

# **The Existence and Attributes of God**

**by Stephen Charnock**

## DISCOURSE VII - ON GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE

*JEREMIAH 23:24.—Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him! saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.*

THE occasion of this discourse begins ver. 16, where God admonisheth the people, not to hearken to the words of the false prophets which spake a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They made the people vain by their insinuations of peace, when God had proclaimed war and calamity; and uttered the dreams of their fancies, and not the visions of the Lord; and so turned the people from the expectation of the evil day which God had threatened (ver. 17): "They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace: and they say unto every one that walks after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you." And they invalidate the prophecies of those whom God had sent, ver. 18: "Who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?" Who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord? Are they acquainted with the secrets of God more than we? Who have the word of the Lord, if we have not? Or, it may be a continuation of God's admonition: believe not those prophets; for who of them have been acquainted with the secrets of God? or by what means should they learn his counsel? No; assure yourselves "a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind; it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked" (ver. 19). A whirlwind shall come from Babylon; it is just at the door, and shall not be blown over; it shall fall with a witness upon the wicked people and the deceiving prophets, and sweep them together into captivity. For (ver. 20), "The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart." My fury shall not be a childish fury, that quickly languisheth, but shall accomplish whatsoever I threaten; and burn so hot, as not to be cool, till I have satisfied my vengeance; "in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly" (ver. 20), when the storm shall beat upon you, you shall then know that the calamities shall answer the words you have heard. When the conqueror shall waste your grounds, demolish your houses, and manacle your hands, then shall you consider it, and have the wishes of fools, that you had had your eyes in your heads before; you shall then know the falseness of your guides, and the truth of my prophets, and discern who stood in the counsel of the Lord, and subscribe to the messages I have sent you.

Some understand this not only of the Babylonish captivity, but refer it to the time of Christ, and the false doctrine of men's own righteousness in opposition to the righteousness of God; understanding this verse to be partly a threatening of wrath, which shall end in an advantage to the Jews, who shall in the latter time consider the falseness of their notions about a legal righteousness, and so make it a promise; they shall then know the intent of the Scripture, and in the latter days, the latter end of the world, when time shall be near the rolling up, they shall reflect upon themselves; they shall "look upon Him whom they have pierced;" and till these latter days, they shall be hardened, and believe nothing of evangelical truths. Now God denieth that he sent those prophets (ver. 21): "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." They have intruded themselves without a commission from me, whatsoever their brags are. The reason to prove it is (ver. 22), "If they had stood in my counsel," if they had been instructed, and inspired by me, "they would have caused my people to hear my words;" they would have regulated themselves according to my word, "and have turned them from their evil way;" *i. e.* endeavored to shake down their false confidences of peace, and make them sensible of their false notions of me, and my ways. Now because those false prophets could not be so impudent as to boast that they prophesied in the name of God, when they had not commission from him, unless they had some secret sentiment, that they and their intentions were hid from the knowledge and eye of God; he adds (ver. 33), "Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? Have I not the power of seeing and knowing what they do, what they design, what they think? Why should I not have such a power, since I fill heaven and earth by my essence?" Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? He excludes here the doctrine of those that excluded the providence of God from extending itself to the inferior things of the earth; which error was ancient, as ancient as the time of Job, as appears by their opinion, that God's eyes were hood-winked and muffled by the thickness of the clouds, and could not pierce through their dark and dense body (Job 22:14): "Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not."

Some refer it to time. Do you imagine me a God new framed like your idols, beginning a little time ago, and not existing before the foundation of the world; yea, from eternity? a God afar off, further than your acutest understandings can reach? I am of a longer standing, and you ought to know my majesty. But it rather refers to place than time. Do you think I do not behold everything in the earth, as well as in heaven? Am I locked up within the walls of my palace, and cannot peep out to behold the things done in the world? or that am I so linked to pleasure in the place of my glory, as earthly kings are in their courts, that I have no mind or leisure to take notice of the carriages of men upon earth?

God doth not say, He was afar off, but only gives an account of the inward thoughts of their minds, or at least of the language expressed by their actions. The interrogation carries in it a strong affirmation, and assures us more of God's care, and the folly of men

in not considering it. "Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places?" (Heb.) In hiddennesses, in the deepest cells. What I are you besotted by your base lusts, that you think me a God careless, ignorant, blind, that I can see nothing, but as a purblind man, what is very near my eye? Are you so out of your wits, that you imagine you can deceive me? Do not all your behaviors speak such a sentiment to lie secret in your heart, though not formed into a full conception, yet testified by your actions? No, you are much mistaken; it is impossible but that I should see and know all things, since I am present with all things, and am not at a greater distance from the things on earth than from the things in heaven; for I fill all that vast fabric which is divided into those two parts of heaven and earth; and he that hath such an infinite essence, cannot lie distant, cannot be ignorant; nothing can be far from his eyes, since everything is so near to his essence. So that it is an elegant expression of the omniscience of God, and a strong argument for it. He asserts, first, the universality of his knowledge; but lest they should mistake, and confine his presence only to heaven, he adds, That he "fills heaven and earth." I do not see things so, as if I were in one place, and the things seen in another, as it is with man; but whatsoever I see, I see not without myself, because every corner of heaven and earth is filled by me. He that fills all, must needs see and know all. And indeed, men that question the knowledge of God, would be more convinced by the doctrine of his immediate presence with them. And this seems to be the design and manner of arguing in this place. Nothing is remote from my knowledge, because nothing is distant from my presence.

*I fill heaven and earth:* he doth not say, "I am in heaven and earth," but I *fill* heaven and earth; *i. e.* say some, with my knowledge, others, with my authority or my power. But,

1. The word *filling* cannot properly be referred to the act of understanding and will. A presence by knowledge is to be granted, but to say such a presence fills a place is an improper speech: knowledge is not enough to constitute a presence. A man at London knows there is such a city as Paris, and knows many things in it; can he be concluded, therefore, to be present in Paris, or fill any place there, or be present with the things he knows there? If I know anything to be distant from me, how can it be present with me? For by knowing it to be distant, I know it not to be present. Besides, filling heaven and earth is distinguished here from knowing or seeing: his presence is rendered as an argument to prove his knowledge. Now a proposition, and the proof of that proposition, are distinct, and not the same. It cannot be imagine that God should prove *idem per idem*, as we say; for what would be the import of the speech then? I know all things, I see all things, because I know and see all things. The Holy Ghost here accommodates himself to the capacity of men; because we know that a man sees and knows that which is done, where he is corporally present; so he proves that God knows all things that are done in the most secret caverns of the heart, because he is everywhere in heaven and earth, as light is everywhere in the air, and air everywhere in the world. Hence the schools use the term *repletive* for the presence of God.

2. Nor by filling of heaven and earth is meant his authority and power. It would be improperly said of a king, that in regard of the government of his kingdom, is everywhere by his authority, that he fills all the cities and countries of his dominions. "I, do not I fill?" That "I" notes the essence of God, as distinguished according to our capacity, from the perfections pertaining to his essence, and is in reason better referred to the substance of God, than to those things we conceive as attributes in him. Besides, were it meant only of his authority or power, the argument would not run well. I see all things, because my authority and power fills heaven and earth. Power doth not always rightly infer knowledge, no, not in a rational agent. Many things in a kingdom are done by the authority of the king, that never arrive to the knowledge of the king. Many things in us are done, by the power of our souls, which yet we have not a distinct knowledge of in our understandings. There are many motions in sleep, by the virtue of the soul informing the body, that we have not so much as a simple knowledge of in our minds. Knowledge is not rightly inferred from power, or power from knowledge. By filling heaven and earth is meant, therefore, a filling it with his essence. No place can be imagined that is deprived of the presence of God; and therefore when the Scripture anywhere speaks of the presence of God, it joins heaven and earth together. He so fills them, that there is no place without him. We do not say a vessel is full so long as there is any space to contain more. Not a part of heaven, nor a part of earth, but the whole heaven, the whole earth, at one and the same time. If he were only in one part of heaven, or one part of earth; nay, if there were any part of heaven, or any part of earth void of him, he could not be said to fill them. "I fill heaven and earth," not a part of me fills one place, and another part of me fills another, but I, God, fill heaven and earth; I am whole God filling the heaven, and whole God, filling the earth. I fill heaven, and yet fill earth; I fill earth, and yet fill heaven, and fill heaven and earth at one and the same time. "God fills his own works," a heathen philosopher saith.

I. Here is then a description of God's presence. 1. By power, "Am I not a God afar off?" a God in the extension of his arm. 2. By knowledge, "Shall I not see them?" 3. By essence; as an undeniable ground for inferring the two former: "I fill heaven and earth."

*Doctrine.* God is essentially everywhere present in heaven and earth. If God be, he must be somewhere; that which is nowhere, is nothing. Since God is, he is in the world; not in one part of it; for then he were circumscribed by it: if in the world, and only there, though it be a great space, he were also limited. Some therefore said, "God was everywhere, and nowhere." Nowhere, *i. e.* not bounded by any place, nor receiving from any place anything for his preservation or sustainment. He is everywhere, because no creature, either body or spirit, can exclude the presence of his essence; for he is not only near, but in everything (Acts 17:28) "In him we live, and move, and have our being." Not absent from anything, but so present with them, that they live and move in him, and move more in God, than in the air or earth wherein they are; nearer to us than our flesh to our bones, than the air to our breath; he cannot be far from them that live, and have every motion in him. The apostle doth not say, By him, but in him, to show the inwardness of his presence. As eternity is the perfection whereby he hath neither beginning nor end, immutability is the perfection whereby he hath neither increase nor diminution, so immensity or omnipresence is that whereby he hath neither bounds nor limitation. As he is in all time, yet so as to be above time; so is he in all places, yet so as to be above limitation by any place. It was a good expression of a heathen to illustrate this, "That God is a sphere or circle, whose centre is everywhere, and circumference nowhere." His meaning was, that the essence of God was indivisible; *i. e.* could not be divided. It cannot be said, here and there the lines of it terminate; it is like a line drawn out in infinite spaces, that no point can be conceived where its length and breadth ends. The sea is a vast mass of waters; yet to that it is said, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further." But it cannot be said of God's essence, hitherto it reaches, and no further; here it is, and there it is not. It is plain, that God is thus immense, because he is infinite; we have reason and Scripture to assent to it, though we cannot conceive it. We know that God is eternal, though eternity is too great to be measured by the short line of a created understanding. We cannot conceive the vastness and glory of the heavens, much less that which is so great, as to fill heaven and earth, yea (1 Kings 8:27), "not to be contained in the heaven of Heavens." Things are said to be present, or in a place,

1. *Circumscriptive*, as circumscribed. This belongs to things that have quantity, as bodies that are encompassed by that place wherein they are; and a body fills but one particular space wherein it is, and the space is commensurate to every part of it, and every

member hath a distinct place. The hand is not in the same particular space that the foot or head is.

2. *Definitive*, which belongs to angels and spirits, which are said to be in a point, yet so as that they cannot be said to be in another at the same time.

3. *Repletive*, filling all places. This belongs only to God: as he is not measured by time, so he is not limited by place. A body or spirit, because finite, fills but one space; God, because infinite, fills all, yet so as not to be contained in them, as wine and water is in a vessel. He is from the height of the heavens to the bottom of the deeps, in every point of the world, and in the whole circle of it, yet not limited by it, but beyond it. Now this hath been acknowledged by the wisest in the world. Some indeed had other notions of God. The more ignorant sort of the Jews confined him to the temple. And God intimates, that they had such a thought when he asserts his presence in heaven and earth, in opposition to the temple they built as his house, and the place of his rest. And the idolaters among them, thought their gods might be at a distance from them, which Elias intimates in the scoff he puts upon them (1 Kings 18:17), "Cry aloud, for he is a god," meaning Baal; "either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey;" and they followed his advice, and cried louder (ver. 28), whereby it is evident, they looked not on it as a mock, but as a truth. And the Syrians called the God of Israel the God of the hills, as though his presence were fixed there, and not in the valleys (1 Kings 10:23); and their own gods in the valleys, and not in the mountains; they fancied every god to have a particular dominion and presence in one place and not in another, and bounded the territories of their gods as they did those of their princes. And some thought him tied to and shut up in their temples and groves wherein they worshipped him. Some of them thought God to be confined to heaven, and therefore sacrificed upon the highest mountains, that the steam might ascend nearer heaven, and their praises be heard better in those places which were nearest to the habitation of God. But the wiser Jews acknowledged it, and therefore called God place, whereby they denoted his immensity; he was not contained in any place; every part of the world subsists by Him: he was a place to himself, greater than anything made by Him. And the wiser heathens acknowledged it also. One calls God a mind passing through the universal nature of things; another, that He was an infinite and immense air; another, that it is as natural to think God is everywhere, as to think that God is: hence they called God the soul of the world; that as the soul is in every part of the body to quicken it, so is God in every part of the world to support it. And there are some resemblances of this in the world, though no creature can fully resemble God in any one perfection; for then it would not be a creature, but God. But air and light are some resemblances of it: air is in all the spaces of the world, in the pores of all bodies, in the bowels of the earth, and extends itself from the lowest earth to the highest regions; and the heavens themselves are probably nothing else but a refined kind of air; and light diffuseth itself through the whole air, and every part of it is truly light, as every part of the air is truly air; and though they seem to be mingled together, yet they are distinct things, and not of the same essence; so is the essence of God in the whole world, not by diffusion as air or light, not mixed with any creature, but remaining distinct from the essence of any created being. Now, when this hath been owned by men instructed only in the school of nature, it is a greater shame to any acquainted with the Scripture to deny. For the understanding of this, there shall be some propositions premised in general.

