

Westminster Shorter Catechism Project

Body of Divinity
Contained in
Sermons upon the Assembly's Catechism
by the
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Chapter 3.
The Being of God

Q3: What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A: The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q4: What is God?

A: God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Here is: I. Something implied. That there is a God. II. Expressed. That he is a Spirit. III. What kind of Spirit?

I. Implied. That there is a God. The question, What is God? takes for granted that there is a God. The belief of God's essence is the foundation of all religious worship. 'He that comes to God must believe that he is' (Heb. 11:6). There must be a first cause, which gives being to all things besides. We know that there is a God--

[1] By the book of nature. The notion of a Deity is engraven on man's heart; it is demonstrable by the light of nature. I think it hard for a man to be a natural atheist; he may wish there were no God, he may dispute against a Deity, but he cannot in his judgment believe there is no God, unless by accumulated sin his conscience be seared, and he has such a lethargy upon him, that he has sinned away his very sense and reason.

[2] We know that there is a God by his works, and this is so evident a demonstration of a Godhead, that the most atheistical spirits, when they have considered these works, have been forced to acknowledge some wise and supreme maker of these things; as is reported of Galen and others. We will begin with the creation of the glorious fabric of heaven and earth. Sure there must be some architect or first cause. The world could not make itself. Who could hang the earth on nothing but the great God? Who could provide such rich furniture for the heavens, the glorious constellations, the firmament bespangled with such glittering lights? We see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. Who could give the earth its clothing, cover it with grass and corn, adorn it with flowers, enrich it with gold? God only. (Job 38:4). Who but God could make the sweet music in the heavens, cause the angels to join in concert, and sound forth the praises of their Maker? 'The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy' (Job 38:7). If a man should go into a far country, and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these built themselves, but that some greater power had built them. To imagine that the work of the creation was not framed by God, is as if we should conceive a curious landscape to be drawn by a pencil without the hand of an artist. 'God that made the world, and all things therein' (Acts 17:24). To create is proper to the Deity. The wise government of all things evinces there is a God. God is the great superintendent of the world, he holds the golden reins of government in his hand, guiding all things most regularly and harmoniously to their proper end. Who that eyes Providence but must be forced to acknowledge there is a God? Providence is the queen and governess of the world; it is the hand that turns the wheel of the whole creation; it sets the sun its race, the sea its bounds. If God did not guide the world, things would run into disorder and confusion. When one looks on a clock, and sees the motion of the wheels, the striking of the hammer, the hanging of the plummets, he would say, some artificer made it; so, when we see the excellent order and harmony in the universe, the sun, that great luminary, dispensing its light and heat to the world, without which the

world were but a grave or a prison; the rivers sending forth their silver streams to refresh the bodies of men, and prevent a drought; and every creature acting within its sphere, and keeping its due bounds; we must needs acknowledge there is a God, who wisely orders and governs all these things. Who could set this great army of the creatures in their several ranks and squadrons, and keep them in their constant march, but He, whose name is the Lord of Hosts? And as God does wisely dispose all things in the whole regiment of the creatures, so, by his power, he supports them. Did God suspend and withdraw his influence ever so little, the wheels of the creation would unpin, and the axletree break asunder. All motion, the philosophers say, is from something that is unmoveable. As for example, the elements are moved by the influence and motion of the heavenly bodies; the sun and moon, and these planets, are moved by the highest orb, called *Primum Mobile*; now, if one should ask, Who moves that highest orb, or is the first mover of the planets? It can be no other than God himself.

Man is a microcosm or lesser world. The excellent contexture and frame of his body is wrought curiously as with needlework. 'I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth' (Ps. 139:15). This body is endowed with a noble soul. Who but God could make such a union of different substances as flesh and spirit? In him we live, and move, and have our being. The quick motion of every part of the body shows there is a God. We may see something of him in the sparkling of the eye; and if the cabinet of the body be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? The soul has a celestial brightness in it; as Damascene says, 'It is a diamond set in a ring of clay.' What noble faculties is the soul endowed with! Understanding, Will, Affections are a glass of the Trinity, as Plato speaks. The matter of the soul is spiritual, it is a divine spark lighted from heaven; and being spiritual, is immortal, as Scaliger notes; *anima non senescit*; 'the soul does not wax old,' it lives for ever. Who could create a soul ennobled with such rare angelic properties but God? We must needs say as the Psalmist, 'It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves' (Ps. 100:3).

