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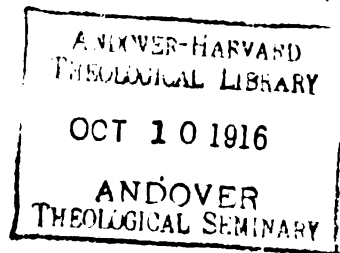
EDGAR Y. MULLINS, D.D., LL.D.

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made a potent factor in the cultivation of the religious mind (Mt 6 9). The beauty of Jesus' teaching on the nature of God consists in this, that He keeps the exaltation of God above every creature and His loving condescension toward the creature in perfect equilibrium and makes them mutually fructified by each other. Religion is more than the inclusion of God in the general altruistic movement of the human mind; it is a devotion at every point colored by the consciousness of that Divine uniqueness in which God's omnipotence occupies a foremost place.

LITERATURE.—Oehler, *Theologie des AT*, 131, 139 ff.; Riehm, *Alttestamentliche Theologie*, 250 ff.; Dillmann, *Handbuch der alttestamentlichen Theologie*, 244; Davidson, *OT Theology*, 163 ff.; König, *Geschichte der alttestamentlichen Religion*, 127, 135 ff., 391, 475.

GEERHARDUS VOS

OMNIPRESENCE, om-ni-prez'ens: Neither the noun "omnipresence" nor adj. "omnipresent" occurs

in Scripture, but the idea that God is everywhere present is throughout presupposed and sometimes explicitly of the Term formulated. God's omnipresence is in Scripture closely related to His omnipotence and omniscience: that He is everywhere enables Him to act everywhere and to know all things, and, conversely, through omnipotent action and omniscient knowledge He has access to all places and all secrets (cf Ps 139). Thus conceived, the attribute is but the correlate of the monotheistic conception of God as the Infinite Creator, Preserver and Governor of the universe, immanent in His works as well as transcendent above them.

The philosophical idea of omnipresence is that of exemption from the limitations of space, subjectively as well as objectively; subjectively, in so far as space, which is a

2. Philosophical and Popular Ideas of Omnipresence necessary form of all created consciousness in the sphere of sense-perception, is not thus constitutionally inherent in the mind of God; objectively, in so far as the actuality of space-relations in the created world imposes no limit upon the presence and operation of God. This metaphysical conception of transcendence above all space is, of course, foreign to the Bible, which in regard to this, as in regard to the other transcendent attributes, clothes the truth of revelation in popular language, and speaks of exemption from the limitations of space in terms and figures derived from space itself. Thus the very term "omnipresence" in its two component parts "everywhere" and "present" contains a double inadequacy of expression, both the notion of "everywhere" and that of "presence" being spacial concepts. Another point, in regard to which the popular nature of the Scriptural teaching on this subject must be kept in mind, concerns the mode of the Divine omnipresence. In treating the concept philosophically, it is of importance to distinguish between its application to the essence, to the activity, and to the knowledge of God. The Bible does not draw these distinctions in the abstract. Although sometimes it speaks of God's omnipresence with reference to the pervasive immanence of His being, it frequently contents itself with affirming the universal extent of God's power and knowledge (Dt 4 39; 10 14; Ps 139 6-16; Prov 15 3; Jer 23 23,24; Am 9 2).

This observation has given rise to the theories of a mere omnipresence of power or omnipresence by an act of will, as distinct from an omnipresence of being. But it is plain that in this antithetical form such a distinction is foreign to the intent of the Bib. statements in question. The writers in these passages content themselves with describing the practical effects of the attribute without reflecting upon the difference between this and its ontological aspect; the latter is neither affirmed nor denied. That no denial of the omni-

presence of being is intended may be seen from Jer 23 24, where in the former half of the verse the omnipresence of ver 23 is expressed in terms of omniscience, while in the latter half the idea finds ontological expression. Similarly, in Ps 139, cf ver 2 with vs 7 ff., and vs 13 ff. As here, so in other passages the presence of God with His being in all space is explicitly affirmed (1 K 8 27; 2 Ch 2 6; Isa 66 1; Acts 17 28).

Omnipresence being the correlate of monotheism, the presence of the idea in the earlier parts of the OT is denied by all those who assign the development of monotheism in the OT religion to the prophetic period from the 8th cent. onward. It is undoubtedly true that the earliest narratives speak very anthropomorphically of God's relation to space; they describe Him as coming and going in language such as might be used of a human person. But it does not follow from this that the writers who do so conceive of God's being as circumscribed by space. Where such forms of statement occur, not the presence of God in general, but His visible presence in theophany is referred to. If from the local element entering into the description God's subjection to the limitations of space were inferred, then one might with equal warrant, on the basis of the physical, sensual elements entering into the representation, impute to the writers the view that the Divine nature is corporeal.