*Prop. I.* This is negatively to be understood. Our knowledge of God is most by withdrawing from him, or denying to him in our conceptions any weaknesses or imperfections in the creature. As the infiniteness of God is a denial of limitation of being, so immensity or omnipresence is a denial of limitation of place: and when we say, God is *totus* in every place, we must understand it thus; that he is not everywhere by parts, as bodies are, as air and light are; He is everywhere, *i. e.* his nature hath no bounds; he is not tied to any place, as the creature is, who, when he is present in one place, is absent from another. As no place can be without God, so no place can compass and contain him.

*Prop. II.* There is an influential omnipresence of God.

1. Universal with all creatures. He is present with all things by his authority, because all things are subject to him by his power, because all things are sustained by him: by his knowledge, because all things are naked before him. He is present in the world, as a king is in all parts of his kingdom regally present: providentially present with all, since his care extends to the meanest of his creatures. His power reacheth all, and his knowledge pierceth all. As everything in the world was created by God, so everything in the world is preserved by God; and since preservation is not wholly distinct from creation, it is necessary God should be present with everything while he preserves it, as well as present with it when he created it. "Thou preservest man and beast" (Psalm 36:6). "He upholds all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1:3). There is a virtue sustaining every creature, that it may not fall back into that nothing from whence it was elevated by the power of God. All those natural virtues we call the principles of operation, are fountains springing from his goodness and power; all things are acted and managed by him, as well as preserved by him; and in this sense God is present with all creatures; for whatsoever acts another, is present with that which it acts, by sending forth some virtue and influence whereby it acts: if free agents do not only live, but move in him and by him (Acts 17:28), much more are the motions of other natural agents by a virtue communicated to them, and upheld in them in the time of their acting. This virtual presence of God is evident to our sense, a presence we feel; his essential presence is evident in our reason. This influential presence may be compared to that of the sun, which though at so great a distance from the earth, is present in the air and earth by its light, and within the earth by its influence in concocting those metals which are in the bowels of it, without being substantially either of them. God is thus so intimate with every creature, that there is not the least particle of any creature, but the marks of his power and goodness are seen in it, and his goodness doth attend them, and is more swift in its effluxes than the breakings out of light from the sun, which yet are more swift than can be declared; but to say he is in the world only by his virtue, is to acknowledge only the effects of his power and wisdom in the world, that his eye sees all, his arm supports all, his goodness nourisheth all, but himself and his essence at a distance from them; and so the soul of man according to its measure would have in some kind a more excellent manner of presence in the body, than God according to the infiniteness of his Being with his creatures; for that doth not only communicate life to the body, but is actually present with it, and spreads its whole essence through the body and every member of it. All grant, that God is efficaciously in every creek of the world; but some say he is only substantially in heaven.

2. Limited to such subjects that are capacitated for this or that kind of presence. Yet it is an omnipresence, because it is a presence in all the subjects capacitated for it; thus there is a special providential presence of God with some in assisting them when he sets them on work as his instruments for some special service in the world. As with Cyrus (Isa. 45:2), "I will go before thee;" and with Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander, whom he protected and directed to execute his counsels in the world; such a presence Judas and others that shall not enjoy his glorious presence, had in the working of miracles in the world. Besides, as there is an effective presence of God with all creatures, because he produced them and preserves them, so there is an objective presence of God with rational

creatures, because he offers himself to them to be known and loved by them. He is near to wicked men in the offers of his grace, "Call ye upon him while he is near" (Isa. 55:6); besides, there is a gracious presence of God with his people in whom he dwells and makes his abode, as in a temple consecrated to him by the graces of the Spirit. "We will come" (John 14:23), *i. e.* the Father and the Son, and make our abode with him. He is present with all by the presence of his Divinity, but only in his saints by a presence of a gracious efficacy; he walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and hath dignified the congregation of his people with the title of Jehovah Shammah, "the Lord is there" (Ezek. 48:35): "in Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Sion" (Psalm 76:2). As he filled the tabernacle, so he doth the church with the signs of his presence; this is not the presence wherewith he fills heaven and earth. His Spirit is not bestowed upon all to reside in their hearts, enlighten their minds, and bedew them with refreshing comforts. When the Apostle speaks of God being "above all and through all" (Eph. 4:6), above all in his majesty, through all in his providence; he doth not appropriate that as he doth what follows, "and in you all;" in you all by a special grace; as God was specially present with Christ by the grace of union, so he is specially present with his people by the grace of regeneration. So there are several manifestations of his presence; he hath a presence of glory in heaven, whereby he comforts the saints; a presence of wrath in hell, whereby he torments the damned; in heaven he is a God spreading his beams of light; in hell, a God distributing his strokes of justice; by the one he fills heaven; by the other he fills hell; by his providence and essence he fills both heaven and earth.

*Prop.* III. There is an essential presence of God in the world. He is not only everywhere by his power upholding the creatures, by his wisdom understanding them, but by his essence containing them. That anything is essentially present anywhere, it hath from God; God is therefore much more present everywhere, for he cannot give that which he hath not.

1. He is essentially present in all places. It is as reasonable to think the essence of God to be everywhere as to be always. Immensity is as rational as eternity. That indivisible essence which reaches through all times may as well reach through all places. It is more excellent to be always than to be everywhere; for to be always in duration is intrinsic; to be everywhere is intrinsic. If the greater belongs to God, why not the less? As all times are a moment to his eternity, so all places are as a point to his essence. As he is larger than all time, so he is vaster than all place. The nations of the world are to him "as the dust of the balance" or "drop of a bucket" (Isa. 40:15). "The nations are accounted as the small dust." The essence of God may well be thought to be present everywhere with that which is no more than a grain of dust to him, and in all those isles, which, if put together, "are a very little thing" in his hand. Therefore, saith a learned Jew, if a man were set in the highest heavens he would not be nearer to the essence of God than if he were in the centre of the earth. Why may not the presence of God in the world be as noble as that of the soul in the body, which is generally granted to be essentially in every part of the body of man, which is but a little world, and animates every member by its actual presence, though it exerts not the same operation in every part? The world is less to the Creator than the body to the soul, and needs more the presence of God than the body needs the presence of the soul. That glorious body of the sun visits every part of the habitable earth in twenty-four hours by its beams, which reaches the troughs of the lowest valleys as well as the pinnacles of the highest mountains; must we not acknowledge in the Creator of this sun an infinite greater proportion of presence? Is it not as easy, with the essence of God, to overspread the whole body of heaven and earth as it is for the sun to pierce and diffuse itself through the whole air, between it and the earth, and send up its light also as far to the regions above? Do we not see something like it in sounds and voices? Is not the same sound of a trumpet, or any other musical instrument, at the first breaking out of a blast, in several places within such a compass at the same time? Doth not every ear that hears it receive alike the whole sound of it? And fragrant odors, scented in several places at the same time, in the same manner; and the organ proper for smelling takes in the same in every person within the compass of it. How far is the noise of thunder heard alike to every ear in places something distant from one another! And do we daily find such a manner of presence in those things of so low a concern, and not imagine a kind of presence of God greater than all those? Is the sound of thunder, the voice of God as it is called, everywhere in such a compass? and shall not the essence of an infinite God be much more everywhere? Those that would confine the essence of God only to heaven, and exclude it from the earth, run into great inconveniences. It may be demanded whether he be in one part of the heavens or in the whole vast body of them. If in one part of them, his essence is bounded; if he moves from that part he is mutable, for he changes a place wherein he was, for another wherein he was not. If he be always fixed in one part of the heavens, such a notion would render him little better than a living statue. If he be in the whole heaven, why cannot his essence possess a greater space than the whole heavens, which are so vast? How comes he to be confined within the compass of that, since the whole heaven compasseth the earth? If he be in the whole heaven he is in places farther distant one from another than any part of the earth can be from the heavens; since the earth is like a centre in the midst of a circle, it must be nearer to every part of the circle than some parts of the circle can be to one another. If, therefore, his essence possesses the whole heavens, no reason can be rendered why he doth not also possess the earth, since also the earth is but a little point in comparison of the vastness of the heavens: if, therefore, he be in every part of the heavens, why not in every part of the earth? The Scripture is plain (Psalm 139:7-9), "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I fly from thy presence? If I ascend up to heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall uphold me." If he be in heaven, earth, hell, sea, he fills all places with his presence. His presence is here asserted in places the most distant from one another. All the places then between heaven and earth are possessed by his presence. It is not meant of his knowledge, for that the Psalmist had spoken of before (ver. 2, 3), "Thou understandest my thoughts afar off; thou art acquainted with all my ways:" besides, "thou art there;" not thy wisdom or knowledge, but thou, thy essence, not only thy virtue. For, having before spoken of his omniscience, he proves that such knowledge could not be in God, unless he were present in his essence in all places, so as to be excluded from none. He fills the depths of hell, the extension of the earth, and the heights of the heavens. When the Scripture mentions the power of God only, it expresseth it by hand or arm; but when it mentions the Spirit of God, and doth not intend the Third Person in the Trinity, it signifies the nature and essence of God. And so here, when he saith, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" he adds, exegetically, "Whither shall I fly from thy presence?" or (Heb.) "face:" and the face of God in Scripture signifies the essence of God (Exod. 33:20, 23); "Thou canst not see my face," and "My face shall not be seen." The effects of his power, wisdom, and providence are seen, which are his back parts, but not his face. The effects of his power and wisdom are seen in the world, but his essence is invisible; and this the Psalmist elegantly expresseth, Had I wings endued with as much quickness as the first dawns of the morning light, or the first darts of any sunbeam that spreads itself through the hemisphere, and passeth many miles in as short a space as I can think a thought, I should find thy presence in all places before me, and could not fly out of the infinite compass of thy essence.

2. "He is essentially present with all creatures." If he be in all places, it follows that he is with all creatures in those places; as he is in heaven, so he is with all angels; as he is in hell, so he is with all devils: as he is in the earth and sea, he is with all creatures inhabiting those elements; as his essential presence was the ground of the first being of things by creation, so it is the ground of the

continued being of things by conservation; as his essential presence was the original, so it is the support of the existence of all the creatures. What are all those magnificent expressions of his creative virtue, but testimonies of his essential presence at the laying the foundation of the world (Isa. 40:12), “when he measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” He sets forth the power and majesty of God in the creation and preservation of things, and every expression testifies his presence with them. The waters that were upon the face of the earth at first were no more than a drop in the palm of a man’s hand, which in every part is touched by his hand; and thus he is equally present with the blackest devils, as well as the brightest angels; with the lowest dust, as well as with the most sparkling sun. He is equally present with the damned and the blessed, as he is an infinite Being, but not in regard of his goodness and grace. He is equally present with the good and the bad, with the scoffing Athenians, as well as the believing apostles, in regard of his essence, but not in regard of the breathing of his divine virtues upon them to make them like himself (Acts 17:27). “He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being.” The apostle includes all; he tells them they should seek the Lord; the Lord that they were to seek, is God essentially considered. We are, indeed, to seek the perfections of God, that glitter in his works, but to the end that they should direct us to the seeking of God himself in his own nature and essence; and, therefore, what follows, “In him we live,” is to be understood, not of his power and goodness, perfections of his nature, distinguished according to our manner of conception from his essence, but of the essential presence of God with his creatures. If he had meant it of his efficacy in preserving us, it had not been any proof of his nearness to us. Who would go about to prove the body or substance of the sun to be near us because it doth warm and enlighten us, when our sense evidenceth the distance of it? We live in the beams of the sun, but we cannot be said to live in the sun, which is so far distant from us. The expression seems to be more emphatical than to intend any less than his essential presence; but we live in him not only as the efficient cause of our life, but as the foundation sustaining our lives and motions, as if he were like air, diffused round about us; and we move in him, as Austin saith, as a sponge in the sea, not containing him, but being contained by him. He compasseth all, is encompassed by none; he fills all, is comprehended by none. The Creator contains the world, the world contains not the Creator; as the hollow of the hand contains the water, the water in the hollow of the hand contains not the hand; and therefore some have chose to say, rather, that the world is in God, it lives and moves in him, than that God is in the world. If all things thus live and move in him, then he is present with everything that hath life and motion; and as long as the devils and damned have life, and motion, and being, so long is he with them; for whatsoever lives and moves, lives and moves in him. This essential presence is,

(1) Without any mixture. I fill heaven and earth; not, I am mixed with heaven and earth: his essence is not mixed with the creatures; it remains entire in itself. The sponge retains the nature of a sponge, though encompassed by the sea, and moving in it; and the sea still retains its own nature. God is most simple; his essence therefore is not mixed with anything. The light of the sun is present with the air, but not mixed with it; it remains light, and the air remains air; the light of the sun is diffused through all the hemisphere, it pierceth all transparent bodies, it seems to mix itself with all things, yet remains unmixed and undivided; the light remains light, and the air remains air; the air is not light, though it be enlightened. Or, take this similitude: When many candles are lighted up in a room, the light is all together, yet not mixed with one another; every candle hath a particular light belonging to it, which may be separated in a moment, by removing one candle from another; but if they were mixed, they could not be separated, at least so easily. God is not formally one with the world, or with any creature in the world by his presence in it; nor can any creature in the world, no, not the soul of man, or an angel, come to be essentially one with God, though God be essentially present with it.

