

B. Miller 50th Sermon.

Place: Spring Creek Church.

Time: Sunday Morning service, May 21, 1944.

"THE DOCTRINE OF GOD"

Intro:

To speak of God and His character calls to remembrance many varied experiences. Job had much to share in his misfortunes. During this time God seemed far away. (See Job 23:3,8-9)

The frigid thought of a sense of loneliness had laid its cold hand on Job. Such experiences are as old as the race. We believe in God, but it is of the greatest import what our concept of God is. This determines our pattern and philosophy. Our religion is no greater than our concept of God. William Newton Clark, professor of Christian theology in Colgate University, New York, has given us a definition of God, which we want to use as a basis for our remarks.

"God is a personal Spirit, perfectly good, who in holy love creates, sustains and orders all."

Here we have the nature, character, relation and motive of God.

Body of Sermon:

1. The Nature of God.

God is personal Spirit. This is what Jesus told the woman at the well. What is spirit? Jesus implied that God was immaterial, but what He affirmed was something far more positive and valuable. It is that God is intelligence, mind. He thinks, feels, wills.

These are necessary elements of His being. If God is God, then He must sustain some relation to other existence with respect to presence, knowledge, power. One of the modes of activity that belong to God the Spirit, is:

Omnipresence (everywhere present)

God is not conditioned or limited by space, in His power of acting. We're limited. We can be only at one place at a time. God isn't a local God, but is everywhere at the same time.

See Ps. 139:7-10.

We are apt to confine God to some shrine, region or the starry blue. Tennyson said:

"God is closer than breathing; nearer than hands and feet." When voices are calling, let us be sensitive and cultivate God's presence. In time of test, God is our bulwark; in joy, he rings the bells of heaven; in sorrow, He is our strength and comfort.

The Hymn assures: "In Heavenly love abiding, No change my heart shall fear. And safe is such confiding, For nothing changes here; The storm may roar without me, My heart may low be laid, But God is round about me, And can I be dismayed."

Omniscience (knows all)

God has perfect knowledge of all that is or can be. What does He know?

All that occurs in every place - Prov. 15:3.

All in nature - Psalm 147:4, Matt. 10:29-30, the weather, crops, sparrows, grass.

God knows all men--their thoughts, words and deeds - Ps. 139:1,2,4, and what each will do till eternity.

Omnipotent (all powerful)

All things are possible with Him, but He will do only what Infinite wisdom, holiness and love dictate. If His nature had impelled Him to make the universe more vast, His omnipotence would have been equal to its demands.

Jesus said: "All power is given unto me." Sometimes the wrong one is on the throne of our hearts - Satanic presence. God must have monopoly. For His work to be done, He must have our united wills and forces at His disposal.

Immutable (Always the same)

How changeable we are! God has the game elements to His nature. He may have a variety of ways to execute His ways and will, but He holds to an unchangeable purpose.

2. Character of God.

He is perfectly good. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." He possesses every excellence that can belong to a personal spirit.

Someone said: "God's character is unmixed with evil, unweakened by defect and unsurpassable by degree." His perfect character is expressed in Christ.

Jesus said: "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." Christ brings to man the joy and cheer that springs from confidence in a God of perfect goodness, and adds the strength of hope to every good endeavor. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect,"

3. Relation of God.

Creates. There's a lot of homespun theories about God as Creator. The Bible is a Book in our libraries unused, dust-covered. But here is asserted simply the fact that God has given existence to all things that exist. God is the active cause of the existence in the universe.

Sustains. He who is original cause is perpetual, who preserves existence in a uniform way. The total of God's method in the universe is nature and its regularity.

Orders all. He who creates and sustains the universe is also governing it and directing it to an end. The universe owes its unity to God's oneness. God provides the universe with an end worth existing for and guides it to the fulfillment of its own significance.

4. Motive of God.

What's the motive of God in His relation to other existence? The definition asserts that the motive of God in the universe is holy love.

In holy love, God created the universe. In holy love, He sustains the universe; in holy love, He directs the universe to the end to which He has destined it.

Love has to have an object on whom affection can be bestowed. God manifested His love in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us. His love is redemptive.

The Cross has two posts, The vertical post is a symbol of perfect righteousness and holiness of character. The horizontal post is a symbol of love that includes "whosoever will."

Illus: E.S. Jones tells of a boy who in sin had left home. After a time he wanted to come home, but feared his parents wouldn't receive him back. So he wrote them and said he was boarding a certain train, and if they would receive him back, they should put a white cloth on the old large cherry tree in the front yard, where he could see it from the train.

Coming home, he feared to look. But one sitting near him, said: "Look, there's a cloth on every limb of the tree."

Divine love will heal the wounds. It is a regret that we have used other means. In Christ, God has explained the universe. I pray that we will confirm this testimony of Christ and bear witness to the Holy Love that has produced and governed it.

Conclusion:

Christian friends, we have a great God. Our God is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, immutable, perfect character, holy love in all His dealings. He revealed Himself through Christ.

He takes the initiative. He wants to claim us for His own. God is still on the throne. Our experience need not be like that of Job. But we can be like Paul, who said: "I know in whom I have believed."