

Charles Hodge, in his *Systematic Theology* (Washington: Scribner, 1871), Volume One, p. 409, says:

By absolute power, as understood by the schoolmen and some of the later philosophers, is meant power free from all the restraints of reason and morality. According to this doctrine, contradictions, absurdities, and immoralities, are all within the compass of the divine power. Nay, it is said that God can annihilate Himself....

It is, however, involved in the very idea of power, that it has reference to the production of possible effects. It is no more a limitation of power that it cannot effect the impossible, than it is of reason that it cannot comprehend the absurd, or of infinite goodness that it cannot do wrong. It is contrary to its nature. Instead of exalting, it degrades God, to suppose that He cannot be other than He is, or that He can act contrary to infinite wisdom and love. When, therefore, it is said that God is omnipotent because He can do whatever He wills, it is to be remembered that his will is determined by his nature. It is certainly no limitation to perfection to say that it cannot be imperfect.

d. The limitations on God's power

Millard J. Erickson, in his *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), Volume 1, pp. 277-278, states:

There are, however, certain qualifications of this all-powerful character of God. He cannot arbitrarily do anything whatsoever that we may conceive of. He can do only those things which are proper objects of his power. Thus, he cannot do the logically absurd or contradictory. He cannot make square circles or triangles with four corners. He cannot undo what happened in the past, although he may wipe out its effects or even the memory of it. He cannot act contrary to his nature—he cannot be cruel or unconcerned. He cannot fail to do what he has promised. In reference to God's having made a promise and having confirmed it with an oath, the writer to the Hebrews says: "So that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we... might have strong encouragement." (Heb. 6:18) All of these "inabilities," however, are not weaknesses, but strengths. The inability to do evil or to lie or to fail is a mark of positive strength rather than failure.

Stephen Charnock, in *The Existence and Attributes of God* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1958), pp. 375-379, states:

The impossibility of God's doing some things, is no infringing of his almightiness, but rather a strengthening of it. It is granted that some things God cannot do; or rather, as Aquinas and others, it is better to say, such things cannot be done, than to say that God cannot do them; to remove all kind