[3] We may prove a Deity by our conscience. Conscience is God's deputy or vicegerent. Conscience is a witness of a Deity. If there were no Bible to tell us there is a God, yet conscience might. Conscience, as the apostle says, 'either accuseth' or 'excuseth' (Rom. 2:15). It acts in order to a higher judicatory. Natural conscience, being kept free from gross sin, excuses. When a man does virtuous actions, lives soberly and righteously, observes the golden maxim, doing to others as he would have them do to him, then conscience approves, and says, Well done. Like a bee it gives honey. Natural conscience in the wicked accuses. When men go against its light they feel the worm of conscience. *Eheu! quis intus scorpio?* [Alas! What scorpion lurks within?] Seneca. Conscience, being sinned against, spits fire in men's faces, fills them with shame and horror. When the sinner sees a handwriting on the wall of conscience, his countenance is changed. Many have hanged themselves to quiet their conscience. Tiberius the emperor, a bloody man, felt the lashes of his conscience; he was so haunted with that fury, that he told the senate, he suffered death daily. What could put a man's conscience into such an agony but the impression of a Deity, and the thoughts of coming before his tribunal? Those who are above human laws are subject to the checks of their own conscience. And it is observable, the nearer the wicked approach to death, the more they are terrified. Whence is this but from the apprehension of judgment approaching? The soul, being sensible of its immortal nature, trembles at him who never ceases to live, and therefore will never cease to punish.

[4] That there is a God, appears by the consent of nations, by the universal vote and suffrage of all men. *Nullagens tam barbara cui non insideat hacpersuasio Deum esse*. Tully. 'No nation so barbarous,' says Tully, 'as not to believe there is a God.' Though the heathen did not worship the true God, yet they worshipped a god. They set up an altar, 'To the unknown God' (Acts 17:23). They knew a God should be worshipped, though they knew not the God whom they ought to worship. Some worshipped Jupiter, some Neptune, some Mars. Rather than not worship something, they would worship anything.

[5] That there is a God, appears by his prediction of future things. He who can foretell things which shall surely come to pass is the true God. God foretold, that a virgin should conceive; he prefixed the time when the Messiah should be cut off (Dan. 9:26). He foretold the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and who should be their deliverer (Is. 45:1). God himself uses this argument to prove he is the true God, and that all the gods of the heathens are fictions and nullities (Is. 41:23). *Testimonium divinitatis est veritas divinationis* (Tertullian). To foretell things contingent, which depend upon no natural causes, is peculiar to Deity.

[6] That there is a God, appears by his unlimited power and sovereignty. He who can work, and none can hinder, is the true God; but God can do so. 'I will work, and who shall let it' (Is. 43:13). Nothing can hinder action but some superior power; but there is no power above God: an power that is, is by him, therefore all power is under him; he has a 'mighty

arm' (Ps. 89:13). He sees the designs men drive at against him, and plucks off their chariot wheels; he makes the diviners mad (Is. 44:25). He cutteth off the spirit of princes; he bridled the sea, gives check to the leviathan, binds the devil in chains; he acts according to his pleasure, he doth what he will. 'I will work, and who shall let it?'

[7] There are devils, therefore there is a God. Atheists cannot deny but there are devils, and then they must grant there is a God. We read of many possessed of the devil. The devils are called in Scripture 'hairy ones', because they often appeared in the form of goats or satyrs. Gerson, in his book *De Probationis Spirituum*, tells us how Satan on a time appeared to a holy man in a most glorious manner, professing himself to be Christ: the old man answered, 'I desire not to see my Saviour here in this desert, it shall suffice me to see him in heaven.' Now, if there be a devil, there is a God. Socrates, a heathen, when accused at his death, confessed, that, as he thought there was a *malus genius*, an evil spirit, so he thought there was a good spirit.

Use one: Seeing there is a God, it reproves such atheistical fools as deny it. Epicurus denied there was a Providence, saying that all things fell out by chance. He that says there is no God is the wickedest creature that is; he is worse than a thief, for he takes away our goods, but the atheist would take away our God from us. 'They have taken away my Lord' (John 20:13). So we may say of atheists, they would take away our God from us, in whom all our hope and comfort is laid up. 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God' (Ps. 14:1). He durst not speak it with his tongue, but says it in his heart: he wishes it. Sure none can be speculative atheists. 'The devils believe and tremble' (James 2:19). I have read of one Arthur, a professed atheist, who, when he came to die, cried out he was damned. Though there are few found who say, There is no God, yet many deny him in their practices. 'In works they deny him' (Titus 1:16). Cicero said of Epicurus, *Verbis reliquit Deos resustulit* [In his words he both denies the existence of the gods, and permits them to remain]. The world is full of practical atheism; most people live as if they did not believe there was a God. Durst they lie, defraud, be unclean, if they believed there were a God who would call them to account? If an Indian who never heard of a God should come among us, and have no other means to convince him of a Deity, but the lives of men in our age, surely he would question whether there were a God; *utrum Dii sint non ausim affirmare* [I would not venture to assert that gods exist].

