavit, the mighty Gods, or all the three persons in the Godhead created. The Jews also note in the verb נָּ֤עַר, Bara, consisting of three letters, the mystery of the Trinity, by בֵּֽית, ben, the Son; by רֹֽכַח, roach, the Spirit; by סְלָ֥ה, sah, the Father. But this holy mystery is more clearly taught by Moses, Gen. iii. 23. And Jehovah Elohim said, "Behold the man is become as one of us." And Gen. xix. 24, "Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven," that is, God the Son, from God the Father, who hath committed all judgment unto the Son (John v. 22; see Psal. xxxiii. 6; Isa. vi. 8, 9, 10.) The singular number of Elohim is Eloah, derived of Alah, he swore; because that in all weighty causes, when necessity requireth an oath to decide the truth, we are only to swear by the name of God, who is the great and righteous Judge of heaven and earth.

This name Eloah is but seldom used, as Habak. iii. 3; Job iv. 9; xii. 4; xv. 2, 8, 36; Psal. xviii. 32; cxiv. 7. Once it has a noun plural joined to it, Job xxxv. 10, "None saith, where is Eloah Gosai, the Almighty my Maker?" to note the mystery of the eternal Trinity. Many times also Elohim, the plural number, is joined with a verb singular; to express more emphatically, this mystery (Gen. xxxv. 7; 2 Sam. vii. 23; Josh. xxiv. 19; Jer. x. 10.) Elohim is also sometimes tropically given to magistrates, because they are God's vicegerents; as to Moses (Exod. vii. 1), Jehovah said unto Moses, I have made thee Elohim to Pharaoh; that is, I have appointed thee an ambassador to represent the

Thus far of the absolute attributes; now of the relative, or such which have reference to the creatures.

Those are five:—1. Life; 2. Understanding; 3. Will; 4. Power; 5. Majesty;

1. The life of God is that by which, as by a most pure and perpetual act, he not only liveth of himself, but is also that ever and overflowing fountain of life, from which all creatures derive their lives (Acts xvii. 25, 26; xiv. 15; Psal. xlii. 2; xxxvi. 19; John v. 26; Heb. iii. 12); so as that in him they live, move, breathe, and have their being. And because only his life differs not from his essence;* therefore God is said only to have immortality (1 Tim. vi. 16.)

2. The understanding, or knowledge of God, is that whereby, by one pure act, he most perfectly knoweth in himself all things that ever were, are, or shall be; yea, the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts (1 Kings viii. 39; Psal. lxiv. 21; cxxxi. 1, &c.; Jer. xvii. 10; xx. 12; Luke xvi. 15; Acts i. 24; Heb. iv. 12; Rom. xi. 33; xvi. 17; 1 Tim. ii. 19; Matt. vii. 13.)

This knowledge of God is either general, by which God knoweth simply all things eternally, the good by himself, the evil by the good opposite to it, imposing to things contingent the lot of contingency, and to things necessary the law of necessity. And thus knowing all things in and of himself, he is the cause of all the knowledge that is in all, both men and angels. Or, secondly, special, called the knowledge of approbation, by which he particularly knoweth, and graciously acknowledgeth, only his elect or his own.

Understanding also contains the wisdom of God, by which he most wisely created all things of nothing, in number, measure; and weight, and still ruleth and disa—

* Hence it is that God is called of the Hebrews Eheies, so likewise Echeies; and as of the Grecians, ὅστις, so also ὅστις; and as of the Latins, primus ens, so also primus vivens; for, to be, and to live, is all one and the same in God.
cause God is three, not by composition of parts, but by co-existence of persons.

Infiniteness is that whereby all things in God are void of all measure, limitation, and bounds above and beneath, before and after.

From these two do necessarily flow three other absolute attributes.

1. Unmeasureableness or ubiquity, whereby he is of infinite extension, filling heaven and earth (Acts vii. 48; Psal clxv; Job xi. 7, &c.; 2 Chron. ii. 5, 6; Psal. cxxxv. 5, &c.; Jer. xxiii. 23, 24), containing all places, and not contained of any space, place, or bounds, and being nowhere absent, is everywhere present.

There are four degrees of God's presence: The first is universal, by which God is replethly everywhere, inclusively nowhere; secondly, special, by which God is said to be in heaven, because that there his power, wisdom, and goodness is in a more excellent manner seen and enjoyed (Psal. xix. 1; Hos. ii. 21); as also because that usually he doth from thence pour forth his blessings and judgments; thirdly, more special, by which God dwelleth in his saints (1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16); fourthly, most special, and altogether singular, by which the whole fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in Christ bodily (Col. ii. 8.)

