Theology Proper: The Attributes of God

Westminster Confession of Faith 2.1

I. Introduction: What is Theology Proper, and why is it important?

A. "Theology" is the study of _____, so the doctrine of _____ is called "theology proper."

i. This study of God has two main topics: the attributes of God and the Trinity.

1. WCF 2 treats both topics: 2.1-2 on attributes, 2.3 on the Trinity.

2. _____: what God is like (nature); _____: Who God is (persons).

ii. Treating attributes first, and then the Trinity shows us the _____ of the Godhead.

1. Sections 1-2 describe all 3 persons of the Trinity—Father, Son, & Spirit.

B. Why is theology proper so important?

i. Because you can't have a _____ with someone you don't know!

ii. If it's so important, why is WCF 2 so short? Especially compared to WCF 1!

1. We quickly reach the _____ of human understanding in doctrine of God.

2. And this demonstrates the _____ of WCF's doctrine of God.

II. WCF 2.1: The Incommunicable Attributes of God

A. WCF 2.1 starts by asserting the _____ of God—monotheism! (1 Thess 1:9; Deut 6:4)

i. This helps set up the Trinity: Father, Son, Spirit are not _____!

ii. But this also exposes any other religions as worshiping false & dead gods.

B. Traditionally, we categorize God's attributes as communicable or incommunicable.

i. Communicable: we share in common w/ God, in a creaturely & _____ way

1. Incommunicable: attributes that are completely unique to God.

ii. WCF 2.1 roughly follows this: it starts with incommunicable, God is "_____."

iii. "A most pure spirit, invisible, without body"—God isn't _____ like we are.

1. God created physical existence; he is not bound by it (Jn 4:24; 1 Tim 1:17).

iv. God is not just without body, but also without "parts"—Divine simplicity.

1. This means that God is not a _____ of all his attributes.

2. All of God's attributes describe his nature, not just parts of his nature.

C. God is without "passions" (impassibility) & immutable (Num 23:19; Mal 3:6; Acts 14:15).

i. _____ is often caricatured to mean that God can't relate to humans.

1. _____ is usually caricatured to mean God doesn't have emotions.

ii. God certainly has affections, and he relates intimately with his creation.

1. But God does not _____ in response to his creation.

2. In the incarnation and passion of Jesus, the divine nature remained unchanged and impassible.

D. God is "immense, eternal, incomprehensible" (1 Kgs 8:27; Ps 90:2; Ps 145:3).

III. WCF 2.1: The Communicable Attributes of God

A. When the confession turns to "almighty, most wise, most holy," we get to communicable.

i. Humans can be mighty, only God can be almighty—_____.

ii. Humans can be wise, but only God can be most wise—_____.

iii. Humans can be holy, but only God can be most holy (Isa 6:3).

iv. Freedom & absoluteness plays out in how God _____—he does what he wills

B. The confession next turns to moral attributes, first with the attributes most dear to saints.

i. Central to this section is _____, when the Lord reveals himself to Moses.

ii. God is love, God is just—they aren't _____ of God's character.

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Of God and of the Holy Trinity

1. There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal, most just, and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.