

pantheism. These are views of God's relation to the universe. And let's distinguish these views in terms of three components: location, essence, and identity.

By location we are asking whether God and the universe are in the same place or in different places. By essence we are asking whether God and the universe are made of the same stuff or different kinds of stuff. And by identity we are asking whether God and the universe are one being or distinct beings.

Let's look at deism. With regard to location, deism holds that God and the universe are in two separate places. With regard to essence, deism holds that God and the universe are made of different kinds of stuff. And with regard to identity, deism holds that God and the universe are distinct beings.

What about theism? With regard to location, theism holds that God and the universe are in the same place, and that God even transcends or goes beyond the universe. With regard to essence, theism holds that God and the universe are made of different kinds of stuff. And with regard to identity, theism holds that God and the universe are distinct beings.

Pantheism is at the other end of the spectrum from deism. With regard to location, pantheism holds that God and the universe are in the same place. With regard to essence, pantheism holds that God is made of the same stuff as the universe. And with regard to identity, pantheism holds that God and the universe are one being.

So if we say "God is in that tree," we have definitely ruled out deism, but it is not yet clear whether we hold to theism or pantheism. But if we say "God is not only in that tree; He and the tree are one and the same being," then it is clear that we hold to pantheism. And if we say "God is in that tree, but He and the tree are distinct beings," then it is clear that we hold to theism.

Perhaps our understanding can be helped if we think of the physical realm and the spirit realm as occupying the same space. The physical realm or dimension is that which we can see with our physical eyes. The spirit realm or dimension is that which we can "see" with the eyes of faith (i.e., faith as a believing response to a word from God). Both realms occupy the same space. Spirits are not excluded or pushed out of the space that a physical object or body is occupying.

In addition, finite spirits such as human spirits, angelic spirits, and demonic spirits occupy only one location in space at a time, but the Holy Spirit occupies