Use two: Seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously, and give just rewards to men. Things seem to be carried in the world very unequally; the wicked flourish (Ps. 73:3). They who tempt God are delivered (Mal. 3:15). The ripe cluster of grapes are squeezed into their cup, and, in the meanwhile, the godly, who wept for sin, and served God, are afflicted. 'I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping' (Ps. 102:9). Evil men enjoy all the good, and good men endure all the evil. But seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously with men. 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right' (Gen. 18:25). Offenders must come to punishment. The sinner's death-day, and dooms-day is coming. 'The Lord seeth that his day is coming' (Ps. 37:13). While there is a hell, the wicked shall be scourged enough; and while there is eternity, they shall lie there long enough; and God will abundantly compensate the faithful service of his people. They shall have their white robes and crowns. 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth' (Ps. 48:11). Because God is God, he will give glorious rewards to his people.

Use three: Seeing there is a God, woe to all such as have this God against them. He lives for ever to be avenged upon them. 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee' (Ezek. 22:14). Such as pollute God's Sabbath, oppose his saints, trampling these jewels in the dust. Such as live in contradiction to God's Word engage the Infinite Majesty of heaven against them; and how dismal will their case be! 'If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies; I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,' &c. (Deut. 32:41). If it be so terrible to hear the lion roar, what must it be when he begins to tear his prey? 'Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces' (Ps. 50:22). Oh that men would think of this, who go on in sin! Shall we engage the great God against us? God strikes slow but heavy. 'Hast thou an arm like God' (Job 40:9)? Canst thou strike such a blow? God is the best friend, but the worst enemy. If he can look men into their grave how far can he throw them? 'Who knows the power of his wrath' (Ps. 90:11)? What fools are they, who, for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath! Paracelsus speaks of a frenzy some have, which will make them die dancing; so sinners go dancing to hell.

Use four: Seeing there is a God, let us firmly believe this great article of our Creed. What religion can there be in men, if they do not believe a Deity? 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is.' To worship God, and pray to him, and not believe there is a God, is to put a high scorn and contempt upon him. Believe that God is the only true God: such a God as he has revealed himself in his Word, 'A lover of righteousness, and hater of wickedness' (Ps. 45:7). The real

belief of a Deity gives life to all religious worship; the more we believe the truth and infiniteness of God, the more holy and angelic we are in our lives. Whether we are alone, or in company, God sees us; he is the heart-searcher; the belief of this would make us live always under God's eye. 'I have set the Lord always before me' (Ps. 16:8). The belief of a Deity would be a bridle to sin, and a spur to duty; it would add wings to prayer, and oil to the lamp of our devotion. The belief of a Deity would cause dependence upon God in all our straits and exigencies. 'I am God all-sufficient' (Gen. 17:1); a God that can supply all your wants, scatter all your fears, resolve all your doubts, conquer all your temptations; the arm of God's power can never be shrunk; he can create mercy for us, and therefore can help, and not be beholden to the creature. Did we believe there is a God, we should so depend on his providence as not to use any indirect means; we should not run ourselves into sin to rid ourselves out of trouble. 'Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron' (2 Kings 1:3)? When men run to sinful shifts, is it not because they do not believe there is a God, or that he is all-sufficient?

Use five: Seeing there is a God, let us labour to get an interest in him. 'This God is our God' (Ps. 48:14). Since the fall we have lost likeness to God, and communion with God; let us labour to recover this lost interest, and pronounce this Shibboleth, 'My God' (Ps. 43:5). It is little comfort to know there is a God, unless he be ours. God offers himself to be our God. 'I will be their God' (Jer. 31:33). And faith catches hold of the offer, it appropriates God, and makes all that is in him over to us to be ours; his wisdom to be ours, to teach us; his holiness ours, to sanctify us; his Spirit ours, to comfort us; his mercy ours, to save us. To be able to say, God is mine, is more than to have all mines of gold and silver.