(2.) The essential presence is without any division of himself. “I fill heaven and earth,” not part in heaven, and part in earth; I fill one as well as the other: one part of his essence is not in one place, and another part of his essence in another place, he would then be changeable; for that part of his essence which were now in this place, he might alter it to another, and place that part of his essence which were in another place to this; but he is undivided everywhere. As his eternity is one indivisible point, though in our conception we divide it into past, present, and to come, so the whole world is as a point to him, in regard of place, as before was said; it is as a small dust, and grain of dust: it is impossible that one part of his essence can be separated from another, for he is not a body, to have one part separable from another. The light of the sun cannot be cut into parts, it cannot be shut into any place and kept there, it is entire in every place. Shall not God, who gives the light that power, be much more present himself? Whatsoever hath parts is finite, but God is infinite, therefore hath no parts of his essence. Besides, if there were such a division of his being, he would not be the most simple and uncompounded being, but would be made up of various parts; he would not be a Spirit, for parts are evidences of composition; and it could not be said that God is here or there, but only, a part of God here, and a part of God there. But he fills heaven and earth; he is as much a God in the earth beneath as in heaven above (Deut. 4:39); entirely in all places, not by scraps and fragments of his essence.

(3.) This essential presence is not by multiplication. For that which is infinite cannot multiply itself, or make itself more or greater than it was.

(4.) This essential presence is not by extension or diffusion, as a piece of gold may be beaten out to cover a large compass of ground; no, if God should create millions of worlds he would be in them all, not by stretching out his being, but by the infiniteness of his being; not by a new growth of his being, but by the same essence he had from eternity: upon the same reasons mentioned before, his simplicity and indivisibility.

(5.) But totally. There is no space, not the least, wherein God is not wholly, according to his essence, and wherein his whole substance doth not exist; not a part of heaven can be designed wherein the Creator is not wholly; as he is in one part of heaven, he is in every part of heaven. Some kind of resemblance we may have from the water of the sea, which fills the great space of the world, and is diffused through all; yet the essence of water is in every drop of water in the sea, as much as the whole; and the same quality of water, though it comes short in quantity; and why shall we not allow God a nobler way of presence without diffusion, as is in that? or take this resemblance; since God likens himself to light in the Scripture, “he covereth himself with light.” A crystal globe hung up in the air hath light all about it, all within it, every part is pierced by it, wherever you see the crystal you see the light; the light in one part of the crystal cannot be distinguished from the light in the other part; and the whole essence of light is in every part; and shall not God be as much present with his creatures, as one creature can be with another? God is totally everywhere by his own simple substance.

*Prop. IV.* God is present beyond the world. He is within and above all places, though places should be infinite in number; as he was before and beyond all time, so he is above and beyond all place; being from eternity before any real time, he must also be without as well as within any real space; if God were only confined to the world, he would be no more infinite in his essence than the world is in

quantity; as a moment cannot be conceived from eternity, wherein God was not in being, so a space cannot be conceived in the mind of man, wherein God is not present; he is not contained in the world nor in the heavens (1 Kings 8:27). "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." Solomon wonders that God should appoint a temple to be erected to him upon the earth, when he is not contained in the vast circuit of the heavens; his essence is not straitened in the limits of any created work; he is not contained in the heavens, *i. e.* in the manner that he is there; but he is there in his essence, and therefore cannot be contained there in his essence. If it should be meant only of his power and providence, it would conclude also for his essence; if his power and providence were infinite, his essence must be so too; for the infiniteness of his essence is the ground of the infiniteness of his power. It can never enter into any thought, that a finite essence can have an infinite power, and that an infinite power can be without an infinite essence; it cannot be meant of his providence, as if Solomon should say, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thy providence; for naming the heaven of heavens, that which encircles and bounds the other parts of the world, he could not suppose a providence to be exercised where there was no object to exercise it about; as no creature is mentioned to be beyond the uttermost heaven, which he calls here the heaven of heavens: besides, to understand it of his providence, doth not consist with Solomon's admiration: he wonders that God, that hath so immense an essence, should dwell in a temple made with hands; he could not so much wonder at his providence in those things that immediately concern his worship. Solomon plainly asserts this of God, That he was so far from being bounded within the rich wall of the temple, which with so much cost he had framed for the glory of his name, that the richer palace of the heaven of heavens could not contain him; it is true, it could not contain his power and wisdom, because his wisdom could contrive other kind of worlds, and his power erect them. But doth the meaning of that wise king reach no farther than this? Will the power and wisdom of God reside on the earth? He was too wise to ask such a question, since every object that his eyes met with in the world resolved him, that the wisdom and power of God dwelt upon the earth, and glittered in everything he had created; and reason would assure him that the power that had framed this world, was able to frame any more; but Solomon, considering the immensity of God's essence, wonders that God should order a house to be built for him, as if he wanted roofs and coverings, and habitation, as bodily creatures do. Will God indeed dwell in a temple, who hath an essence so immense as not to be contained in the heaven of heavens? It is not the heaven of heavens that can contain him, his substance. Here he asserts the immensity of his essence, and his presence not only in the heaven, but beyond the heavens; he that is not contained in the heavens, as a man is in a chamber, is without, and above, and beyond the heavens; it is not said, they do not contain him, but it is impossible they should contain him; they cannot contain him. It is impossible, then, but that he should be above them; he that is without the compass of the world, is not bounded by the limits of the world, as his power is not limited by the things he hath made, but can create innumerable worlds, so can his essence be in innumerable spaces; for as he hath power enough to make more worlds, so he hath essence enough to fill them, and therefore cannot be confined to what he hath already created; innumerable worlds cannot be a sufficient place to contain God; he can only be a sufficient place to himself; He that was before the world, and place, and all things, was to himself a world, a place, and everything: He is really out of the world in himself, as he was in himself before the creation of the world: as because God was before the foundation of the world, we conclude his eternity; so because he is without the bounds of the world, we conclude his immensity, and from thence his omnipresence. The world cannot be said to contain him, since it was created by him; it cannot contain him now, who was contained by nothing before the world was: as there was no place to contain him before the world was, there can be no place to contain him since the world was. God might create more worlds, circular and round as this, and those could not be so contiguous, but some spaces would be left between; as, take three round balls, lay them as close as you can to one another, there will be some spaces between; none would say but God would be in these spaces, as well as in the world he had created, though there were nothing real and positive in those spaces: why should we then exclude God from those imaginary spaces without the world? God might also create many worlds, and separate them by distances, that they might not touch one another, but be at a great distance from one another; and would not God fill them as well as he doth this? if so, he must also fill the spaces between them; for if he were in all those worlds, and not in the spaces between those worlds, his essence would be divided; there would be gaps in it, his essence would be cut into parts, and the distance between every part of his essence, would be as great as the space between each world. The essence of God may be conceived then well enough to be in all those infinite spaces where he can erect new worlds.

I shall give one place more to prove both these propositions, *viz.* that God is essentially in every part of the world, and essentially above ours without the world (Isa. 66:1): "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." He is essentially in every part of the world; he is in heaven and earth at the same time, as a man is upon his throne and his footstool. God describes himself in a human shape, accommodated to our capacity; as if he had his head in heaven, and his feet on earth. Doth not his essence then, fill all intermediate spaces between heaven and earth? As when the head of a man is in the upper part of a room, and his feet upon the floor, his body fills up the space between the head and his feet: this is meant of the essence of God; it is a similitude drawn from kings sitting upon the throne, and not their power and authority, but the feet of their persons are supported by the footstool; so here it is not meant only of the perfections of God, but the essence of God. Besides, God seems to tax them with an erroneous conceit they had, as though his essence were in the temple, and not in any part of the world; therefore God makes an opposition between heaven and earth, and the temple: "Where is the house that you built unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" Had he understood it only of his providence, it had not been anything against their mistake; for they granted his providence to be not only in the temple, but in all parts of the world. "Where is the house that you build to me;" to Me, not to my power or providence, but think to include Me within those walls. Again, it shows God to be above the heavens, if the heavens be his throne; he sits upon them, and is above them, as kings are above the thrones on which they sit. So it cannot be meant of his providence, because no creature being without the sphere of the heavens, there is nothing of the power and the providence of God visible there, for there is nothing for him to employ his providence about; for providence supposeth a creature in actual being; it must be therefore meant of his essence, which is above the world and in the world. And the like proof you may see (Job 11:7, 8), "It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Where he intends the unsearchableness of God's wisdom, but proves it by the infiniteness of his essence, (Heb.) "he is the height of the heavens," he is the top of all the heavens; so that, when you have begun at the lowest part, and traced him through all the creatures, you will find his essence filling all the creatures, to be at the top of the world, and infinitely beyond it.

*Prop. V.* This is the property of God, incommunicable to any creature. As no creature can be eternal and immutable, so no creature can be immense, because it cannot be infinite; nothing can be of an infinite nature, and therefore nothing of an immense presence but God. It cannot be communicated to the human nature of Christ, though in union with the Divine; some indeed argue, that Christ in regard of his human nature is everywhere, because he sits at the right hand of God, and the right hand of God is everywhere. His sitting at the right hand of God signifies his exaltation, and cannot with any reason, be extended to such a kind of arguing. "The hearts of kings are in the hand of God;" are the hearts of kings everywhere, because God's hand is everywhere? The souls of the righteous are

in the hand of God; is the soul, therefore, of every righteous man everywhere in the world? The right hand of God is from eternity; is the humanity of Christ, therefore, from eternity, because it sits at the right hand of God? The right hand of God made the world; did the humanity of Christ, therefore, make heaven and earth? the humanity of Christ must then be confounded with his divinity; be the same with it, not united to it. All creatures are distinct from their Creator, and cannot inherit the properties essential to his nature, as eternity, immensity, immutability, omnipresence, omniscience; no angel, no soul, no creature can be in all places at once; before they can be so they must be immense, and so must cease to be creatures, and commence God; this is impossible.

II. . Reasons to prove God's essential presence. *Reason I.* Because he is infinite. As he is infinite, he is everywhere; as he is simple, his whole essence is everywhere: for, in regard of his infiniteness, he hath no bounds; in regard of his simplicity, he hath no parts and, therefore, those that deny God's omnipresence, though they pretend to own him infinite, must really conceive him finite.

1. God is infinite in his perfections. None can set bounds to terminate the greatness and excellency of God (Psalm 145:3): "His greatness is unsearchable," Sept. *οὐχ ἔστι πέρας*, there is no end, no limitation. What hath no end is infinite; his power is infinite (Job 5:9): "which doth great things and unsearchable;"—no end of those things he is able to do. His wisdom infinite (Psalm 147:5); he understands all things past, present, and to come; what is already made, what is possible to be made. His duration infinite (Job 36:26): "The number of his years cannot be searched out" *ἀπέραντος*. To make a finite thing of nothing is an argument of an infinite virtue. Infinite power can only extract something out of the barren womb of nothing; but all things were drawn forth by the word of God, the heavens, and all the host of them; the sun, moon, stars, the rich embellishments of the world, appeared in being "at the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33:6). The author, therefore, must be infinite; and since nothing is the cause of God, or of any perfection in him,—since he derives not his being, or the least spark of his glorious nature, from anything without him,—he cannot be limited in any part of his nature by anything without him; and, indeed, the infiniteness of his power and his other perfections is asserted by the prophet, when he tells us that "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, or the dust of the balance, and less than nothing and vanity" (Isa. 40:15, 17), they are all so in regard of his power, wisdom, &c. Conceive what a little thing a grain of dust or sand is to all the dust that may be made by the rubbish of a house: what a little thing the heap of the rubbish of a house is to the vast heap of the rubbish of a whole city, such an one as London; how little that, also, would be to the dust of a whole empire; how inconsiderable that, also, to the dust of one quarter of the world, Europe or Asia; how much less that, still, to the dust of the whole world! The whole world is composed of an unconceivable number of atoms, and the sea of an unconceivable number of drops; now what a little grain of dust is in comparison to the dust of the whole world—a drop of water from the sea, to all the drops remaining in the sea—that is the whole world to God. Conceive it still less, a mere nothing, yet is it all less than this in comparison of God; there can be nothing more magnificently expressive of the infiniteness of God to a human conception, than this expression of God himself in the prophet. In the perfection of a creature, something still may be thought greater to be added to it; but God containing all perfections in himself formally, if they be mere perfections, and eminently, if they be but perfections in the creature, mixed with imperfection, nothing can be thought greater, and therefore every one of them is infinite.

