

Henry C. Thiessen, in his *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), p. 126, states:

By the omnipotence of God we mean that He is able to do whatever He wills,...

The possession of omnipotence does not, however imply the exercise of His power, certainly not the exercise of all His power. God can do what He wills to do; but He does not necessarily will to do anything. That is, God has power over His power; otherwise He would act of necessity and cease to be a free being. Nor does omnipotence exclude but rather imply the power of self-limitation. God has limited Himself to some extent by the free will of His rational creatures. That is why He did not keep sin out of the universe by a display of His power; that is also why He does not save anyone by force.

c. God's power and His nature

William G. T. Shedd, in *Dogmatic Theology* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n. d.), Volume One, p. 360, states:

God cannot do anything inconsistent with the perfections of the Divine nature. Under this category, fall the instances mentioned in Heb. 6:18, "It is impossible for God to lie;" and 2 Tim. 2:13, "He cannot deny himself;" and James 1:13, "God cannot be tempted." God cannot sin: (a) Because sin is imperfection, and it is contradictory to say that a necessarily perfect Being may be imperfect. (b) God cannot sin, because he cannot be tempted to sin, and sinning without temptation or motive to sin, is impossible. God cannot be tempted, because temptation implies a desire for some good that is supposed to be greater than what is already possessed. But God cannot see anything more desirable than what he already has; and his understanding is infallible, so that he cannot mistake an apparent for a real good. All such cases, when analyzed, will be found to imply something contradictory to the idea and definition of God. If it could be supposed that God is capable to be tempted and to sin, it would prove that he is not infinite. God is not able to die, to see corruption (Acts 2:27), to become non-existent. This would be finite weakness, not almighty power. Says Augustine (*De Symbolo*, l.i), "God is omnipotent, and yet he cannot die, he cannot lie, he cannot deny himself. How is he omnipotent then? He is omnipotent for the very reason that he cannot do these things. For if he could die, he would not be omnipotent." Again he remarks (*De Civitate*, V. x.) that "the power of God is not diminished when it is said that he cannot die, and cannot sin; for if he could do these things, his power would be less. A being is rightly called omnipotent, from doing what he wills, and not from suffering what he does not will."