

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”,
Message # 9 – “The Immensity of God”, Presented in the Adult
Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 9th, 2016.**

Chapter 2 – Of God and the Holy Trinity, Paragraph 1 -

The Lord our God is but (a)one only living and true God; whose (b)subsistence is in and of Himself, (c)infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; (d)a most pure spirit, (e) invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is (f)immutable, (g)immense, (h)eternal, incomprehensible, (i)almighty, every way infinite, (k)most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; (l)working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, (m)for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; (n)the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just (o)and terrible in his judgments, (p)hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the (q)guilty.

a 1st Corinthians 8: 4 and 6; Deuteronomy 6: 4; b Jeremiah 10: 10; Isa 48: 12; c Exodus 3: 14; d John 4: 24; e 1st Timothy 1: 17; Deut. 4: 15-16; f Malachi 3:6; g 1st Kings 8: 27; Jeremiah 23: 23; h Psalm 90: 2; j Genesis 17: 1; k Isa 6: 3; l Psalm 115: 3; Isa 46: 10; m Pro 16: 4; Rom 11: 36; n Exodus 34: 6-7; Hebrews 11:6; o Nehemiah 9: 32-33; p Psalm 5: 5-6; q Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1: 2-3

The Westminster Shorter Catechism states in Question 4 – “What is God?” “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”

1. God’s Immensity –

Today we want to think together about our God’s Immensity. All of God’s attributes are not parts of God, but each of His attributes is of the Essence of God. They are not extensions of His Essence. They are what He is essentially. When we say that God is Immense, we are saying that He is wholly present in every place and with all of His creatures at all times. God’s Immensity is also known to many people as His Omnipresence. The word “Immensity” gets at the greatness and the extensiveness of God’s presence.

Jeremiah 23: 23 and 24 – “Am I a God near at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off?” “Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?” says the Lord; Do I not fill heaven and earth.”

The context of these verses is that God is addressing the false prophets in Jerusalem who had caused the people to err because they themselves were hypocrites. Verse 14 states that they committed adultery and walked in lies; they strengthened the hands of evildoers, so that no one turned back from their wickedness. All of them were like Sodom to God, and like the inhabitants of Gomorrah. Therefore he was going to bring judgment upon them. In verse 17 it says that these false prophets would continually say to those who despised God, “The Lord has said, ‘You shall have peace, and to everyone who walks according to the imagination of his own heart, ‘No evil shall come upon you. But most certainly God did see what they were doing, and He was most surely going to judge them.

The problem with these people, Jeremiah says, is that they thought that God was only a God who was near and not a God who was afar off. In other words, they believed that God was in heaven and did not take notice of many of the things that went on, on the earth. God answers them, through the words of the prophet in verse 23, that He is both a God who is near and afar off. He is in both places, heaven and earth, because in His essence He fills both heaven and earth.

John Calvin in his commentary on this verse - ***Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith Jehovah?***, says:

This must not be refinedly explained of the infinite essence of God. It is indeed true, that his essence extends through heaven and earth, as it is interminable. But Scripture will not have us to feed on frivolous and unprofitable notions; it teaches only what avails to promote true religion. What therefore God declares here, that he fills heaven and earth, ought to be applied to his providence and his power; as though he had said, that he is not so taken up with things in heaven that he neglects the concerns of earth, as profane men dream; but he is said to fill heaven and earth, because he governs all things, because all things are noticed by him, because he is, in short, the judge of the world. We now perceive what the Prophet means; and this passage is entitled to particular notice, because this error of imagining a God like ourselves is inbred almost in us all. Hence it is, that men allow themselves so much liberty; for they consider it a light thing to discharge their duty towards God, because they reflect not what sort of being he is, but they think of him according to their own understanding and character. As, then, we are thus gross in our ideas, it becomes us carefully to reflect on this passage, where God declares, that he is not only a God near at hand, that is, that he is not like us, who have only a limited power of seeing, but that he sees in the thickest darkness as well as in the clearest light; and that therefore it avails those nothing to deceive themselves who dig for themselves caverns, as it is said in Isaiah, and hide themselves in deep labyrinths. (Isaiah 2:21.) He thus denies that they gain anything, and gives this as the reason, "Because he fills heaven and earth;" that is, his providence, his power, and his justice are so diffused everywhere, that wherever men betake themselves, it is impossible for them to be concealed from him."

This will be confirmed for us if we will turn over to Psalm 139, verses 1-15 –

"For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You. For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth."

