

William G. T. Shedd, in his Dogmatic Theology (reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n. d.), Volume One, pp. 359-360, states:

The Divine power is limited only by the absurd and self-contradictory. God can do anything that does not imply a logical impossibility. A logical impossibility means that the predicate is contradictory to the subject; for example, a material spirit, a corporeal deity, a sensitive stone, an irrational man, a body without parts or extensions, a square triangle. These are not objects of power, and therefore it is really no limitation of the Divine omnipotence to say that it cannot create them. They involve the absurdity that a thing can be and not be at the same time. A logical impossibility is, in truth, a nonentity; and to say that God cannot create a nonentity, is not a limitation or denial of power.

e. Summary of these emphases

The power of God is that characteristic by which He is able to do whatever He pleases, whether immediately or mediately, whether apart from means or by means of existing materials and/or secondary causes, whether in regard to nonliving things, nonpersonal living things, or persons

Of course, to assert the possession of this ability is not to assert the necessity of its exertion. God is able to do whatever He pleases; there is no necessity that He do anything except as He wills it.

However, it can be asserted that whatever God does, He does because He has willed it; and that whatever God wills, He wills not contrary to, but in accordance with, His nature. Thus His actions express His will, and His will reflects His nature.

It flows from this principle that there are some things which God cannot do:

God cannot look favorably or complacently on sin. Habakkuk 1:13 says, "Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil, And Thou canst not look on wickedness with favor."

God cannot be tempted with sin, cannot be enticed to moral evil. James 1:13 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God;' for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone."

God cannot lie. Titus 1:2 speaks of "the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ago" and Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man, that He should lie."

God cannot deny Himself. II Timothy 2:13 states, "if we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself."