

THEOLOGY PROPER (19)

(Weakness #1)- Deism denies the Bible.

The Bible clearly teaches that God is very closely associated with **all** of His creation, in a very intimate way (i.e. Matthew 10:29-3).

(Weakness #2)- Deism attacks God's Character.

God reveals that He is a Sovereign God who providentially governs everything (i.e. Is.46: 10-11). Deism attacks the character of God in that it denies that He is providentially governing all things and theorizes that the world is operating by some natural scientific "iron clad system of laws." (Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p.166)

(Weakness #3)- Deism promotes an unpleasant Faith.

One's faith system as it pertains to God determines one's ability to please God. In Hebrews 11:6, clearly the assumption is God can and will reward one who comes to Him with a proper faith system. Since Deism denies God's personal involvement with this world, it must also deny God's personal involvement with man. Therefore, it promotes a faith that does not please God, nor a faith that God will reward.

(Weakness #4)- Deism promotes an ungodly Lifestyle.

Obviously, if God is nowhere to be seen or found, man can just call his own shots and live life his own way. Such a mindset becomes impetus for a godless lifestyle. Accountability to God is dismissed in a faith system that says God has abandoned all things Man is left to do whatever He desires.

Deism is a false and dangerous faith system. Charles Baker observes: "While few today go under the name of Deist, the basic tenants of Deism are doubtless held by many people. If they are not outspoken Deists, they are virtual Deists. One who behaves as though God had never spoken, who disregards the Bible, who never prays, who finds the material world sufficient for all his needs, who thinks that God is billions of light years away and is completely disinterested in how may behaves- such an one does not need to pin the label of Deism upon himself." But, we might add, that is precisely what he is. (Baker, p. 108)

Faith System #5- Polytheism.

This is the faith system that believes there is more than one God. This belief allows for the existence of many "gods". The roots of polytheism can be found in the dark, foolish, empty imaginations and speculations of men (i.e. Rom. 1:21-23). Polytheism is clearly a corrupt faith system that denies the existence of the one and only true God, plus it destroys the potential accountability that man has to the one and only true God.

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The belief in the existence of one God is called monotheism, whereas the belief in the existence of many gods is called polytheism. Polytheism is a system that worships things God has created, thus making the created thing a god. Such things as nature, vegetation, herbs, animals, humans, serpents, cattle, agriculture, love, fertility, healing and war are all things that humans have worshipped. The Greeks were the people who really refined polytheism. They invented a variety of "gods" and gave them names- Zeus, Aphrodite, Hermes, Apollo, Artemis, Dionysus and Poseidon and just a few of the gods the Greek culture invented.

It is estimated today that polytheism is still a primary system of belief among millions of people. In fact, as one writer said: "Except for the great monotheisms of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the world's religions are overwhelmingly polytheistic." (D.B. Fletcher, Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, p.861)

There are obviously many things wrong with this belief system:

(Weakness #1)- It is rooted in Mythology not Reality.

A myth is a nonexistent, imaginary story or legend. According to Webster, it is a fictitious account of a person or thing that has no real existence (Webster, p.660). A myth cannot be logically proved, for the moment it can be logically proved, it ceases to be a myth. Theism can be logically proved, polytheism cannot. It is beyond reason to devote one's worship to a myth.

(Weakness #2)- It is rooted in the Darkened heart of man. Rom. 1:21-22

Polytheism was invented by the imaginations and speculations of men whose heads were darkened and hardened against the truth of God. Polytheism was not invented by men searching for reality, but by men inventing their own unreality.

(Weakness #3)- It is contradictory to the Word of God. Deut.6:4; Is.44:6; I Cor.8:4; Eph.4:6

The Bible very clearly establishes that there is only one God. To accept a polytheistic belief system is to deny the Bible.

(Weakness #4)- It is opposed to the Law of God. Ex. 20:1-3; Deut. 5:7; 6:13-14; Mt. 4:10

The first of the ten commandments is to worship no other "god" but the **one and only true God of the Bible**. To have more than one God, is to live life in direct contradiction to God's law.

(Weakness #5)- It denies the Personality of God.

Polytheism is a direct attack against the Person of God. It lowers God and makes Him a thing or being much less than He really is. Polytheism is a direct assault on the character of God.

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(Weakness #6)- It denies the Transcendence of God.

According to Romans 1:19-20, God's transcendence has been clearly on display and recognized ever since creation. In other words, creation clearly signals to man that there is a powerful God who is far superior to everything else. This God has made all things. Polytheism attacks God in that it does not acknowledge His superiority, but, in fact, denies His superiority and makes many things equal to God.

(Weakness #7)- It denies the future Judgment of God.

Obviously, if a person invents, in his mind, the myth that there are many "gods", it eliminates, his thinking, the possibility of being accountable to the One true God. The Bible makes in very clear, however, that regardless of what man believes, the reality is, **all** will be judged by God.

Polytheism is a foolish, fictional, false system of belief. As Thiessen said: "When we consider the fact that literally hundreds of millions of people still bow down to sticks and stones, We cannot but realize what a strong affinity polytheism has for fallen human nature." (Thiessen, p.72)

Faith System #6- Pantheism.