2. If his perfections be infinite, his essence must be so. How God can have infinite perfections, and a finite essence, is unconceivable by a human or angelical understanding; an infinite power, an infinite wisdom, an infinite duration, must needs speak an infinite essence; since the infiniteness of his attributes is grounded upon the infiniteness of his essence: to own infinite perfections in a finite subject is contradictory. The manner of acting by his power, and knowing his wisdom, cannot exceed the manner of being by his essence. His perfections flow from his essence, and the principle must be of the same rank with what flows from it; and, if we conceive his essence to be the cause of his perfections, it is utterly impossible that an infinite effect should arise from a finite cause: but, indeed, his perfections are his essence; for though we conceive the essence of God as the subject, and the attributes of God as faculties and qualities in that subject, according to our weak model, who cannot conceive of an infinite God without some manner of likeness to ourselves—who find understanding, and will, and power in us distinct from our substance; yet truly and really there is no distinction between his essence and attributes; one is inseparable from the other. His power and wisdom are his essence; and therefore to maintain God infinite in the one, and finite in the other, is to make a monstrous god, and have an unreasonable notion of the Deity; for there would be the greatest disproportion in his nature, since there is no greater disproportion can possibly be between one thing and another than there is between finite and infinite. God must not only then be compounded, but have parts of the greatest distance from one another in nature; but God, being the most simple being without the least composition, both must be equally infinite: if, then, his essence be not infinite, his power and wisdom cannot be infinite, which is both against scripture and reason. Again, how should his essence be finite, and his perfections be infinite, since nothing out of himself gave them either the one or the other? Again, either the essence can be infinite, or it cannot; if it cannot, there must be some cause of that impossibility; that can be nothing without him, because nothing without him can be as powerful as himself, much less too powerful for him; nothing within him can be an enemy to his highest perfection; since he is necessarily what he is, he must be necessarily the most perfect being, and therefore necessarily infinite, since to be something infinitely is a greater perfection than to be something finitely: if he can be infinite he is infinite, otherwise he could be greater than he is, and so more blessed and more perfect than he is, which is impossible: for being the most perfect Being, to whom nothing can be added, he must needs be infinite.

3. If, therefore, God have an infinite essence, he hath an infinite presence. An infinite essence cannot be contained in a finite place, as those things which are finite have a bounded space wherein they are; so that which is infinite hath an unbounded space; for, as finiteness speaks limitedness, so infiniteness speaks unboundedness; and if we grant to God an infinite duration, there is no difficulty in acknowledging an infinite presence: indeed, the infiniteness of God is a property belonging to him in regard of time and place; he is bounded by no place, and limited to no time. Again, infinite essence may as well be everywhere, as infinite power reaches everything; it may as well be present with every being, as infinite power in its working may be present with nothing to bring it into being. Where God works by his power, he is present in his essence; because his power and his essence cannot be separated; and therefore his power, wisdom, goodness, cannot be anywhere where his essence is not: his essence cannot be severed from his power, nor his power from his essence; for the power of God is nothing but God acting, and the wisdom of God nothing but God knowing. As the power of God is always, so is his essence—as the power of God is everywhere, so is his essence: whatsoever God is, he is always, and everywhere. To confine him to a place, is to measure his essence; as to confine his actions, is to limit his power; his essence being no less infinite than his power and his wisdom, can be no more bounded than his power and wisdom; but they are not separable from his essence, yea, they are his essence. If God did not fill the whole world, he would be determined to some place, and excluded from others; and so his substance would have bounds and limits, and then something might be conceived greater than God; for we may conceive that a creature may be made by God of so vast a greatness as to fill the whole world, for the power of God is able to make a body that should



take up the whole space between heaven and earth, and reach to every corner of it. But nothing can be conceived by any creature greater than God; he exceeds all things, and is exceeded by none. God, therefore, cannot be included in heaven, nor included in the earth; cannot be contained in either of them; for, if we should imagine them vaster than they are, yet still they would be finite; and if his essence were contained in them, it could be no more infinite than the world which contains it, as water is not of a larger compass than the vessel which contains it. If the essence of God were limited, either in the heavens or earth, it must needs be finite, as the heaven and earth are; but there is no proportion between finite and infinite; God, therefore, cannot be contained in them. If there were an infinite body, that must be everywhere; certainly, then, an infinite Spirit must be everywhere; unless we will account him finite, we can render no reason why he should not be in one creature as well as in another. If he be in heaven, which is his creature, why can he not be in the earth, which is as well his creature as the heavens?

*Reason II.* Because of the continual operation of God in the world. This was one reason which made the heathen believe that there was an infinite Spirit in the vast body of the world, acting in every thing, and producing those admirable motions which we see everywhere in nature: that cause which acts in the most perfect manner, is also in the most perfect manner present with its effects.

God preserves all, and therefore is in all; the apostle thought it a good induction (Acts 17:27), "He is not far from us, for in him we live." *For* being as much as *because*, shows, that from his operation he concluded his real presence with all: it is not, His virtue is not far from every one of us, but He, his substance, himself; for, none that acknowledge a God will deny the absence of the virtue of God from any part of the world. He works in everything, everything lives and works in him; therefore he is present with all: or rather, if things live, they are in God, who gives them life. If things live, God is in them, and gives them life; if things move, God is in them, and gives them motion; if things have any being, God is in them, and gives them being; if God withdraws himself; they presently lose their being, and therefore some have compared the creature to the impression of a seal upon the water, that cannot be preserved but by the presence of the seal. As his presence was actual with what he created, so his presence is actual with what he preserves, since creation and preservation do so little differ; if God creates things by his essential presence, by the same he supports them; if his substance cannot be disjoined from his preserving power, his power and wisdom cannot be separated from his essence; where there are the marks of the one, there is the presence of the other; for it is by his essence that he is powerful and wise; no man can distinguish the one from the other in a simple being; God doth not preserve and act things by a virtue diffused from him.

It may be demanded whether that virtue be distinct from God; if it be not, it is then the essence of God; if it be distinct it is a creature, and then it may be asked, how that virtue which preserves other things, is preserved itself; it must be ultimately resolved into the essence of God, or else there must be a running *in infinitum*: or else, is that virtue of God a substance, or not? Is it endued with understanding, or not? If it hath understanding, how doth it differ from God? If it wants understanding, can any imagine that the support of the world, the guidance of all creatures, the wonders of nature, can be wrought, preserved, managed by a virtue that hath nothing of understanding in it? If it be not a substance, it can much less be able to produce such excellent operations as the preserving all the kinds of things in the world, and ordering them to perform such excellent ends; this virtue is, therefore, God himself—the infinite power and wisdom of God; and therefore, wheresoever the effects of these are seen in the world, God is essentially present: some creatures, indeed, act at a distance by a virtue diffused. But such a manner of acting comes from a limitedness of nature, that such a nature cannot be everywhere present and extend its substance to all parts. To act by a virtue, speaks the subject finite, and it is a part of indigence: kings act in their kingdoms by ministers and messengers, because they cannot act otherwise; but God being infinitely perfect, works all things in all immediately (1 Cor. 12:6). Illumination, sanctification, grace, &c., are the immediate works of God in the heart, and immediate agents are present with what they do: it is an argument of the greater perfection of a being, to know things immediately, which are done in several places, than to know them at the second hand by instruments; it is no less a perfection to be everywhere, rather than to be tied to one place of action, and to act in other places lay instruments, for want of a power to act immediately itself. God, indeed, acts by means and second causes in his providential dispensations in the world, but this is not out of any defect of power to work all immediately himself; but he thereby accommodates his way of acting to the nature of the creature, and the order of things which he hath settled in the world. And when he works by means, he acts with those means, in those means, sustains their faculties and virtues in them, concurs with them by his power; so that God's acting by means doth rather strengthen his essential presence than weaken it, since there is a necessary dependence of the creatures upon the Creator in their being and acting; and what they are, they are by the power of God; what they act, they act in the power of God, concurring with them; they have their motion in him as well as their being; and where the power of God is, his essence is, because they are inseparable; and so this omnipresence ariseth from the simplicit of the nature of God; the more vast anything is, the less confined. All that will acknowledge God so great, as to be able to work all things by his will, without an essential presence, cannot imagine him upon the same reason, so little as to be contained in, and bounded by any place.

*Reason III.* Because of his supreme perfection. No perfection is wanting to God; but an unbounded essence is a perfection; a limited one is an imperfection. Though it be a perfection in a man to be wise, yet it is an imperfection that his wisdom cannot rule all the things that concern him; though it be a perfection to be present in a place where his affairs lie, yet is it an imperfection that he cannot be present everywhere in the midst of all his concerns; if any man could be so, it would be universally owned as a prime perfection in him above others: is that which would be a perfection in man to be denied to God? as that which hath life is more perfect than that which hath not life; and that which hath sense is more perfect than that which hath only life as the plants have; and what hath reason, is more perfect than that which hath only life and sense, as the beasts have; so what is everywhere, is more perfect than that which is bounded in some narrow confines: if a power of motion be more excellent than to be bed-rid, and swiftness in a creature be a more excellent endowment than to be slow and snail-like, then to be everywhere without motion, is inconceivably a greater excellency than to be everywhere successively by motion. God sets forth his readiness to help his people and punish his enemies, or his omnipresence, by swiftness, or "flying upon the wings of the wind" (Psalm 18:10): the wind is in every part of the air, where it blows; it cannot be said that it is in this or that point of the air where you feel it, so as to exclude it from another part of the air where you are not; it seems to possess all at once. If the Divine essence had any bounds of place, it would be imperfect, as well as if it had bounds of time; where anything hath limitation, it hath some defect in being; and therefore if God were confined or concluded, he would be as good as nothing in regard of infiniteness. Whence should this restraint arise? there is no power above him to restrain him to a certain space; if so, then he would not be God, but that power which restrained him would be God: not from his own nature, for the being everywhere implies no contradiction to his nature; if his own nature determined him to a certain place, then if he removed from that place, he would act against his nature; to conceive any such thing of God is highly absurd. It cannot be thought God should voluntarily impose any such restraint or confinement upon himself; this would be to deny himself a perfection he might have; if God

have not this perfection, it is either because it is inconsistent with his nature; or, because he cannot have it; or, because he will not. The former cannot be; for if he hath impressed upon air and light a resemblance of his excellency, to diffuse themselves and fill so vast a space, is such an excellency inconsistent with the Creator more than the creature? whatsoever perfection the creature hath, is eminently in God. "Understand, O ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will you be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" (Psalm 94:8, 9.) By the same reason he that hath given such a power to those creatures, air and light, shall not he be much more filling all spaces of the world? It is so clear a rule, that the Psalmist fixes a folly and brutishness upon those that deny it; it is not therefore inconsistent with his nature, it were not then a perfection but an imperfection; but whatsoever is an excellency in creatures, cannot in a way of eminency be an imperfection in God; if it be then a perfection, and God want it, it is because he cannot have it; where, then, is his power? How can he be then the fountain of his own Being? If he will not, where is his love to his own nature and glory? since no creature would deny that to itself which it can have, and is an excellency to it; God, therefore, hath not only a power or fitness to be everywhere, but he is actually everywhere.

*Reason IV.* Because of his immutability. If God did not fill all the spaces of heaven and earth, but only possess one, yet it must be acknowledged that God hath a power to move himself to another. It were absurd to fix God in a part of the heavens, like a star in an orb, without a power of motion to another place. If he be therefore essentially in heaven, may he not be upon the earth if he please, and transfer his substance from one place to another? to say he cannot, is to deny him a perfection which he hath bestowed upon his creatures; the angels, his messengers, are sometimes in heaven, sometimes on the earth; the eagles, meaner creatures, are sometimes in the air out of sight, sometimes upon the earth. If he doth move, therefore, and recede from one place and settle in another, doth he not declare himself mutable by changing places?—by being where he was not before, and in not being where he was before? He would not fill heaven and earth at once, but successively; no man can be said to fill a room, that moves from one part of a room to another; if therefore any in their imaginations stake God to the heavens, they render him less than his creatures; if they allow him a power of motion from one place to another, they conceive him changeable; and in either of them they own him no greater than a finite and limited Being; limited to heaven, if they fix him there; limited to that space to which they imagine him to move.

*Reason V.* Because of his omnipotency. The Almightyness of God is a notion settled in the minds of all,—that God can do whatsoever he pleases, everything that is not against the purity of his nature, and doth not imply a contradiction in itself; he can therefore create millions of worlds greater than this; and millions of heavens greater than this heaven he hath already created; if so, he is then in inconceivable spaces beyond this world, for his essence is not less narrower than his power; and his power is not to be thought of a further extent than his essence; he cannot be excluded therefore from those vast spaces where his power may fix those worlds if he please; if so, it is no wonder that he should fill this world: and there is no reason to exclude God from the narrow space of this world, that is not contained in infinite spaces beyond the world. God is wheresoever he hath a power to act; but he hath a power to act everywhere in the world, everywhere out of the world; he is therefore everywhere in the world, everywhere out of the world. Before this world was made, he had a power to make it in the space where now it stands; was he not then unlimitedly where the world now is, before the world received a being by his powerful word?