2. Unchangeableness, whereby God is void of all change, both in respect of his essence and will * (Rom. i. 23; Isa. xl. 28; Psal. cii. 27, &c.; Rev. i. 8; 1 Sam. xv. 29; Numb. xxxiii. 19; Mal. iii. 6; Rom. xi. 29; James i. 18.)

3. Eternity, whereby God is without beginning of days, or end of time, and without all bounds of precession or succession.† (Isa. xxxiv. 6; James v. 19; Dan. vi. 26; Heb. xii; Rev. iv. 8.)

* Penitentia cum deo enunciatur, non affectum in deo, sed effectum Dei in hominibus significat.—Alsted.
† Creatura quodam aeternae sunt a posteriori: a priori solus Deus est aeternus.—Alsted. Lex. Theol. cap. 2.

person of the true three-one God, and to deliver his message and will unto Pharaoh; as oft, therefore, as we read, or hear this name Elohim, it should put us in mind to consider, that in one divine essence there are three distinct Persons, and that God is Jehovah Elohim.

Now follow the Names which signify God's essential Works, which are these five especially:—

1. El, which is as much as the strong God,* and teacheth us, that God is not only most strong, and for-
is found one hundred and thirty-four times in the Old Testament; and logically it is given to creatures, but properly it belongeth to God alone. It is used (Mal. i. 6) in the plural number to note the mystery of the holy Trinity. If I be Adonim, Lords, where is my fear? Adoni, the singular; Adonim, the plural number. This name is given to Christ, Dan. ix. 16, "Cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for Adoni (the Lord Christ) his sake."

The hearing of this holy name may teach every man to obey God's commandments, to fear him alone, to suffer none beside him to reign in his conscience, to lay hold (by a particular hand of faith) upon his word and promise, and to challenge God in Christ to be his God, that he may say with Thomas, "Thou art my Lord and my God."

4. Helion, that is, Most High (Psal. ix. 2; xci. 9; xcii. 9; Dan. iv. 17, 24, 25, 34; Acts vii. 48.) This name Gabriel gives to God, telling the Virgin Mary that the child which should be born of her, should be the Son of the Most High* (Luke i. 32.) This teacheth, that God in his essence and glory exceedeth infinitely all creatures in heaven and earth; secondly, that no man should be proud of any earthly honour or greatness; thirdly, if we desire true dignity, to labour to have communion with God in grace and glory.

5. Abba, a Syriac name, signifying Father (Rom. viii. 15.) This is sometimes used essentially, as in the Lord's prayer; secondly, personally (as Matt. xi. 25.) For God is the Father of Christ by nature, and of Christians by adoption and grace. Christ is called the everlasting Father (Isa. ix. 6), because he regenerates us under the New Testament. God is also called the Father of lights (Jam. i. 17), because God dwelleth in inaccessible light (1 Tim. vi. 16), and is the author not only of the sun's light, but also of all the light, both of natural reason,

and of supernatural grace, which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. This name teacheth us, that all the gifts which we receive from God proceed from his mere fatherly love; secondly, that we should love him again as dear children; thirdly, that we may, in all our needs and troubles, be bold to call upon him as a father for his help and succour. Thus should we not hear of the sacred names of God, but we should thereby be put in mind of his goodness to us, and of our duties to him. And then should we find how comfortable a thing it is to do everything in the name of God,—a phrase usual in every man's tongue, but the true comfort of it, through ignorance, known to few men's hearts.

It is a great wisdom, and an unspeakable matter for the strengthening of a Christian's faith, to know how, in the mediation of Christ, to invoke God by such a name, as whereby he hath manifested himself to be most willing, and best able, to help and succour him in his present need or adversity. The ardent desire of knowing God, is the surest testimony of our love to God, and of God's favour to us. "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name: He shall call upon me, and I will answer him," &c. Psal. xxi. 14, 15. And it is a great strengthening of faith with understanding to begin every action in the name of God.

Thus far of the nominal attributes.

The real attributes are of two sorts; either absolute or relative.

The absolute attributes are such, which cannot in any sort agree to any creature, but to God alone.

These are two, Simplesness and Infiniteness.

Simplesness is that whereby God is void of all composition, division, multiplication, accidents, or parts compounding, either sensible or intelligible; so that what ever he is, he is the same essentially.

It hinders not God's simplesness that he is three,