

The Omnipresence of God

Scripture Reading: Psalm 139.1-16.

Key Verse: "Am I a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? says the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? says the Lord." Jeremiah 23.23&4

By the omnipresence of God we mean that God in the completeness of His being fills the totality of creation. What an inspiring and yet terrible thought. How we view this attribute of God depends on where we stand in relation to Calvary, whether we stand in wrath or in mercy, whether we are running from God or to Him.

God's omnipresence is not material, but essential.

An atheist once wrote 'God is nowhere' but his small child mis-read it as 'God is now here' and in the discussion that followed he came to faith in Christ. Looking for God in space is as illusive as trying to put gravity in a container. Language such as that found in Psalm 113.5 or Isaiah 57.15 is symbolic, but states a reality. For God is spirit (John 4.24) and those who approach Him must do so in spirit, and do it correctly. This is why the Russian spacemen looked through the windows of their space ship and could not see Him. They thought that because they could not see Him that he was not there. They needed to read the Bible.

God's omnipresence is not symbolic but actual.

Another error that must be avoided is to think that the idea of God being everywhere is simply rhetorical. King David affirmed with assurance, 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?' Psalm 139.7. Those who know God know where to find Him - anywhere. How to find Him is another matter!

An illustration of this is the person which lives in our own bodies. Where

in the body do we find that self aware being that co-exists in life, the soul or the person? In the brain? And yet we can examine the brain and never find the real person. Nor can we find the seat of life. Every organ, tissue, and cell has its allotment of life and is important to the well being of the whole. Life and personhood is both everywhere and in every atom.

David's answer to his question 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?' was in part, 'If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there'. Psalm 139 What then is this 'hell' to which he refers. It is the Hebrew word 'sheol' which may be defined as:

sheol- the underworld, grave, hell, pit or the underworld, the old Testament designation for the abode of the unrighteous dead.

Jesu's story of the rich man and Lazarus is an illustration of the omnipresence of God over the abode of the unrighteous dead. See Luke 16.19-31 (The omnipresence of God was not the reason Jesus told the story.)

We also must beware of the error of pantheism which binds God within creation. God is free and has assumed omnipresence voluntarily in

the act of creation. God is not found in creation, but anywhere in creation He may be found by those who seek for Him with all their heart (Jeremiah 29.13, Luke 11.9)

AJ Gordon said, 'In mathematics the whole is equal to the sum of its parts. But we know of the Spirit that every part is equal to the whole.' Every true church has just as much of Jesus Christ as any other. He is in the midst. Just the same Jesus can be in each individual believer and each can be in Him. Likewise 'all are one in Christ Jesus'.

This is the meaning behind the words of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4.6&7 when he said, '(There is) one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' The all here is the body of Christ, the 'you', true church to which it was written

God's omnipresence is not ethereal but dependable.

God is not a psychological idea which

stimulates the religious to perform good work by positive thinking, although much contemporary Christian religion may pass off in this guise. God is rather a real being who is active in creation, and who is active

in the lives and hearts of His people.

Because God is omnipresent:

He is in the midst of His people, no matter how many or how few Matthew 18.20 cf Luke 24.36.

He is with His people wherever they may be. Matthew 28.20, Joshua 1.5,

Isaiah 8.8 & 41.10.

He will hear our prayer wherever we are. Jeremiah 29.12-14, Matthew 6.6.

We can call upon Him in any difficult situation See 2 Chronicles 15.1&2 and 4 and compare 1 Corinthians 10.13.

God can call upon anything anywhere

to meet the need of His people Psalm 50.10&11, Psalm 104.24 and Philippians 4.18&19.

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Isaiah 55.6

A parish priest with great insight
Climbed high up in the church's steeple
To be near God so that he might
Hand his word down to the people.

In sermon script he daily fed
What he thought was sent from heaven

Dropping it down on the peoples head,
Two times, one day in seven.

One day God said, 'Come down and die,'
And he cried from up in the steeple
'Where art thou Lord?' the Lord's reply,
'Down here among all my people.' Anon

Bibliography: Strong A H, Systematic Theology 1907 Twentieth Edition 1958

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