Use six: Seeing there is a God, let us serve and worship him as God. It was an indictment brought against some in Romans 1:21: 'They glorified him not as God.' Let us pray to him as to God. Pray with fervency. 'An effectual fervent prayer availeth much' (James 5:16). This is both the fire and the incense; without fervency it is no prayer. Let us love him as God. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart' (Deut. 6:5). To love him with all the heart, is to give him precedence in our love, to let him have the cream of our affections; to love him not only appreciatively, but intensively, as much as we can. As the sunbeams united in a burning glass burn the hotter, so all our affections should be united, that our love to God may be more ardent. Let us obey him as God. All creatures obey him, the stars fight his battles, the wind and sea obey him (Mark 4:41). Much more should man, whom God has endued with a principle of reason. He is God, and has a sovereignty over us; therefore, as we received life from him, so we must receive a law from him, and submit to his will in all things. This is to kiss him with a kiss of loyalty, and it is to glorify him as God.

II. The thing expressed. 'God is a Spirit' (John 4:24). God is *essentia spiritualissima*. Zanchius.

What do you mean when you say, God is a Spirit?

By a spirit I mean, God is an immaterial substance, of a pure, subtile, unmixed essence, not compounded of body and soul, without all extension of parts. The body is a dreggish thing. The more spiritual God's essence, the more noble and excellent it is. The spirits are the more refined part of the wine.

Wherein does God differ from other spirits?

[1] The angels are spirits. We must distinguish spirits. The angels are created, God is a Spirit uncreated. The angels are finite, and capable of being annihilated; the same power which made them is able to reduce them to their first nothing; but God is an infinite Spirit. The angels are confined spirits, they cannot be *duobus locis simul*, but are confined to a place; but God is an immense Spirit, and in all places at once. The angels, though spirits, are but ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14). Though they are spirits, they are servants. God is a super-excellent Spirit, the Father of spirits (Heb. 12:9).

[2] The soul is a spirit. 'The spirit shall return to God that gave it' (Ecc. 12:7).

How does God, being a Spirit, differ from the soul?

Servetus and Osiander thought, that the soul being infused, conveyed into man the very spirit and substance of God. This is an absurd opinion, for the essence of God is incommunicable.

When it is said the soul is a spirit, it means that God has made it intelligible, and stamped upon it his likeness, not his essence.

But is it not said, that we are made partakers of the divine nature?

By divine nature there, is meant divine qualities (2 Pet. 1:4). We are made partakers of the divine nature, not by identity or union with the divine essence, but by a transformation into the divine likeness. Thus you see how God differs from other spirits, angels and souls of men. He is a Spirit of transcendent excellence, the 'Father of spirits.'

Against this Vorstius and the Anthropomorphites object, that, in Scripture, a human shape and figure is given to God; he is said to have eyes and hands.

It is contrary to the nature of a spirit to have a corporeal substance. 'Handle me, and see me: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have' (Luke 24:39). Bodily members are ascribed to God, not properly, but metaphorically, and in a borrowed sense. By the right hand of the Lord is meant his power; by the eyes of the Lord is meant his wisdom. Now that God is a Spirit, and is not capable of bodily shape or substance, is clear, for a body is visible, but God is invisible; therefore he is a Spirit. 'Whom no man hath seen, nor can see' (1 Tim. 6:16); not by an eye of sense. A body is terminated, can be but in one place at once; but God is everywhere, in all places at once; therefore he is a Spirit (Ps. 139:7, 8). God's center is everywhere, and his circumference is nowhere. A body being compounded of integral parts may be dissolved; *quicquid divisibile est corruptibile*: but the Godhead is not capable of dissolution, he can have no end from whom all things have their beginning. So that it clearly appears that God is a Spirit, which adds to the perfection of his nature.

Use one: If God be a Spirit, then he is impassible; he is not capable of being hurt. Wicked men set up their banners, and bend their forces against God; they are said to fight against God (Acts 5:39). But what will this fighting avail? What hurt can they do to the Deity? God is a Spirit, and therefore cannot receive any hurtful impression. Wicked men may imagine evil against the Lord. 'What do ye imagine against the Lord' (Nahum 1:9). But God being a Spirit is impenetrable. The wicked may eclipse his glory, but cannot touch his essence. God can hurt his enemies, but they cannot hurt him. Julian might throw up his dagger into the air against Heaven, but could not touch the Deity. God is a Spirit, invisible. How can the wicked with all their forces hurt him, when they cannot see him? Hence all the attempts of the wicked against God are foolish, and prove abortive. 'The kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord and against his anointed. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh' (Ps. 2:2, 4). He is a Spirit, he can wound them, but they cannot touch him.