We can say from these verses that if the Lord has searched us and known us; knows our sitting down and rising up, and understands our thought from afar, that He must be in every place possible. He is acquainted with all of our ways, knows all the words that I speak before I speak

them. Verse 7 perfectly conveys to us the meaning of Immensity: “Where can I go from Your Spirit?” “Or where can I flee from Your presence.” A person cannot go anywhere where God is not. Heaven – He is there. Hell – He is there. For the Christian, this is very good news, because he knows that wherever he is, in whatever stage of his life, God’s hand shall be leading and His right hand shall hold us, all the way to death, and beyond, to glory. He sees us equally clearly whether in darkness or light. He was the One who formed our inward parts when we were made in our mother’s womb. God skillfully wrought the lowest parts of the earth because it was very clear to Him what He wanted to do.

John Gill says on this verse – O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me: “The omniscience of God reaches to all persons and things; but the psalmist only takes notice of it as respecting himself. God knows all men in general, and whatever belongs to them; he knows his own people in a special manner; and he knows their particular persons, as David and others: and this knowledge of God is considered after the manner of men, as if it was the fruit of search, to denote the exquisiteness of it; as a judge searches out a cause, a physician the nature of a disease, a philosopher the reason of things; who many times, after all their inquiries, fail in their knowledge; but the Lord never does: his elect lie in the ruins of the fall, and among the men of the world; he searches them out and finds them; for He knows where they are, and the time of finding them, and can distinguish them in a crowd of men from others, and notwithstanding the sad case they are in, and separates them from them; and he searches into them, into their most inward part, and knows them infinitely better than their nearest relations, friends and acquaintance do; he knows that of them and in them, which none but they themselves know; their thoughts, and the sin that dwells in them: yea, he knows more of them and in them than they themselves, Jeremiah 17: 9. And he knows them after another manner than he does other men: there are some whom in a sense he knows not; but these he knows, as he did David, so as to approve of, love and delight in, Matthew 7: 23.”

Listen to John Leadley Dagg in his Manual of Theology: “A man who sincerely believes the omnipresence of God, cannot be indifferent to religion. To realize that the moral Governor of the universe is ever near, in all his holiness and power, and as much present as if he were nowhere else, must awaken solicitude. When a sense of guilt oppresses, the presence of such a companion becomes intolerable. The guilty man strives to flee from the presence of God, as Jonah did; but the doctrine of God’s omnipresence teaches him that the attempt is unavailing. The power of conscience tormenting the guilty man, wherever he goes, is terrible; but the presence of the God against whom he has sinned, and whose wrath he dreads, is still more terrible. To the soul, reconciled to God, the doctrine is full of consolation. In every place, in every condition, to have with us an almighty friend, a kind father, is a source of unspeakable comfort and joy. We need not fear, though we pass through fire or flood, if God be with us. Even in the valley of the shadow of death, we may fear no evil. In every circumstance and trial, it conduces to holiness, to know that God is present.

A few more Verses –

Proverbs 15: 3 – “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.”

This is a wonderful verse as not only does God know whatever goes on in every place because He fills every place, but He is keeping watch on the evil and the good. In other words, He is

providentially able to intervene at a moment's notice, if it His will to do something about every situation that His people are in. He is their defense and He is their help.

1st Kings 8: 27 – “But will indeed God dwell on the earth?” “Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You.” “How much less this temple which I have built!”

2nd Chronicles 6: 18 – “But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth?” “Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; how much less this temple which I have built!”

Isaiah 66: 1 and 2 – “Thus says the Lord: ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool’ “Where is the house that you will build Me?” “And where is the place of My rest?” “For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist, says the Lord.”

William Cowper, Hymn # 309 in the Trinity Hymnal, Verse 2 –

“For Thou, within no walls confined, inhabitest the humble mind; such ever bring Thee where they come, and going take Thee to their home.”

The God-Man – In His Deity is Omnipresent John 3: 13 – “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is the Son of Man who in heaven.”

John Gill says on this verse – “but he that came down from heaven; meaning himself, who is the Lord from heaven, and came from thence to do the will of God by preaching the Gospel, working miracles, obeying the law, and suffering death in the room of his people, and thereby obtaining eternal redemption for them. Not that he brought down from heaven with him, either the whole of his human nature, or a part of it; either an human soul, or an human body; nor did he descend locally, by change of place, he being God omnipresent, infinite and immense, but by assumption of the human nature into union with his divine person:

even the son of man which is in heaven; at the same time he was then on earth: not that he was in heaven in his human nature, and as he was the son of man; but in his divine nature, as he was the Son of God; see John 1: 18; though this is predicated of his person, as denominated from the human nature, which was proper to him only in his divine nature; for such is omnipresence, or to be in heaven and earth at the same time: just as on the other hand God is said to purchase the church with his blood, and the Lord of glory is said to be crucified, Acts 20: 28, where those things are spoken of Christ, as denominated from his divine nature, which were proper only to his human nature; and is what divines call a communication of idioms or properties; and which will serve as a key to open all such passages of Scripture: and now as a proof of our Lord's having been in heaven, and of his being a teacher come from God, and such an one as never was, or can be, he opens and explains a type respecting himself, in the following verse.”

