

Box 80A (1)

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GOD IS SPIRIT  
LIGHT  
LOVE

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"THE PROTESTANT FAITH"

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What we believe about God is of immense importance to the way we live and to our happiness. From God's word in scripture we learn that we are under God's condemnation for our wrongdoings but we also learn that Jesus conquered sin through His death on the cross so that all who accept Him as their Lord and God may be forgiven and restored to the relationship of being the children of God with the prospect of eternal fellowship and happiness in His presence not only now but after death and throughout eternity.

The apostle John was one of the closest of Jesus' disciples and in his writings in the New Testament he makes three great statements about God's nature.

The first is in John 4:24 "God is spirit". This means that God is a person like ourselves in that He has personal relationships. He is not merely an impersonal force or influence, but is a person with interests, with purpose, with will. Jesus said God is Spirit and they that worship Him (that is to say those who are in relationship with Him) must worship Him in spirit and in truth. As we draw near to God in prayer we must do so from the centre of our true personality. There must be nothing artificial or indirect as we speak to God. It is like friendship. You cannot be a friend of someone if you always address them in an artificial way or indirectly through somebody else. God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit. We should see to it that our relationship to God is genuine, sincere, from the bottom of our heart: let us ask for His full forgiveness and accept Him as our true Lord and God.

Jesus added - they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Once again you cannot be related to a friend in the area of falsehood, if you pretend to

be other than you are that friendship has no future. Our friendship and fellowship with God must be based on truth. We must acknowledge ourselves as sinners and ask for His forgiveness.

The second great statement that John makes about God is in 1 John 1 "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all". All our relationships with persons if they are to be true must be on the basis of what is right and just and fair. Justice, fairness and righteousness are the basic ingredients of all relationships with other people and this is the prerequisite of our relationship with God. God is light and we must walk in light if we are to be related to Him, otherwise we simply evoke and receive His eternal wrath. That is why we need to repent of our untruthful, Godless, self-centred way of life, ask for forgiveness and be restored to His friendship, for God is light and we dare not trifle with this truth. We must walk in light, being just and fair to others as well as being true to God.

The other great statement of St. John about God's nature is in the fourth chapter of his letter in which he says God is love. This is perhaps the best known of the three and it conveys the wonderful fact that God, just and upright person that He is, is utterly unselfish. He finds His interests in us; He loves us so much that He gave Himself for us in order to rescue us from the rule of darkness to bring us into His presence as forgiven children. God is love, Jesus died for us, and His love extends to every little detail of daily life. His infinite mind knows everything about us and cares for every need; we should respond by love and trust in Him and imitate His character by finding our interests in other people, in extending true love to those whom we meet and who are in our sphere of life. We must never treat people with indifference; God never does this, for God is love. God cares for us.

So we have these three great affirmations, God is Spirit, that He is a true person and we must be related to Him in a true personal way. God is light, never will He overlook the slightest deviation from what is upright; and God is love - He gave Himself for our sins that we might be completely forgiven if we turn to Him. And He will give us His Spirit, that is, His own presence so we ourselves might walk uprightly doing the fair and just things to others by His help and walk in love not only to God who has such a wonderful future for us, but in love for one another, for as St. John says "how can we say we love God whom we have not seen as yet if we do not love our fellow man whom we have seen!"

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