Use two: If God be a Spirit, it shows the folly of the Papists, who worship him by pictures and images. As a spirit, we cannot make any image to represent him. 'The Lord spake to you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude' (Deut. 4:12).

God being a Spirit is imperceptible, cannot be discerned; how then can there be any resemblance made of him? 'To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him' (Is. 40:18)? How can you paint the Deity? Can we make an image of that which we never saw? Ye saw no similitude. God is a Spirit. It were folly to endeavour to make a picture of the soul, because it is a spiritual thing, or to paint the angels, because they are spirits.

Are not angels in Scripture represented by the cherubim?

There is *Imago personae, et officii*; 'there is the image of the person, and the image that represents the office.' The cherubims did not represent the persons of the angels, but their office. The cherubims were made with wings, to show the swiftness of the angels in discharge of their office; and if we cannot picture the souls nor the persons of angels, because they are spirits, much less can we make an image or picture of God, who is infinite and the Father of spirits.

God is also an omnipresent Spirit; he is present in all places. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord.' (Jer. 23:24)? Therefore, being everywhere present, it is absurd to worship him by an image. Were it not a foolish thing to bow down to the king's picture, when the king is present? So it is to worship God's image, when God himself is present.

How then shall we conceive of God as a Spirit, if we may make no image or resemblance of him?

We must conceive of him spiritually. In his attributes; his holiness, justice, and goodness, which are the beams by which his divine nature shines forth. We must conceive of him as he is in Christ. 'Christ is the image of the invisible

God' (Col 1:15). Set the eyes of your faith on Christ as God-man. In Christ we see some sparklings of the divine glory; in him there is the exact resemblance of all his Father's excellencies. The wisdom, love, and holiness of God the Father, shine forth in Christ. 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father' (John 14:9).

Use three: If God be a Spirit, it shows us, that the more spiritual we grow, the more we grow like to God. How do earth and spirit agree (Philippians 3:19)? Earthly ones may give for their crest, the mole or tortoise that live in the earth. What resemblance is there between an earthly heart, and him who is a Spirit? The more spiritual any one is, the more like God.

What is it to be spiritual?

To be refined and sublimated, to have the heart still in heaven, to be thinking of God and glory, and to be carried up in a fiery chariot of love to God. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee' (Ps. 73:25)? Which Beza paraphrases thus, *Apaga terra, utinam tecum in calo essem!* 'Begone earth! Oh that I were in heaven with thee!' A Christian, who is taken off from these earthly things, as the spirits are taken off from the lees, has a noble spiritual soul, and most resembles him who is a Spirit.

Use four: It shows that the worship which God requires of us, and is most acceptable to him, is spiritual worship. 'They which worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth' (John 4:24). Though God will have the service of our bodies, our eyes and hands lifted up, to testify to others that reverence we have of his glory and majesty, yet he will have the worship of the soul chiefly. 'Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit' (1 Cor. 6:20). Spirit-worship God prizes, because it comes near to his own nature, which is a Spirit.

What is it to worship God in spirit?

(1) To worship him without ceremonies. The ceremonies of the law, which God himself ordained, are now abrogated, and out of date. Christ the substance being come, the shadows fly away; and therefore the apostle calls the legal ceremonies carnal rites (Heb. 9:10). If we may not use those Jewish ceremonies which God once appointed, then not those which he never appointed.

(2) To worship God in spirit, is to worship him with faith in the blood of the Messiah (Heb. 10:19). To worship him with the utmost zeal and intenseness of soul. 'Our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night' (Acts 26:7), with intenseness of spirit; not only constantly, but instantly. This is to worship God in spirit. The more spiritual any service is, the nearer it comes to God, who is a Spirit, and the more excellent it is; the spiritual part of duty is the fat of the sacrifice: it is the soul and quintessence of religion. The richest cordials are made of spirits, and the best duties are such as are of a spiritual nature. God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit; it is not pomp of worship, but purity, which God accepts. Repentance is not in the outward severities used to the body, as penance, fasting, and chastising the body, but it consists in the sacrifice of a broken heart. Thanksgiving does not stand in church-music, the melody of an organ, but rather in making melody in the heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19). Prayer is not the tuning the voice into a heartless confession, or telling over a few beads, but it consists in sighs and groans (Rom. 8:26). When the fire of fervency is put to the incense of prayer, then it ascends as a sweet odour. The true holy water is not that which the pope sprinkles, but is distilled from the penitent eye. Spirit-worship best pleases that God who is a Spirit. 'The Father seeketh such to worship him' (John 4:23); to show the great acceptance of such, and how God is delighted with spiritual worship. This is the savoury meat that God loves. How few mind this! They give him more dregs than spirits; they think it enough to bring their duties, but not their hearts; which makes God disclaim the very services he himself appointed (Is. 1:12; Ezek. 33:31). Let us then give God spirit-worship, which best suits his nature. A sovereign elixir full of virtue may be given in a few drops; so a little prayer, if it be with the heart and spirit, may have much virtue and efficacy in it. The publican made but a short prayer, 'God be merciful to me a sinner' (Luke 18:13), but it was full of life and spirit; it came from the heart, therefore it was accepted.

