

very nature. While the author often expresses his reaction or response to these attributes, the attributes and the response are quite clearly distinguished from one another.

The attributes are inseparable from the being or essence of God. Some earlier theologies thought of the attributes as somehow adhering to or being at least in some way distinguishable from the underlying substance or being or essence. In many cases, this idea was based upon the Aristotelian conception of substance and attribute. Some other theologies have gone to the opposite extreme, virtually denying that God has an essence. Here the attributes are pictured as a sort of collection of qualities. They are thought of as fragmentary parts or segments of God. It is better to conceive of the attributes of God as his nature, not as a collection of fragmentary parts nor as something in addition to his essence. Thus, God is his love, holiness, and power. These are but different ways of viewing the unified being, God. God is richly complex, and these conceptions are merely attempts to grasp different objective aspects or facets of his being.

A working definition:

The attributes of God are those constant characteristics, qualities, or perfections of God's nature, being, or essence, which are revealed in the Scriptures and (to some extent and degree) in the created universe.

2. Classification of God's characteristics or attributes

Although God's constant characteristics have been classified in many different ways, we will employ the incommunicable/communicable distinction.

The incommunicable characteristics of God are those which are uniquely God's, which emphasize the absolute distinction between God and His creation.