Pantheism is the belief that everything is God, Dr. Chafer defined pantheism as "...the belief that God is everything and that everything is God" (Vol.1, p.173) The term "pantheist" was first used by John Toland in 1705 who used it to refer to a philosophical system that identified everything in the world as God. The word itself comes from two Greek words, "pan"(Παν) meaning all or every, and "theos"(θεός) meaning God. The combination of the two words mean "all is God or everything is God."

In the belief system of Pantheism, all is God and God is all, In the pantheistic belief system there are two different concepts:

Pantheistic Concept #1- This is the concept that believes all matter is God.

In this view, for example, God is sky, sun, moon and trees. God is a bull, a snake or a piece of wood. All matter is God.

Pantheistic Concept #2- This is the concept that believes all non-matter is God.

In this view, matter is just an impression or delusion, but the unseen force or spirit or mind behind it is God.

Seneca, the famed tutor of Nero, who wrote extensively on Stoic philosophy, asks and answers the question of God as a pure pantheist: "What is God?" "He is all that you see, and all that you do not see." (Chafer, Vol.1, p174).

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In the Pantheistic belief system, there is absolutely no distinction between the Creator and the creation. There is no distinction between the Potter and the Clay. There is no distinction between the Infinite and the Finite. This then logically means there is no distinction between what is Holy and what is sinful. To the pantheist, it is all one and the same Whatever is, is God.

Obviously there are many major weaknesses in this belief system:

(Weakness #1)- It is not Logical.

This belief system is contrary to logical reason and is completely irrational. For example, by pure logical deduction we could legitimately reason that something with more attributes is greater than something with lesser attributes. For example, we could logically conclude that the attributes of a little child are far superior to the attributes of a turtle or piece of wood. To make everything God is very foolish.

(Weakness #2)- It is not Biblical.

Obviously, this system of belief is in direct contradiction to the Bible and the One God who it reveals. Any honest pantheist must give an answer to the one God who is carefully identified in the Bible. All false systems contradict the Bible.

(Weakness #3)- It attacks God's Person.

Pantheism denies God's Personality in that it makes anything God and it denies His transcendence in that it makes inferior things actually out to be God. Pantheism makes the Infinite God, finite. It lowers God to any level which any mind desires to make Him. It allows anything to be God and this is a direct attack against God's character.

(Weakness #4)- It disregards future Judgment.

To the pantheist, there is no accountability to the Holy God, for each man may in fact be a god. This method of thinking leads, as Dr. Chafer said, "to blasphemy and licentiousness." (Ibid. p. 175) The pantheist can, do whatever he wants, dismissing from his-mind the fact that he will face God.

(Weakness #5)- It destroys Holiness.

Pantheism is a dangerous heresy which distorts the concept of sin and therefore destroys the concept of Holiness. Naturally, if everything is God or if God is all, then God must be involved in sin and sin must be "an activity of God." To the Pantheist, sin is just an undeveloped good. Charles Baker cites a good illustration when he says to the Pantheist, for example, water is water whether or not it is in the sewer or drinking fountain, and God is God, "Whether in a scoundrel or a saint." (Baker, p. 107)

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Charles Hodge gives another perspective of the Pantheistic view when he says: "Water is water, whether in the puddle or in the ocean; and God is God in Nero or St John." (Vol.1, p.305) Dr. Hodge goes on to cite the teachings of Spinoza- a Jewish, heretical, philosopher who was expelled from the Synagogue in 1656 and a promoter of Pantheism. This quote shows how a Pantheist tampers with sin:

".. sin is nothing positive. It exists for us but not for God. The same things which appear in men are regarded with admiration in animals, ...It follows then that sin, which expresses an imperfection, cannot consist in anything which expresses a reality. We speak improperly applying human language to what is above human language, when we say that we sin against God, or that men offend God." (Vol.1, p.305)

Obviously such reasoning destroys the concept of holiness. To this system, there is nothing that God, for God is part of everything, including sinful things. Pantheism promotes an "anything goes", "anything is okay" lifestyle. It eliminates any need for holiness for it makes sin part of holiness.

Pantheism is nothing more than a philosophical false theory which cannot be proved by reason or by revelation. Every human being logically knows everything cannot be God. Every human being logically knows there is a major difference between good and evil. As Hodge said: "Had we no divine revelation on the subject, Theism merely as a theory could not fail to secure the assent of every devout mind in preference to Pantheism." (Ibid., p.332)

It is clear that the **only** faith system that can be supported from the Bible, from facts and from sound reason is that of Theism, the belief in the existence of a personal God. All other faith systems could be classified as Antithetic, they contradict both God and His word. Theism is the **only** faith system that will satisfy the needs of the mind, heart and soul. All other systems will fall short and leave one empty.

To the person looking to believe the facts, to the one looking to believe what is most logical, we remind them of a key scientific rule: "Do not deny something you have not put to the test." Any person who is willing to put "Theism" to the test, will discover the evidence overwhelming and consistently proves it is absolutely true.

QUESTION #7- How does God reveal Himself in the Bible?

Having examined the introductory material concerning Theology Proper, including the philosophical proofs for the existence of God and an overview of faith systems, we now come to a consideration of the factual, Biblical record of the Person and Work of God, as clearly seen in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

As we will observe, it is impossible to completely define God, but it is possible to accurately understand all that God wants us to know about Him, God has given a written revelation that