Use five: Let us pray to God, that as he is a Spirit, so he will give us of his Spirit. The essence of God is incommunicable; but not the motions, the presence and influences of his Spirit. When the sun shines in a room, not the body of the sun is there, but the light, heat, and influence of the sun. God has made a promise of his Spirit. 'I will put my Spirit within you' (Ezek. 36:27). Turn promises into prayers. 'O Lord, thou who art a Spirit, give me of thy Spirit; I, flesh, beg thy Spirit, thy enlightening, sanctifying, quickening, Spirit.' Melancthon prayed, 'Lord, inflame my soul with thy Holy Spirit.' How needful is his Spirit! We cannot do any duty without it, in a lively manner. When this wind

blows upon our sails, we move swiftly towards heaven. Let us pray, therefore, that God would give us of the residue of his Spirit that we may move more vigorously in the sphere of religion (Mal. 2:15).

Use six: As God is a Spirit, so the rewards that he gives are spiritual. As the chief blessings he gives us in this life are spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), not gold and silver; as he gives Christ, his love; he fills us with grace; so the main rewards he gives us after this life are spiritual, 'a crown of glory that fadeth not away' (1 Pet. 5:4). Earthly crowns fade, but the believer's crown being spiritual is immortal, a never-fading crown. 'It is impossible,' says Joseph Scaliger, 'for that which is spiritual to be subject to change or corruption.' This may comfort a Christian in all his labours and sufferings; he lays out himself for God, and has little or no reward here; but remember, God, who is a Spirit, will give spiritual rewards, a sight of his face in heaven, white robes, a weight of glory. Be not then weary of God's service; think of the spiritual reward, a crown of glory which fadeth not away.

III. What kind of Spirit is God?

He is infinite. All created beings are finite. Though infinite may be applied to all God's attributes--he is infinitely merciful, infinitely wise, infinitely holy--yet, if we take infinity it implies,

God's omnipresence. The Greek word for 'infinite' signifies 'without bounds or limits.' God is not confined to any place, he is infinite, and so is present in all places at once. His center is everywhere, *Divina essentia nusquam inclusa aut exclita* [In no place is God's Being either confined or excluded]. Augustine. 'Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee' (1 Kings 8:27). The Turks build their temples open at the top, to show that God cannot be confined to them, but is in all places by his presence. God's essence is not limited either to the regions above, or to the terrestrial globe, but is everywhere. As philosophers say of the soul, it is, *Tota in tota, et tota in qualibet parte*: 'the soul is in every part of the body,' in the eye, heart, foot; so we may say of God, he is *ubique*, his essence is everywhere; his circuit is in heaven, and in earth, and sea, and he is in all places of his circuit at once. 'This is to be infinite.' God, who bounds everything else, is himself without bounds. He sets bounds to the sea; *Hue usque*; 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;' he sets bounds to the angels; they, like the cherubims, move and stand at his appointment (Ezek. 10:16), but he is infinite, without bounds. He who can span the heavens, and weigh the earth in scales, must needs be infinite (Is. 11:22).

Vorstius maintains that God is in all places at once, but not in regard of his essence; but *Virtute et potential* by his virtue and influence: as the body of the sun is in heaven, it only sends forth its beams and influences to the earth; or as a king, who is in all places of his kingdom authoritatively, by his power and authority, but he is personally on his throne.

God, who infinite, is in all places at once, not only by his influence, but by his essence; for, if his essence fills all places, then he must needs be there in person. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth' (Jer. 23:24)?

But does not God say heaven is his throne (Is. 67:15).