Why should he not then be in every part of the world now? Can it be thought that God who was immense before, should, after he had created the world, contract himself to the limits of one of his creatures, and tie himself to a particular place of his own creation, and be less after his creation than he was before? This might also be prosecuted by an argument from his eternity. What is eternal in duration, is immense in essence; the same reason which renders him eternal, renders him immense; that which proves him to be always, will prove him to be everywhere.

III. The third thing is, Propositions for the further clearing this doctrine from any exceptions.

1. This truth is not weakened by the expressions in Scripture, where God is said to dwell in heaven and in the temple.

(1.) He is indeed said to sit in heaven (Psalm 2:4), and to dwell on high (Psalm 113:5), but he is nowhere said to dwell only in the heavens, as confined to them. It is the court of his majestic presence, but not the prison of his essence: for when we are told that "the heaven is his throne," we are told with the same breath that the "earth is his footstool" (Isa. 66:1). He dwells on high, in regard of the excellency of his nature, but he is in all places, in regard of the diffusion of his presence. The soul is essentially in all parts of the body, but it doth not exert the same operations in all; the more noble discoveries of it are in the head and heart. In the head where it exerciseth the chiefest senses for the enriching the understanding; in the heart, where it vitally resides, and communicates life and motion to the rest of the body. It doth not understand with the foot or toe, though it be in all parts of the body it informs; and so God may be said to dwell in heaven, in regard of the more excellent and majestic representations of himself, both to the creatures that inhabit the place, as angels and blessed spirits, and also in those marks of his greatness which he hath planted before, those spiritual natures which have a nobler stamp of God upon them, and those excellent bodies, as sun and stars, which, as so many topers, light us to behold his glory (Psalm 19:1), and astonish the minds of men when they gaze upon them. It is his court, where he hath the most solemn worship from his creatures, all his courtiers attending there with a pure love and glowing zeal. He reigns there in a special manner, without any opposition to his government; it is, therefore, called his "holy dwelling place" (2 Chron. 3:27). The earth hath not that title, since sin cast a stain and a ruining curse upon it. The earth is not his throne, because his government is opposed: but heaven is none of Satan's precinct, and the rule of God is uncontradicted by the inhabitants of it. It is from thence also he hath given the greatest discoveries of himself; thence he sends the angels his messengers, his Son upon Redemption, his Spirit for sanctification. From heaven his gifts drop down upon our heads, and his grace upon our hearts (James 3:17). From thence the chiefest blessings of earth descend. The motions of the heavens fatten the earth; and the heavenly bodies are but stewards to the earthly comforts for man by their influence. Heaven is the richest, vastest, most steadfast, and majestic part of the visible creation. It is there where he will at last manifest himself to his people in a full conjunction of grace and glory, and be forever open to his people in uninterrupted expressions of goodness, and discoveries of his presence, as a reward of their labor and service; and in these respects it may peculiarly be called his throne. And this doth no more hinder his essential presence in all parts of the earth, than it doth his gracious presence in all the hearts of his people. God is in heaven, in regard of the manifestation of his glory; in hell, by the expressions of his justice; in the earth, by the discoveries of his wisdom, power, patience, and compassion; in his people, by the monuments of his grace; and in all, in regard of his substance.

(2.) He is said also to dwell in the ark and temple. It is called (Psalm 26:8) "the habitation of his house, and the place where his honor

dwells;" and to dwell in Jerusalem as in his holy mountain, "The mountain of the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 8:3), in regard of publishing his oracles, answering their prayers, manifesting more of his goodness to the Israelites, than to any other nation in the world; erecting his true worship among them, which was not settled in any part of the world besides: and his worship is principally intended in that psalm. The ark is the place where his honor dwells. The worship of God is called the glory of God; "They changed the glory of God into an image made like to corruptible man" (Rom. 1:23), *i. e.*, they changed the worship of God into idolatry; and to that also doth the place in Zechariah refer. Now, because he is said to dwell in heaven, is he essentially only there? Is he not as essentially in the temple and ark as he is in heaven, since there are as high expressions of his habitation there as of his dwelling in heaven? If he dwell only in heaven, how came he to dwell in the temple? both are asserted in Scripture, one as much as the other. If his dwelling in heaven did not hinder his dwelling in the ark, it could as little hinder the presence of his essence on the earth. To dwell in heaven, and in one part of the earth at the same time, is all one as to dwell in all parts of heaven, and all parts of earth. If he were in heaven, and in the ark and temple, it was the same essence in both, though not the same kind of manifestation of himself. If by his dwelling in heaven he meant his whole essence, why is it not also to be meant by his dwelling in the ark? It was not, sure, part of his essence that was in heaven, and part of his essence that was on earth; his essence would then be divided; and can it be imagined that he should be in heaven and the ark at the same time, and not in the spaces between? Could his essence be split into fragments, and a gap made in it, that two distant spaces should be filled by him, and all between be empty of him, so that God's being said to dwell in heaven, and in the temple, is so far from impairing the truth of this doctrine, that it more confirms and evidences it.

2. Nor do the expressions of God's coming to us, or departing from us, impair this doctrine of his omnipresence. God is said to hide his face from his people (Psalm 10:1); to be far from the wicked; and the Gentiles are said to be afar off, *viz.* from God (Prov. 15:29; Eph. 2:17), and upon the manifestation of Christ made near. These must not be understood of any distance or nearness of his essence, for that is equally hear to all persons and things; but of some other special way and manifestation of his presence. Thus, God is said to be in believers by love, as they are in him (1 John 4:15); "He that abides in love, abides in God, and God in him." He that loves, is in the thing beloved; and when two love one another, they are in one another. God is in a righteous man by a special grace, and far from the wicked in regard of such special works; and God is said to be in a place by a special manifestation, as when he was in the bush (Exod. 3), or manifesting his glory upon Mount Sinai (Exod. 24:16); "The glory of the Lord abode about Mount Sinai." God is said to hide his face when he withdraws his comforting presence, disturbs the repose of our hearts, flasheth terror into our consciences, when he puts men under the smart of the cross; as though he had ordered his mercy utterly to depart from them, or when he doth withdraw his special assisting providence from us in our affairs; so he departed from Saul, when he withdrew his direction and protection from him in the concerns of his government (1 Sam. 16:14); "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul," *i. e.* the spirit of government. God may be far from us in one respect, and near to us in another; far from us in regard of comfort, yet near to us in regard of support, when his essential presence continues the same: this is a necessary consequent upon the infiniteness of God, the other is an act of the will of God; so he was said to forsake Christ, in regard of his obscuring his glory from his human nature, and inflicting his wrath, though he was near to him in regard of his grace, and preserved him from contracting any spot in his sufferings. We do not say the sun is departed out of the heavens when it is bemisted; it remains in the same part of the heavens, passes on its course, though its beams do not reach us by reason of the bar between us and it. The soul is in every part of the body, in regard of its substance, and constantly in it, though it doth not act so sprightly and vigorously at one time as at another in one and the same member, and discover itself so sensibly in its operations; so all the various effects of God towards the sons of men, are but divers operations of one and the same essence. He is far from us, or near to us, as he is a judge or a benefactor. When he comes to punish, it notes not the approach of his essence, but the stroke of his justice; when he comes to benefit, it is not by a new access of his essence, but an efflux of his grace: he departs from us when he leaves us to the frowns of his justice; he comes to us when he encircles us in the arms of his mercy; but he was equally present with us in both dispensations, in regard of his essence. And, likewise, God is said to come down (Gen. 11:5, "And the Lord came down to see the city"), when he doth some signal and wonderful works which attract the minds of men to the acknowledgment of a Supreme Power and Providence in the world, who judged God absent and careless before.

3. Nor is the essential presence of God with all creatures any disparagement to him. Since it was no disparagement to create the heaven and the earth, it is no disparagement to him to fill them; if he were essentially present with them when he created them, it is no dishonor to him to be essentially present with them to support them; if it were his glory to create them by his essence, when they were nothing, can it be his disgrace to be present by his essence, since they are something, and something good, and very good in his eye (Gen. 1:31)? God saw every thing, and behold it was very good, or mighty good; all ordered to declare his goodness wisdom, power, and to make him adorable to man, and therefore took complacency in them. There is a harmony in all things, a combination in them for those glorious ends for which God created them; and is it a disgrace for God to be present with his own harmonious composition? Is it not a musician's glory to touch with his fingers the treble, the least and tenderest string, as well as the strongest and greatest bass? Hath not everything some stamp of God's own being upon it, since he eminently contains in himself the perfections of all his works? Whatsoever hath being, hath a footstep of God upon it, who is all being; everything in the earth is his footstool, having a mark of his foot upon it; all declare the being of God, because they had their being from God; and will God account it any disparagement to him to be present with that which confirms his being, and the glorious perfections of his nature, to his intelligent creatures? The meanest things are not without their virtues, which may boast God's being the Creator of them, and rank them in the midst of his works of wisdom as well as power. Doth God debase himself to be present by his essence, with the things he hath made, more than he doth to know them by his essence? Is not the least thing known by him? How? not by a faculty or act distinct from his essence, but by his essence itself. How is anything disgraceful to the essential presence of God, that is not disgraceful to his knowledge by his essence? Besides, would God make anything that should be an invincible reason to him to part with his own infiniteness, by a contraction of his own essence into a less compass than before? it was immense before, it had no bounds; and would God make a world that he would be ashamed to be present with, and continue it to the diminution and lessening of himself, rather than annihilate it to avoid the disparagement? This were to impeach the wisdom of God, and cast a blemish upon his infinite understanding, that he knows not the consequences of his work, or is well contented to be impaired in the immensity of his own essence by it. No man thinks it a dishonor to light, a most excellent creature, to be present with a toad or serpent; and though there be an infinite disproportion between light, a creature, and the Father of lights, the Creator: yet God, being a Spirit, knows how to be with bodies as if they were not bodies; and being jealous of his own honor, would not, could not do any thing that might impair it.

4. Nor will it follow, That because God is essentially everywhere, that everything is God. God is not everywhere by any conjunction, composition or mixture with anything on earth. When light is in every part of a crystal globe, and encircles it close on every side, do they become one? No; the crystal remains what it is, and the light retains its own nature; God is not in us as a part of

us, but as an efficient and preserving cause; it is not by his essential presence, but his efficacious presence, that he brings any person into a likeness to his own nature; God is so in his essence with things, as to be distinct from them, as a cause from the effect; as a Creator different from the creature, preserving their nature, not communicating his own; his essence touches all, is in conjunction with none; finite and infinite cannot be joined; he is not far from us, therefore near to us; so near that we live and move in him (Acts 17:28). Nothing is God because it moves in him, any more than a fish in the sea, is the sea, or a part of the sea, because it moves in it. Doth a man that holds a thing in the hollow of his hand, transform it by that action, and make it like his hand? The soul and body are more straitly united, than the essence of God is, by his presence, with any creature. The soul is in the body as a form in matter, and from their union doth arise a man; yet in this near conjunction, both body and soul remain distinct; the soul is not the body, nor the body the soul; they both have distinct natures and essences; the body can never be changed into a soul, nor the soul into a body; no more can God into the creature, or the creature into God. Fire is in heated iron in every part of it, so that it seems to be nothing but fire; yet is not fire and iron the same thing. But such a kind of arguing against God's omnipresence, that if God were essentially present, everything would be God, would exclude him from heaven as well as from earth. By the same reason, since they acknowledge God essentially in heaven, the heaven where he is should be changed into the nature of God; and by arguing against his presence in earth, upon this ground they run such an inconvenience, that they must own him to be nowhere, and that which is nowhere is nothing. Doth the earth become God, because God is essentially there, any more than the heavens, where God is acknowledged by all to be essentially present? Again, if where God is essentially, that must be God; then if they place God in a point of the heavens, not only that point must be God, but all the world; because if that point be God, because God is there, then the point touched by that point must be God, and so consequently as far as there are any points, touched by one another. We live and move in God, so we live and move in the air; we are no more God by that, than we are mere air because we breathe in it, and it enters into all the pores of our body; nay, where there was a straiter union of the divine nature to the human in our Saviour, yet the nature of both was distinct, and the humanity was not changed into the divinity, nor the divinity into the humanity.

