

derived imperfectly represent him, God is knowable only "insofar as he is represented in the perfections of his creatures."...

After the Reformation Roman Catholic theology returned to the position of scholasticism, and adopted the doctrine of the unknowability of God's being as advanced by Thomas Aquinas. At the Lateran Council, convened by Pope Innocent III, the view: "God is ineffable" was sealed with the stamp of ecclesiastical authority.

The theology of the Reformation did not bring about any change in this view. Luther in his work *De servo arbitrio* differentiated between "the hidden and the revealed God", between "God himself and the Word of God". In his later years he preferred to speak of God as revealed in Christ. He did not teach, however, that the fullness of God's being was revealed in Christ. On the contrary, there remains in God a dark, hidden depth, namely, "God as he is in his own nature and majesty, the absolute God." This hidden depth is "unknowable, incomprehensible, inaccessible". Later Lutheran theologians did not differentiate so sharply between God's being and his revelation, but all teach that it is impossible to give an adequate definition of God or to ascribe an adequate name to him.

Reformed theologians were in agreement with this view. Their deep abhorrence of every kind of deification of the creature led them to differentiate sharply at every turn between that which pertains to God and that which pertains to the creature. More than any other theologians they emphasized the truth, "the finite cannot grasp the infinite." Said Zwingli, "Of ourselves we are as ignorant with respect to the nature of God as is the beetle with respect to the nature of man." Calvin deemed it vain speculation to attempt "an examination of God's essence." It is sufficient for us "to become acquainted with his character and to know what is conformable to his nature." Later theologians affirmed the unknowability of God's being in even stronger terms. As the finite cannot grasp the infinite, God's names serve not to make known to us God's being, but merely to indicate (in a measure and in a manner suited to our understanding) that concerning God which we need to know. The statements: "God cannot be defined; he has no name; the finite cannot grasp the infinite," are found in the works of all the theologians. They unanimously affirm that God is highly exalted above our comprehension, our imagination, and our language. E. g., Polanus states that the attributes ascribed to God in Scripture do not explain his nature and being. They rather show us, "what is not God's essence and character than what is God's essence and character. Whatever is said concerning God is not God, for God is ineffable. No divine attributes reveal sufficiently the essence and nature of God, for that is infinite. That which is finite, moreover, cannot adequately and fully reveal the infinite."

B. Preliminary Considerations Regarding the Doctrine

1. Distinctions between apprehend and comprehend, and between inapprehensibility and incomprehensibility

To apprehend means to know. Apprehension is simply
[omission]