It is also said, that a humble heart is his throne (Is. 57:15). The humble heart is his throne, in regard to his gracious presence; and heaven is his throne, in regard to his glorious presence; and yet neither of these thrones will hold him, for the heaven of heavens cannot contain him.

But if God be infinite in all places, he is in impure places, and mingles with impurity.

Though God be in all places, in the heart of a sinner by his inspection, and in hell by his justice, yet he does not mingle with the impurity, or receive the least tincture of evil. *Divina natura non est immista rebus aut sordibus inquinata* [The divine nature does not intermix with created matter, nor is contaminated by its impurities]. Augustine. No more than the sun shining on a dunghill is defiled, or its beauty spotted; or than Christ going among sinners was defiled, whose Godhead was a sufficient antidote against infection.

God must needs be infinite in all places at once, not only in regard to the simplicity and purity of his nature, but in regard to his power, which being so glorious, who can set him bounds, or prescribe him a circuit to walk in? It is as if the drop should limit the ocean, or a star set bounds to the sun.

Use one: It condemns the Papists, who would make more things infinite than the Godhead. They hold that Christ's body is in many places at once, that it is in heaven, and in the bread and wine in the sacrament. Though Christ as he is God is infinite, and in all places at once, yet as man he is not. When he was on earth, his manhood was not in heaven, though his Godhead was; and now he is in heaven, his manhood is not on earth, though his Godhead be. Hebrews 10:5 is spoken of Christ: 'A body thou hast prepared me.' This body cannot be in all places at once; for then it is no more a body, but a spirit. Christ's body in heaven, though glorified, is not deified; it is not infinite, as it must be, if it be both in heaven, and in the bread and wine by transubstantiation.

Use two: If God be infinite, present in all places at once, then it is certain he governs all things in his own person, and needs no proxies or deputies to help him to carry on his government. He is in all places in an instant, and manages all affairs both in the earth and heaven. A king cannot be in all places of his kingdom in his own person, therefore he is fain to govern by deputies and vicegerents, and they often pervert justice; but God, being infinite, needs no deputies, he is present in all places, he sees all with his own eyes, and hears all with his own ears; he is everywhere in his own person, therefore is fit to be the judge of the world; he will do every one right.

Use three: If God be infinite by his omnipresence, then see the greatness and immenseness of the divine majesty! What a great God do we serve 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the glory, and the majesty, and thou art exalted as head above all' (1 Chron. 29:3). Well may the Scripture display the greatness of his glory, who is infinite in all places. He transcends our weak conceptions; how can our finite understanding comprehend him who is infinite? He is infinitely above all our praises. 'Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise' (Neh. 9:5). Oh what a poor nothing is man, when we think of God's infiniteness! As the stars disappear at the rising of the sun, oh, how does a man shrink into nothing when infinite majesty shines forth in its glory! 'The nations are as a drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance' (Is. 40:15). On what a little of that drop are we! The heathens thought they had sufficiently praised jupiter when they called him great Jupiter. Of what immense majesty is God, who fills all places at once (Ps. 150:2)!

Use four: If God be infinite, filling heaven and earth, see what a full portion the saints have; they have him for their portion who is infinite. His fulness is an infinite fulness; and he is infinitely sweet, as well as infinitely full. If a conduit be filled with wine, there is a sweet fulness, but still it is finite; but God is a sweet fulness, and it is infinite. He is infinitely full of beauty and of love. His riches are called unsearchable, because they are infinite (Eph. 3:8). Stretch your thoughts as much as you can, there is that in God which exceeds; it is an infinite fulness. He is said to do abundantly for us, above all that we can ask (Eph. 3:20). What can an ambitious spirit ask? He can ask crowns and kingdoms, millions of worlds; but God can give more than we can ask, nay, or think, because he is infinite. We can think, what if all the dust were turned to silver, if every flower were a ruby, every sand in the sea a diamond; yet God can give more than we can think, because he is infinite. Oh how rich are they who have the infinite God for their portion! Well might David say, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage' (Ps. 16:5, 6). We may go with the bee from flower to flower, but we shall never have full satisfaction till we come to the infinite God. Jacob said: 'I have enough;' in the Hebrew, 'I have all,' because he had the infinite God for his portion (Gen. 33:11). God being an infinite fulness, there is no fear of want for any of the heirs of heaven; though there be millions of saints and angels, which have a share in God's riches, yet he has enough for them all, because he is infinite. Though a thousand men behold the sun, there is light enough for them all: put never so many buckets into the sea, there is water enough to fill them. Though an innumerable company of saints and angels are to be filled out of God's fulness, yet God, being infinite, has enough to satisfy them. God has land enough to give to all his heirs. There can be no want in that which is infinite.