5. Nor doth it follow, that because God is everywhere, therefore a creature may be worshipped without idolatry. Some of the heathens who acknowledged God's omnipresence, abused it to the countenancing idolatry; because God was resident in everything, they thought everything might be worshipped; and some have used it as an argument against this doctrine; the best doctrines may by men's corruption be drawn out into unreasonable and pernicious conclusions. Have you not met with any, that from the doctrine of God's free mercy, and our Saviour's satisfactory death, have drawn poison to feed their lusts, and consume their souls?—a poison composed by their own corruption, and not offered by those truths. The Apostle intimates to us, that some did, or at least were ready to be more lavish in sinning, because God was abundant in grace; "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" when he prevents an objection that he thought might be made by some: but as to this case, since though God be present in everything, yet everything retains its nature distinct from the nature of God; therefore it is not to have a worship due to the excellency of God. As long as anything remains a creature, it is only to have the respect from us, which is due to it in the rank of creatures. When a prince is present with his guard, or if he should go arm in arm with a peasant, is, therefore, the veneration and honor due to the prince to be paid to the peasant, or any of his guard? Would the presence of the prince excuse it, or would it not rather aggravate it? He acknowledged such a person equal to me, by giving him my rights, even in my sight.

Though God dwelt in the temple, would not the Israelites have been accounted guilty of idolatry had they worshipped the images of the cherubims, or the ark, or the altar, as objects of worship, which were erected only as means for his service? Is there not as much reason to think God was as essentially present in the temple as in heaven, since the same expressions are used of the one and the other? The sanctuary is called the glorious high throne (Jer. 17:13); and he is said to dwell between the cherubims (Psalm 80:1), *i. e.* the two cherubims that were at the two ends of the mercy seat, appointed by God as the two sides of his throne in the sanctuary (Exod. 25:18), where he was to dwell (ver. 8), and meet, and commune, with his people (ver. 22). Could this excuse Manasseh's idolatry in bringing in a carved image into the house of God (1 Chron. 33:7)? had it been a good answer to the charge, God is present here, and therefore everything may be worshipped as God? If he be only essentially in heaven, would it not be idolatry to direct a worship to the heavens, or any part of it as a due object, because of the presence of God there? Though we look up to the heavens, where we pray and worship God, yet heaven is not the object of worship; the soul abstracts God from the creature.

6. Nor is God defiled by being present with those creatures which seem filthy to us. Nothing is filthy in the eye of God as his creature; he could never else have pronounced all good; whatsoever is filthy to us, yet, as it is a creature, it owes itself to the power of God: his essence is no more defiled by being present with it, than his power by producing it: no creature is foul in itself, though it may seem so to us. Doth not an infant lie in a womb of filthiness and rottenness? yet is not, the power of God present with it, in working it curiously in the lower parts of the earth? Are his eyes defiled by seeing the substance when it is yet imperfect? or his hand defiled by writing every member in his book (Psalm 139:15, 16)? Have not the vilest and most noisome things excellent medicinal virtues? How are they endued with them? How are those qualities preserved in them? by anything without God, or no? Every artificer looks with pleasure upon the work he hath wrought with art and skill. Can his essence be defiled by being present with them, any more than it was in giving them such virtues, and preserving them in them? God measures the heavens and the earth with his hand; is his hand defiled by the evil influences of the planets, or the corporeal impurities of the earth? Nothing can be filthy in the eye of God but sin, since everything else owes its being to him. What may appear deformed and unworthy to us, is not so to the Creator; he sees beauty where we see deformity; finds goodness where we behold what is nauseous to us. All creatures being the effects of his power, may be the objects of his presence. Can any place be more foul than hell, if you take it either for the hell of the damned, or for the grave where there is rottenness? yet there he is (Psalm 139:8). When Satan appeared before God, and God spake with him (Job 1:7), could God contract any impurity by being present where that filthy spirit was, more impure than any corporeal, noisome, and defiling thing can be? No; God is purity to himself in the midst of noisomeness; a heaven to himself in the midst of hell. Whoever heard of a sunbeam stained by shining upon a quagmire, any more than sweetened by breaking into a perfumed room? Though the light shines upon pure and impure things, yet it mixes not itself with either of them; so though God be present with devils and wicked men, yet without any mixture; he is present with their essence to sustain it and support it; not in their defection, wherein lies their defilement, and which is not a physical, but a moral evil; bodily filth can never touch an incorporeal substance. Spirits are not present with us in the same maner that one body is present with another; bodies can by a touch only, defile bodies. Is the glory of an angel stained by being in a coal-mine? or could the angel that came into the lion's den to deliver Daniel, be any more disturbed by the stench of the place, than he could be scratched by the paws, or torn by the teeth, of the beasts (Dan. 6:22)? Their spiritual nature secures them against any infection when they are ministering spirits to persecuted believers in their nasty prisons (Acts 12:7). The soul is straitly united with the body, but it is not made white or black by the whiteness or blackness of its habitation. Is it infected by the corporeal impurities of the

body, while it continually dwells in a sea of filthy pollution? If the body be cast into a common shore, is the soul filed by it? Can a diseased body derive a contagion to the spirit that animates it? Is it not often the purer by grace, the more the body is infected by nature? Hezekiah's spirit was scarce ever more fervent with God, than when the sore, which some think to be a plague sore, was upon him (Isa. 38:3). How can any corporeal filth impair the purity of the divine essence? It may as well be said, that God is not present in battles and fights for his people (Joshua 23:10), because he would not be disturbed by the noise of cannons, and clashing of swords, as that he is not present in the world because of the ill scents. Let us therefore conclude this with the expression of a learned man of our own: "To deny the omnipresence of God, because of ill scented places, is to measure God rather by the nicety of sense, than by the sagacity of reason."

#### IV. Use. First, of information.

1. Christ hath a divine nature. As eternity and immutability, two incommunicable properties of the divine nature, are ascribed to Christ, so also is this of omnipresence or immensity (John 3:13:) "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." Not which was, but which is. He comes from heaven by incarnation, and remains in heaven by his divinity. He was, while he spake to Nicodemus, locally on earth, in regard of his humanity; but in heaven according to his deity, as well as upon earth in the union of his divine and human nature. He descended upon earth, but he left not heaven; he was in the world before he came in the flesh (John 1:10): "He was in the world, and the world was made by him." He was in the world, as the "light that enlightens every man that comes into the world." In the world as God, before he was in the world as man. He was then in the world as man, while he discoursed with Nicodemus; yet so, that he was also in heaven as God. No creature but is bounded in place, either circumscribed as body, or determined as spirit to be in one space, so as not to be in another at the same time; to leave a place where they were, and possess a place where they were not. But Christ is so on earth, that at the same time he is in heaven; he is therefore infinite. To be in heaven and earth at the same moment of time, is a property solely belonging to the Deity, wherein no creature can be a partner with him. He was in the world before he came to the world, and "the world was made by him" (John 1:10). His coming was not as the coming of angels, that leave heaven, and begin to be on earth, where they were not before; but such a presence as can be ascribed only to God, who fills heaven and earth. Again, if all things were made by him, then he was present with all things which were made; for where there is a presence of power, there is also a presence of essence, and therefore he is still present; for the right and power of conservation follows the power of creation. And, according to this divine nature, he promiseth his presence with his church (Matt. 18:20): "There am I in the midst of them;" and (Matt. 28:20), "I am with you always, even to the end of the world," *i. e.* by his divinity: for he had before told them (Matt. 26:11), that they were not to have him away with them, *i. e.* according to his humanity; but in his Divine nature he is present with, and walks in the midst of, the golden candlesticks. If we understand it of a presence by his Spirit in the midst of the church, doth it invalidate his essential presence? No; he is no less than the Spirit whom he sends; and therefore as little confined as the Spirit is, who dwells in every believer: and this may also be inferred from John 10:30: "My father and I are one;" not one by consent, though that be included, but one in power: for he speaks not of their consent, but of their joint power in keeping his people. Where there is a unity of essence, there is a unity of presence.

2. here is a confirmation of the spiritual nature of God. If he were an infinite body, he could not fill heaven and earth, but with the exclusion of all creatures. Two bodies cannot be in the same space; they may be near one another, but not in any of the same points together. A body bounded he hath not, for that would destroy his immensity; he could not then fill heaven and earth, because a body cannot be at one and the same time in two different spaces; but God doth not fill heaven at one time, and the earth at another, but both at the same time. Besides a limited body cannot be said to fill the whole earth, but one particular space in the earth at a time. A body may fill the earth with its virtue, as the sun, but not with its substance. Nothing can be everywhere with a corporeal weight and mass; but God being infinite, is not tied to any part of the world, but penetrates all, and equally acts by his infinite power in all.

3. Here is an argument for providence. His presence is mentioned in the text, in order to his government of the affairs of the world. Is he everywhere, to be unconcerned with everything? Before the world had a being, God was present with himself; since the world hath a being, he is present with his creatures, to exercise his wisdom in the ordering, as he did his power in the production of them. As the knowledge of God is not a bare contemplation of a thing, so his presence is not a bare inspection into a thing. Were it an idle careless presence, it were a presence to no purpose, which cannot be imagined of God. Infinite power, goodness, and wisdom, being everywhere present with his essence, are never without their exercise. He never manifests any of his perfections, but the manifestation is full of some indulgence and benefit to his creatures. It cannot be supposed God should neglect those things, wherewith he is constantly present in a way of efficiency and operation. He is not everywhere without acting everywhere. "Wherever his essence is, there is a power and virtue worthy of God everywhere dispensed." He governs by his presence what he made by his power; and is present as an agent with all his works. His power and essence are together, to preserve them while he pleases, as his power and his essence were together, to create them when he saw good to do it. Every creature hath a stamp of God, and his presence is necessary to keep the impression standing upon the creature. As all things are his works, they are the objects of his cares; and the wisdom he employed in framing them will not suffer him to be careless of them. His presence with them engageth him in honor not to be a negligent Governor. His immensity fits him for government; and where there is a fitness, there is an exercise of government, where there are objects for the exercise of it. He is worthy to have the universal rule of the world; he can be present in all places of his empire; there is nothing can be done by any of his subjects, but in his sight. As his eternity renders him King always, so his immensity renders him King everywhere. If he were only present in heaven, it might occasion a suspicion that he minded only the things of heaven, and had no concern for things below that vast body; but if he be present here, his presence hath a tendency to the government of those things with which he is present. We are all in him as fish in the sea; and he bears all creatures in the womb of his providence, and the arms of his goodness. It is most certain that his presence with his people is far from being an idle one; for when he promises to be with them, he adds some special cordial, as, "I will be with thee, and bless thee" (Gen. 26:3.) "I am with thee, and I will strengthen thee" (Jer. 15:20.) "I will help thee, I will uphold thee" (Isa. 41:10, 14.) Infinite goodness will never countenance a negligent presence.

4. The omniscience of God is inferred from hence. If God be present everywhere, he must needs know what is done everywhere. It is for this end he proclaims himself a God filling heaven and earth, in the text, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? I have heard what the prophets say, that prophesy lies in my name: if I fill heaven and earth, the most secret thing cannot be hid from my sight." An intelligent being cannot be everywhere present, and more intimate in everything, than it can be in itself; but he must know what is done without, what is thought within. Nothing can be obscure to Him who is in every part of the world, in every part of his creatures. Not a thought can start up but in his sight, who is present in the souls and minds of

everything. How easy is it with him, to whose essence the world is but a point, to know and observe everything done in this world, as any of us can know what is done in one point of place where we are present! If light were an understanding being, it would behold and know everything done where it diffuseth itself. God is light (as light in a crystal glass all within it, all without it), and is not ignorant of what is done within and without; no ignorance can be fastened upon him who hath an universal presence. Hence, by the way, we may take notice of the wonderful patience of God, who bears with so many provocations; not from a principal of ignorance, for he bears with sins that are committed near him in his sight, sins that he sees, and cannot but see.

5. Hence may be inferred the incomprehensibility of God. He that fills heaven and earth cannot be contained in anything; he fills the understandings of men, the understandings of angels, but is comprehended by neither; it is a rashness to think to find out any bounds of God; there is no measuring of an infinite Being; if it were to be measured it were not infinite; but because it is infinite, it is not to be measured. God sits above the cherubims (Ezek. 10:1), above the fulness, above the brightness, not only of a human, but a created understanding. Nothing is more present than God, yet nothing more hid; he is light, and yet obscurity; his perfections are visible, yet unsearchable; we know there is an infinite God, but it surpasseth the compass of our minds; we know there is no number so great, but another may be added to it; but no man can put it in practice, without losing himself in a maze of figures. What is the reason we comprehend not many, nay, most things in the world? partly from the excellency of the object, and partly from the imperfection of our understandings. How can we then comprehend God, who exceeds all, and is exceeded by none; contains all, and is contained by none; is above our understanding, as well as above our sense? as considered in himself infinite; as considered in comparison with our understandings, incomprehensible; who can, with his eye, measure the breadth, length and depth of the sea, and at one cast, view every dimension of the heavens? God is greater, and we cannot know him (Job 3:26); he fills the understanding as he fills heaven and earth; yet is above the understanding as he is above heaven and earth. He is known by faith, enjoyed by love, but comprehended by no mind. God is not contained in that one syllable, God; by it we apprehend an excellent and unlimited nature; himself only understands himself, and can unveil himself.