Use five: If God be infinite, he fills all places, is everywhere present. This is sad to the wicked, God is their enemy, and they cannot escape him, nor flee from him, for he is everywhere present; they are never out of his eye nor out of his reach. 'Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies' (Ps. 21:8). What caves or thickets can men hide in, that God cannot find them; go where they will, he is present. 'Whither shall I flee from thy presence' (Ps. 139:7)? If a man owes a debt to another he may make his escape, and flee to another land, where the creditor cannot find him. 'But whither shall I flee from thy presence?' God is infinite, he is in all places; so that he will find out his enemies and punish them.

But is it not said, Cain went out from the presence of the Lord (Gen. 4:16)? The meaning is, he went out from the church of God, where were the visible signs of God's presence, and where God in a special manner manifested his

sweet presence to his people; but Cain could not go out of God's sight; for God being infinite is everywhere present. Sinners can neither go from an accusing conscience, nor from a revenging God.

Use six: If God be everywhere present, then for a Christian to walk with God is not impossible. God is not only in heaven, but he is in earth too (Is. 66:1). Heaven is his throne, there he sits; the earth is his footstool, there he stands. He is everywhere present, therefore we may come to walk with God. 'Enoch walked with God' (Gen. 5:22). If God was confined to heaven, a trembling soul might think, 'How can I converse with God, how can I walk with him who lives *in excelsis*; above the upper region? But God is not confined to heaven; he is omnipresent; he is above us, yet he is about us, he is near to us (Acts 17:27). Though he be not far from the assembly of the saints, 'He stands in the congregation of the mighty' (Ps. 82:1). He is present with us, God is in every one of us; so that here on earth we may walk with God. In heaven the saints rest with him, on earth they walk with him. To walk with God is to walk by faith. We are said to draw nigh to God (Heb. 10:22) and to see him 'As seeing him who is invisible' (Heb. 11:27); and to have fellowship with him. 'Our fellowship is with the Father' (1 John 1:3). Thus we may take a turn with him every day by faith. It is slighting God not to walk with him. If a king be in presence, it is slighting him to neglect him, and walk with the page. There is no walk in the world so sweet as to walk with God. 'They shall walk in the light of thy countenance' (Ps. 89:15). 'Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord' (Ps. 138:5). It is like walking among beds of spices, which send forth a fragrant perfume.

Use seven: If God be infinite in his glorious essence, learn to admire where you cannot fathom. The angels wear a veil, they cover their faces, as adoring this infinite majesty (Is. 6:2). Elias wrapped himself in a mantle when God's glory passed by. Admire where you cannot fathom. 'Canst thou by searching find out God' (Job 11:7). Here we see some beams of his glory, we see him in the glass of the creation; we see him in his picture, his image shines in the saints; but who can search out all his essential glory? What angel can measure these pyramids? 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' He is infinite. We can no more search out his infinite perfections, than a man upon the top of the highest mountain can reach the firmament, or take a star in his hand. Oh, have God-admiring thoughts! Adore where you cannot fathom. There are many mysteries in nature which we cannot fathom; why the sea should be higher than the earth, yet not drown it; why the Nile should overflow in summer, when, by the course of nature, the waters are lowest; how the bones grow in the womb (Eccl. 11:5). If these things pose us, how may the infinite mystery of the Deity transcend our most raised intellectuals! Ask the geometrician, if he can, with a pair of compasses, measure the breadth of the earth. So unable are we to measure the infinite perfections of God. In heaven we shall see God clearly, but not fully, for he is infinite; he will communicate himself to us, according to the bigness of our vessel, but not the immenseness of his nature. Adore then where you cannot fathom.

If God be infinite in all places, let us not limit him. 'They limited the Holy One of Israel' (Ps. 78:41). It is limiting God to confine him within the narrow compass of our reason. Reason thinks God must go such a way to work, or the business will never be effected. This is to limit God to our reason; whereas he is infinite, and his ways are past finding out (Rom. 11:33). In the deliverance of the church, it is limiting God, either to set him a time, or prescribe him a method for deliverance. God will deliver Sion, but he will be left to his own liberty; he will not be tied to a place, to a time, or to an instrument, which were to limit him, and then he should not be infinite. God will go his own way, he will pose and nonplus reason, he will work by improbabilities, he will save in such a way as we think would destroy. Now he acts like himself, like an infinite wonder-working God.



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