6. How wonderful is God, and how nothing are creatures! "Ascribe the greatness to our God" (Deut. 33:3); he is admirable in the consideration of his power, in the extent of his understanding, and no less wonderful in the immensity of his essence that, as Austin saith, he is in the world, yet not confined to it; he is out of the world, yet not debarred from it; he is above the world, yet not elevated by it; he is below the world, yet not depressed by it; he is above all, equalled by none; he is in all, not because he needs them, but they stand in need of him; this, as well as eternity, makes a vast disproportion between God and the creature: the creature is bounded by a little space, and no space is so great as to bound the Creator. By this we may take a prospect of our own nothingness: as in the consideration of God's holiness we are minded of our own impurity; and in the thoughts of his wisdom have a view of our own folly; and in the meditation of his power, have a sense of our weakness; so his immensity should make us, according to our own nature, appear little in our own eyes. What little, little, little things are we to God! less than an atom in the beams of the sun; poor drops to a God that fills heaven and earth, and yet dare we to strut against him, and dash ourselves against a rock? If the consideration of ourselves in comparison with others, be apt to puff us up, the consideration of ourselves in comparison with God, will be sufficient to pull us down. If we consider him in the greatness of his essence, there is but little more proportion between him and us, than between being and not being, than between a drop and the ocean. How should we never think of God without a holy admiration of his greatness, and a deep sense of our own littleness! and as the angels cover their faces before him, with what awe should creeping worms come into his sight! and since God fills heaven and earth with his presence, we should fill heaven and earth with his glory; for this end he created angels to praise him in heaven, and men to worship him on earth, that the places he fills with his presence may be filled with his praise: we should be swallowed up in admiration of the immensity of God, as men are at the first sight of the sea, when they behold a mass of waters, without beholding the bounds and immense depth of it.

7. How much is this attribute of God forgotten or contemned! We pretend to believe him to be present everywhere, and yet many live as if he were present nowhere.

(1.) It is commonly forgotten, or not believed. All the extravagances of men may be traced to the forgetfulness of this attribute as their spring. The first speech Adam spake in paradise after his fall, testified his unbelief of this (Gen. 3:10; "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I hid myself;" his ear understood the voice of God, but his mind did not conclude the presence of God; he thought the trees could shelter him from Him whose eye was present in the minutest parts of the earth; he that thought after his sin, that he could hide himself from the presence of his justice, thought before that he could hide himself from the presence of his knowledge; and being deceived in the one, he would try what would be the fruit of the other. In both he forgets, if not denies, this attribute; either corrupt notions of God, or a slight belief of what in general men assent unto, gives birth to every sin. In all transgressions there is something of atheism; either denying the being of God, or a dash upon some perfection of God;—a not believing his holiness to hate it, his truth that threatens, his justice to punish it, and his presence to observe it. Though God be not afar off in his essence, he is "afar off in the apprehension of the sinner." There is no wicked man, but if he be an atheist, he is a heretic; and to gratify his lust, will fancy himself to be out of the presence of his Judge. His reason tells him, God is present with him, his lust presseth him to embrace the season of sensual pleasure; he will forsake his reason, and prove a heretic, that he may be an undisturbed sinner; and sins doubly, both in the error of his mind, and the vileness of his practice; he will conceit God with those in Job, "veiled with thick clouds" (Job 22:14), and not able to pierce into the lower world, as if his presence and cares were confined to celestial things, and the earth were too low a sphere for his essence to reach, at least with any credit. It is forgotten by good men, when they fear too much the designs of their enemies; "Fear not, for I am with thee" (Isa. 43:5). If the presence of God be enough to strengthen against fear, then the prevailing of fear issues from our forgetfulness of it.

(2.) This attribute of God's omnipresence is for the most part contemned. When men will commit that in the presence of God which they would be afraid or ashamed to do before the eye of man, men do not practice that modesty before God as before men. He that would restrain his tongue out of fear of men's eye, will not restrain either tongue or hands out of fear of God's. What is the language of this, but that God is not present with us, or his presence ought to be of less regard with us, and influence upon us, than that of a creature? Ask the thief why he dares to steal? will he not answer, "No eye sees him?" Ask the adulterer why he strips himself of his chastity, and invades the rights of another? will he not answer (Job 24:15), "No eye sees me?" He disguiseth himself to be unseen by man, but slights the all-seeing eye of God. If only a man know them, they are in terror of the shadow of death; they are planet-struck, but stand unshaken at the presence of God (Job 24:17). Is not this to account God as limited as man—as ignorant, as absenting, as if God were something less than those things which restrain us? 'Tis a debasing God below a creature. If we can forbear sin from an awe of the presence of man, to whom we are equal in regard of nature, or from the presence of a very mean man, to whom we are

superior in regard of condition, and not forbear it because we are within the ken of God, we respect him not only as our inferior, but inferior to the meanest man or child of his creation, in whose sight we would not commit the like action: it is to represent him as a sleepy, negligent, or careless God; as though anything might be concealed from him, before whom the least fibres of the heart are anatomised and open, who sees as plainly midnight as noon-day sins (Heb. 4:13). Now this is a high aggravation of sin to break a king's laws, in his sight, is more bold than to violate them behind his back; as it was Haman's offence when he lay upon Esther's bed, to force the queen before the king's face. The least iniquity receives a high tincture from this; and no sin can be little that is an affront in the face of God, and casing the filth of the creature before the eyes of his holiness: as if a wife should commit adultery before her husband's face, or a slave dishonor his master, and disobey his commands in his presence. And hath it not often been thus with us? have we not been disloyal to God in his sight, before his eyes, those pure eyes that cannot behold iniquity without anger and grief? (Isa. 65:12), "Ye did evil before my eyes." Nathan chargeth this home upon David (2 Sam. 12:9), "Thou hast despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight;" and David, in his repentance, reflects upon himself for it (Psalm 51:4); "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." I observed not thy presence, I neglected thee while thy eye was upon me. And this consideration should sting our hearts in all our confessions of our crimes. Men will be afraid of the presence of others, whatsoever they think in their heart. How unworthily do we deal with God, in not giving him so much as an eye-service, which we do man!

8. How terrible should the thoughts of this attribute be to sinners! How foolish is it, to imagine any hiding-place from the incomprehensible God, who fills and contains all things, and is present in every point of the world! When men have shut the door, and made all darkness within, to meditate or commit a crime, they cannot in the most intricate recesses be sheltered from the presence of God. If they could separate themselves from their own shadows, they could not avoid his company, or be obscured from his sight. Hypocrites cannot disguise their sentiments from him; he is in the most secret nook of their hearts. No thought is hid, no lust is secret, but the eye of God beholds this, and that, and the other. He is present with our heart when we imagine, with our hands when we act. We may exclude the sun from peeping into our solitudes, but not the eyes of God from beholding our actions. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and good" (Prov. 15:3). He lies in the depths of our souls, and sees afar off our designs before we have conceived them. He is in the greatest darkness, as well as the clearest light; in the closest thought of the mind, as well as the openest expressions. Nothing can be hid from him, no, not in the darkest cells or thickest walls. "He compasseth our path wherever we are" (Psalm 139:3), and "is acquainted with all our ways." He is as much present with wicked men to observe their sins, as he is to detest them. Where he is present in his essence, he is present in his attributes: his holiness to hate, and his justice to punish, if he please to speak the word. It is strange men should not be mindful of this, when their very sins themselves might put them in mind of his presence. Whence hast thou the power to act? who preserves thy being, whereby thou art capable of committing that evil? Is it not his essential presence that sustains us, and his arm that supports us? and where can any man fly from his presence? Not the vast regions of heaven could shelter a sinning angel from his eye: how was Adam ferreted out of his hiding-places in paradise? Nor can we find the depths of the sea a sufficient covering to us. If we were with Jonah, closeted up in the belly of a whale; if we had the "wings of the morning," as quick a motion as the light at the dawning of the day, that doth in an instant surprise and overpower the regions of darkness, and could pass to the utmost parts of the earth or hell, there we should find him, there his eye would be upon us, there would his hand lay hold of us, and lead us as a conqueror triumphing over a captive (Psalm 139:8-10). Nay, if we could leap out of the compass of heaven and earth, we should find as little reserves from him: he is without the world in those infinite spaces which the mind of man can imagine. In regard of his immensity, nothing in being can be distant from him, wheresoever it is.

Second, *Use* is for comfort. That God is present everywhere, is as much a comfort to a good man, as it is a terror to a wicked one, He is everywhere for his people, not only by a necessary perfection of his nature, but an immense diffusion of his goodness. He is in all creatures as their preserver: in the damned, as their terror; in his people, as their protector. He fills hell with his severity, heaven with his glory, his people with his grace. He is with his people as light in darkness, a fountain in a garden, as manna in the ark. God is in the world as a spring of preservation; in the church as his cabinet, his spring of grace and consolation. A man is present sometimes in his field, but more delightfully in his garden. A vine yard, as it hath more of cost, so more of care, and a watchful presence of the owner (Isa. 27:3); "I, the Lord, do keep it," viz. his vineyard; "I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day." As there is a presence of essence, which is natural, so there is a presence of grace, which is federal: a presence by covenant; "I will not leave thee, I will be with thee." This latter depends upon the former; for, take away the immensity of God, and you leave no foundation for his universal gracious presence with his people in all their emergencies, in all their hearts. And, therefore, where he is present in his essence, he cannot be absent in his grace, from them that fear him. It is from his filling heaven and earth he proves his knowledge of the designs of the false prophets; and from the same topic may as well be inferred the employment of his power and grace for his people.

1. The omnipresence of God is a comfort in all violent temptations. No fiery dart can be so present with us, as God is present both with that and the marksman. The most raging devils cannot be so near us, as God is to us and them. He is present with his people to relieve them, and present with the devil to manage him to his own holy purposes: so he was with Job, defeating his enemies, and bringing him triumphantly out of those pressing trials. This presence is such a terror, that whatsoever the devil can despoil us of, he must leave this untouched. He might scratch the apostle with a thorn (2 Cor. 12:7, 9), but he could not rifle him of the presence of divine grace, which God promised him. He must prevail so far as to make God cease to be God, before he can make him to be distant from us; and while this cannot be, the devils and men can no more hinder the emanations of God to the soul, than a child can cut off the rays of the sun from embellishing the earth. It is no mean support for a good man, at any time, buffeted by a messenger of Satan, to think God stands near him, and behold how ill he is used. It would be a satisfaction to a king's favorite, in the midst of the violence some enemies might use to him upon a surprise, to understand that the king who loves him stands behind a curtain, and through a hole sees the injuries he suffers: and were the devil as considering as he is malicious, he could not but be in great fear at God's being in the generation of the righteous, as his serpentine seed is (Prov. 3:6): "They were in great fear, for God is in the generation of the righteous."

2. The omnipresence of God is a comfort in sharp afflictions. Good men have a comfort in this presence in their nasty prisons, oppressing tribunals; in the overflowing waters or scorching flames he is still with them (Isa. 43:2); and many times by his presence keeps the bush from consuming, when it seems to be all in a flame. In afflictions God shows himself most present, when friends are most absent: "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord shall take me up" (Psalm 27:10), then God will stoop and gather me into his protection; or, (Heb.) "shall gather me," alluding to those tribes that were to bring up the rear in the Israelites'

march, to take care that none were left behind, and exposed to famine or wild beasts, by reason of some disease that disenabled them to keep pace with their brethren. He that is the sanctuary of his people in all calamities, is more present with them to support them, than their adversaries can be present with them to afflict them (Psalm 4:2), a present help in the time of trouble; He is present with all things for this end; though his presence be a necessary presence in regard of the immensity of his nature, yet the end of this presence in regard that it is for the good of his people, is a voluntary presence. It is for the good of man he is present in the lower world, and principally for the good of his people, for whose sake he keeps up the world (2 Chron. 16:9). "His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him." If he doth not deliver good men from afflictions, he will be so present as to manage them in them, as that his glory shall issue from them, and their grace be brightened by them. What a man was Paul when he was lodged in a prison, or dragged to the courts of judicature, when he was torn with rods, or laden with chains! then did he show the greatest miracles, made the judge tremble upon the bench, and brake the heart, though not the prison, of the jailor; so powerful is the presence of God in the pressures of his people. This presence outweighs all other comforts, and is more valuable to a Christian than barns of corn, or cellars of wine can be to a covetous man (Psalm 4:7): it was this presence was David's cordial in the mutinying of his soldiers (1 Sam. 30:6). What a comfort is this in exile, or a forced desertion of our habitations! Good men may be banished from their country, but never from the presence of their Protector; ye cannot say of any corner of the earth, or of any dungeon in a prison, God is not here; if you were cast out of your country a thousand miles off, you are not out of God's precinct; his arm is there to cherish the good, as well as to drag out the wicked; it is the same God, the same presence in every country, as well as the same sun, moon, and stars; and were not God everywhere, yet he could not be meaner than his creature the sun in the firmament, which visits every part of the habitable world in twenty-four hours.

3. The omnipresence of God is a comfort in all duties of worship. He is present to observe, and present to accept our petitions, and answer our suits. Good men have not only the essential presence, which is common to all, but his gracious presence; not only the presence that flows from his nature, but that which flows from his promise; his essential presence makes no difference between this and that man in regard of spirituals, without this in conjunction with it; his nature is the cause of the presence of his essence; his will engaged by his truth is the cause of the presence of his grace. He promised to meet the Israelites in the place where he should set his name, and in all places where he doth record it (Exod. 20:4). "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee;" in every place where I shall manifest the special presence of my divinity. In all places, hands may be lifted up, without doubting of his ability to hear; he dwells in the contrite hearts, wherever it is most in the exercise of contrition; which is usually in times of special worship (Isa. 7:15), and that to revive and refresh them. Habitation notes a special presence, though he dwell in the highest heavens in the sparkings of his glory, he dwells also in the lowest hearts in the beams of his grace; as none can expel him from his dwelling in heaven, so none can reject him from his residence in the heart. The tabernacle had his peculiar presence fixed to it (Lev. 26:11); his soul should not abhor them, as they are washed by Christ, though they are loathsome by sin: in a greater dispensation there cannot be a less presence, since the church under the New Testament is called the temple of the Lord, wherein he will both dwell and walk (2 Cor. 6:6); or, I will indwell in them; as if he should say, I will dwell in and in them; I will, dwell in them by grace, and walk in them by exciting their graces; he will be more intimate with them than their own souls, and converse with them as the living God, *i. e.* as a God that hath life in himself, and life to convey to them in their converse with him; and show his spiritual glory among them in a greater measure than in the temple, since that was but a heap of stones, and the figure of the Christian church the mystical body of his Son.

His presence is not less in the substance than it was in the shadow; this presence of God in his ordinances, is the glory of a church, as the presence of a king is the glory of a court, the defence of it, too, as a wall of fire (Zech. 2:5); alluding to the fire travellers in a wilderness made to fright away wild beasts. It is not the meanness of the place of worship can exclude him; the second temple was not so magnificent as the first of Solomon's erecting, and the Jews seemed to despond of so glorious a presence of God in the second, as they had in the first, because they thought it not so good for the entertainment of Him that inhabits eternity; but God comforts them against this conceit again and again (Hag. 2:3, 4): "be strong, be strong, be strong, I am with you;" the meanness of the place shall not hinder the grandeur of my presence, no matter what the room is, so it be the presence-chamber of the king, wherein he will favor our suits; he can everywhere slide into our souls with a perpetual sweetness, since he is everywhere, and so, intimate with every one that fears him. If we should see God on earth in his amiableness, as Moses did, should we not be encouraged by his presence, to present our requests to him, to echo out our praises of him? and have we not as great a ground now to do it, since he is as really present with us, as if he were visible to us? he is in the same room with us, as near to us as our souls to our bodies, not a word but he hears, not a motion but he sees, not a breath but he perceives; he is through all, he is in all.

4. The omnipresence of God is a comfort in all special services. God never puts any upon a hard task, but he makes promises to encourage them and assist them, and the matter of the promise is that of his presence; so he did assure the prophets of old when he set them difficult tasks, and strengthened Moses against the face of Pharaoh, by assuring him "he would be with his mouth" (Exod. 4:12); and when Christ put his apostles upon a contest with the whole world, to preach a gospel that would be foolishness to the Greeks, and a stumbling block to the Jews, he gives them a cordial only composed of his presence (Matt. 28:20), I will be with you; it is this presence scatters by its light the darkness of our spirits; it is this that is the cause of what is done for his glory in the world; it is this that mingles itself with all that is done for his honor; it is this from whence springs all the assistance of his creatures, marked out for special purposes.

5. This presence is not without the special presence of all his attributes. Where his essence is, his perfections are, because they are one with his essence; yea, they are his essence, though they have their several degrees of manifestation. As in the covenant, he makes over himself, not a part of himself, but his whole deity; so in promising of his presence, he means not a part of it, but the whole, the presence of all the excellencies of his nature to be manifested for our good. It is not a piece of God is here and another parcel there, but God in his whole essence and perfections; in his wisdom to guide us, his power to protect and support us, his mercy to pity us, his fulness to refresh us, and his goodness to relieve us: he is ready to sparkle out in this or that perfection, as the necessities of his people require, and his own wisdom directs for his own honor; so that being not far from us in an excellency of his nature, we can quickly have recourse to him upon any emergency; so that if we are miserable, we have the presence of his goodness; if we want direction, we have the presence of his wisdom; if we are weak, we have the presence of his power; and should we not rejoice in it, as a man doth in the presence of a powerful, wealthy, and compassionate friend?

Third, *Use.* Of Exhortation.



1. Let us be much in the actual thoughts of this truth. How should we enrich our understandings with the knowledge of the excellency of God, whereof this is none of the least; nor hath less of honey in its bowels, though it be more terrible to the wicked than the presence of a lion; it is this that makes all other excellencies of the divine nature sweet. What would grace, wisdom, power, signify at a distance from us? Let us frame in our minds a strong idea of it; it is this that makes so great a difference between the actions of one man and another; one maintains actual thoughts of it, another doth not: though all believe it as a perfection pertaining to the infiniteness of his essence. David, or rather a greater than David, had God always before him; there was no time, no occasion, wherein he did not stir up some lively thoughts of him (Psalm 16:8). Let us have right notions of it; imagine not God as a great King, sitting only in his majesty in heaven; acting all by his servants and ministers. This, saith one, is a childish and unworthy conceit of God, and may in time bring such a conceiver by degrees to deny his providence; the denial of this perfection is an axe at the root of religion; if it be not deeply imprinted in the mind, personal religion grows faint and feeble. Who would fear that God that is not imagined to be a witness of his actions? Who would worship a God at a distance both from the worship and the worshipper? Let us believe this truth, but not with an idle faith, as if we did not believe it. Let us know, that as wheresoever the fish moves, it is in the water; wheresoever the bird moves, it is in the air; so wheresoever we move, we are in God. As there is not a moment but we are under his mercy, so there is not a moment that we are out of his presence. Let us therefore look upon nothing, without thinking who stands by, without reflecting upon him in whom it lives, moves and hath its being. When you view a man, you fix your eyes upon his body, but your mind upon that invisible part that acts every member by life and motion, and makes them fit for your converse. Let us not bound our thoughts to the creatures we see, but pierce through the creature to that boundless God we do not see: we have continual remembrances of his presence; the light, whereby we see, and the air, whereby we live, give us perpetual notices of it, and some weak resemblance; why should we forget it? yea, what a shame is our unmindfulness of it, when every cast of our eye, every motion of our lungs, jogs us to remember it? Light is in every part of the air, in every part of the world, yet not mixed with any, both remain entire in their own substance. Let us not be worse than some of the heathens, who pressed this notion upon themselves for the spiriting their actions with virtue, that all paces were full of God. This was the means Basil used to prescribe, upon a question asked him, How shall we do to be serious? mind God's presence. How shall we avoid distractions in service? think of God's presence. How shall we resist temptation? oppose to them the presence of God.

(1.) This will be a shield against all temptations. God is present, is enough to blunt the weapons of hell; this will secure us from a ready compliance with any base and vile attractives, and curb that headstrong principle in our nature, that would join hands with them; the thoughts of this would, like the powerful presence of God with the Israelites, take off the wheels from the chariots of our sensitive appetites, and make them perhaps move slower, at least, towards a temptation. How did Peter fling off the temptation which had worsted him, upon a look from Christ! The actuated faith of this would stifle the darts of Satan, and fire us with an anger against his solicitations, as strong as the fire that inflames the darts. Moses' sight of Him that was invisible, strengthened him against the costly pleasures and luxuries of a prince's court (Heb. 11:27). We are utterly senseless of a Deity, if we are not moved with this item from our consciences, God is present. Had our first parents actually considered the nearness of God to them, when they were tempted to eat of the forbidden fruit, they had not probably been so easily overcome by the temptation. What soldier would be so base as to revolt under the eye of a tender and obliging general? or what man so negligent of himself, as to rob a house in the sight of a judge? Let us consider that God is as near to observe us, as the devil to solicit us, yea, nearer; the devil stands by us, but God is in us; we may have a thought the devil knows not, but not a thought but God is actually present with, as our souls are with the thoughts they think; nor can any creature attract our heart, if our minds were fixed on that invisible presence that contributes to that excellency, and sustains it, and considered that no creature could be so present with us as the Creator is.

(2.) It will be a spur to holy actions. What man would do an unworthy action, or speak an unhandsome word, in the presence of his prince? The eye of the general inflames the spirit of a soldier. Why did David keep God's testimonies (Psalm 119:168)? because he considered that all his ways were before him; because he was persuaded his ways were present with God; God's precepts should be present with him.

The same was the cause of Job's integrity (Job 31:4): "Doth he not see my ways?" To have God in our eye is the way to be sincere (Gen. 17:1); "walk before me" as in my sight, "and be thou perfect." Communion with God consists chiefly in an ordering our ways as in the presence of him that is invisible. This would make us spiritual, raise and watchful in all our passions, if we considered that God is present with us in our shops, in our chambers, in our walks, and in our meetings, as present with us as with the angels in heaven; who, though they have a presence of glory above us, yet have not a greater measure of his essential presence than we have. What an awe had Jacob upon him when he considered God was present in Bethel (Gen. 28:16, 17)! If God should appear visibly to us when we were alone, should we not be reverend and serious before him? God is everywhere about us, he doth encompass us with his presence. Should not God's seeing us have the same influence upon us as our seeing God? He is not more essentially present if he should so manifest himself to us, than when he doth not. Who would appear besmeared in the presence of a great person? or not be ashamed to be found in his chamber in a nasty posture by some visitant? Would not a man blush to be caught about some mean action, though it were not an immoral crime? If this truth were impressed upon our spirits, we should more blush to have our souls daubed with some loathsome lust; swarms of sin, like Egyptian lice and frogs, creeping about our heart in his sight. If the most sensual man be ashamed to do a dishonest action in the sight of a grave and holy man, one of great reputation for wisdom and integrity, how much more should we lift up ourselves in the ways of God, who is infinite and immense, is everywhere, and infinitely superior to man, and more to be regarded! We could not seriously think of his presence but there would pass some intercourse between us; we should be putting up some petition upon the sense of our indigence, or sending up our praises to him upon the sense of his bounty. The actual thoughts of the presence of God is the life and spirit of all religion; we could not have sluggish spirits and a careless watch if we considered that his eye is upon us all the day.

(3.) It will quell distractions in worship. The actual thoughts of this would establish our thoughts, and pull them back when they begin to rove: the mind could not boldly give God the slip if it had lively thoughts of it; the consideration of this would blow off all the froth that lies on the top of our spirits. An eye, taken up with the presence of one object, is not at leisure to be filled with another: he that looks intently upon the sun, shall have nothing for a while but the sun in his eye. Oppose to every intruding thought the idea of the Divine omnipresence, and put it to silence by the awe of his Majesty. When the master is present, scholars mind their books, keep their places, and run not over the forms to play with one another; the master's eye keeps an idle servant to his work, that otherwise would be gazing at every straw, and prating to every passenger. How soon would the remembrance of this dash all extravagant fancies out of countenance, just as the news of the approach of a prince would make the courtiers bustle up themselves, huddle up their vain

sports, and prepare themselves for a reverent behavior in his sight!

We should not dare to give God a piece of our heart when we apprehended him present with the whole: we should not dare to mock one that we knew were more inwards with us than we are with ourselves, and that beheld every motion of our mind, as well as action of our body.

2. Let us endeavor for the more special and influential presence of God. Let the essential presence of God be the ground of our awe, and his gracious influential presence the object of our desire. The heathen thought themselves secure if they had their little petty household gods with them in their journeys: such seem to be the images Rachel stole from her father (Gen. 31:19) to company her travel with their blessings: she might not at that time have cast off all respect to those idols, in the acknowledgment of which she had been educated from her infancy; and they seem to be kept by her till God called Jacob to Bethel, after the rape of Dinah (Gen. 35:4), when Jacob called for the strange gods, and hid them under the oak. The gracious presence of God we should look after, in our actions, as travellers, that have a charge of money or jewels, desire to keep themselves in company that may protect them from highwaymen that would rifle them. Since we have the concerns of the eternal happiness of our souls upon our hands, we should endeavor to have God's merciful and powerful presence with us in all our ways (Psalm 14:5); "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths:" acknowledge him before any action, by imploring; acknowledge him after, by rendering him the glory; acknowledge his presence before worship, in worship, after worship: it is this presence makes a kind of heaven upon earth; causeth affliction to put off the nature of misery. How much will the presence of the sun outshine the stars of lesser comforts, and fully answer the want of them! The ark of God going before us, can only make all things successful. It was this led the Israelites over Jordan, and settled them in Canaan. Without this we signify nothing: though we live without this, we cannot be distinguished forever from evils; his essential presence they have; and if we have no more, we shall be no better. It is the enlivening fructifying presence of the sun that revives the languishing earth; and this only can repair our ruined soul. Let it be, therefore, our desire, that as he fills heaven and earth by his essence, he may fill our understandings and wills by his grace, that we may have another kind of presence with us than animals have in their brutish state, or devils in their chains: his essential presence maintains our beings, but his gracious presence confers and continues a happiness.