The theophanic form of appearance does not disclose what God is ontologically in Himself, but merely how He condescends to appear and work for the redemption of His people. It establishes a redemptive and revelatory presence in definite localities, which does not, in the mind of the writer, detract from the Divine omnipresence. Hence, it is not confined to one place; the altars built in recognition of it are in patriarchal history erected in several places and coexist as each and all offering access to the special Divine presence. It is significant that

already during the patriarchal period these theophanies and the altars connected with them are confined to the Holy Land. This shows that the idea embodied in them has nothing to do with a crude conception of the Deity as locally circumscribed, but marks the beginning of that gradual restoration of the gracious presence of God to fallen humanity, the completion of which forms the goal of redemption. Thus God is said to dwell in the ark, in the tabernacle, on Mt. Zion (Nu 10 35; 2 S 6 2; 2 K 19 15; Ps 3 4; 99 1); in the temple (1 K 8; Ps 20 2; 26 8; 46 5; 48 2; Isa 8 18; Joel 3 16,21; Am 1 2); in the Holy Land (1 S 26 19; Hos 9 3); in Christ (Jn 1 14; 2 19; Col 2 9); in the church (Jn 14 23; Rom 8 9,11; 1 Cor 3 16; 6 19; Eph 2 21,22; 3 11; 2 Tim 3 15; He 10 21; 1 Pet 2 5); in the eschatological assembly of His people (Rev 21 3). In the light of the same principle must be interpreted the presence of God in heaven. This also is not to be understood as an ontological presence, but as a presence of specific theocratic manifestation (1 K 8 27; Ps 2 4; 11 4; 33 13 ff.; 104 3; Isa 6 1 ff.; 63 15; 66 1; Hab 2 20; Mt 5 34; 6 9; Acts 7 48; 17 28; Eph 1 20; He 1 3). How little this is meant to exclude the presence of God elsewhere may be seen from the fact that the two representations, that of God's self-manifestation in heaven and in the earthly sanctuary, occur side by side (1 K 8 26-53; Ps 20 2-6; Am 9 6). It has been alleged that the idea of God's dwelling in heaven marks a comparatively late attainment in the religion of Israel, of which in the pre-prophetic period no trace can as yet be discovered (so Stade, *Bibl. Theol. des AT*, I, 103, 104). There are, however, a number of passages in the Pent bearing witness to the early existence of this belief (Gen 11 1-9; 19 24; 21 17; 22 11; 28 12). Jeh comes, according to the belief of the earliest period, with the clouds (Ex 14 19,20; 19 9,18; 24 15; Nu 11 25; 13 5). That even in the opinion of the people Jeh's local presence in an earthly sanctuary need not have excluded Him from heaven follows also from the unhesitating belief in His simultaneous presence in a plurality of sanctuaries. If it was not a question of locally circumscribed presence as between sanctuary and sanctuary, it need not have been as between earth and heaven (cf Gunkel, *Gen*, 157).

Both from a generally religious and from a specifically soteriological point of view the omnipresence of God is of great practical importance

6. Religious Significance for the religious life. In the former respect it contains the guaranty that the actual nearness of God and a real communion with Him may be enjoyed everywhere, even apart from the places hallowed for such purpose by a specific gracious self-manifestation (Ps 139 5-10). In the other respect the Divine omnipresence assures the believer that God is at hand

to save in every place where from any danger or foe His people need salvation (Isa 43 2).

LITERATURE.—Oehler, *Theologie des AT*, 174 ff.; Riehm, *Alttestamentliche Theologie*, 262 ff.; Dillmann, *Handbuch der alttestamentlichen Theologie*, 246 ff.; Davidson, *OT Theology*, 180 ff.; König, *Geschichte der alttestamentlichen Religion*, 197 ff.

GEERHARDUS VOS

OMNISCIENCE, om-nish'ens: The term does not occur in Scripture, either in its nominal or in its adjectival form.

In the OT it is expressed in connection with such words as *דָּאֵחַ*, *da'ath*, *בִּינָה*, *binah*, *תְּבִינָה*, *tebhūnah*, *הִכְמָה*, *hokhmāh*; also "seeing" and "hearing," "the eye" and "the ear" occur as figures for the knowledge of God, as "arm," "hand," "finger" serve to express His power. In the NT are found *γινώσκειν*, *gínōskein*, *γνώσις*, *gnōsis*, *εἰδέναι*, *eidenai*, *σοφία*, *sophia*, in the same connections.

1. Words and Usage Scripture everywhere teaches the absolute universality of the Divine knowledge. In the historical books, although there is no abstract formula, and occasional anthropomorphic references to God's and Explicit taking knowledge of things occur (Gen Affirmation 11 5; 18 21; Dt 8 3), none the less the principle is everywhere presupposed in what is related about God's cognizance of the doings of man, about the hearing of prayer, the disclosing of the future (1 S 16 7; 23 9-12; 1 K 8 39; 2 Ch 16 9). Explicit affirmation of the principle is made in the Psalter, the Prophets, the *hokhmāh* literature and in the NT. This is due to the increased internalizing of religion, by which its hidden side, to which the Divine omniscience corresponds, receives greater emphasis (Job 26 6; 28 24; 34 22; Ps 139 12; 147 4; Prov 15 3.11; Isa 40 26; Acts 1 24; He 4 13; Rev 2 23).

This absolute universality is affirmed with reference to the various categories that comprise within themselves all that is possible or actual. It extends to God's own being, as well as to what exists outside of Him in the created world. God has perfect possession in consciousness of His own being. The unconscious finds no place in Him (Acts 15 18; 1 Jn 1 5). Next to Himself God knows the world in its totality. This knowledge extends to small as well as to great affairs (Mt 6 8.32; 10 30); to the hidden heart and mind of man as well as to that which is open and manifest (Job 11 11; 34 21.23; Ps 14 2; 17 2 ff.; 33 13-18; 102 19 f.; 139 1-4; Prov 5 21; 15 3; Isa 29 15; Jer 17 10; Am 4 13; Lk 16 15; Acts 1 24; 1 Thess 2 4; He 4 13; Rev 2 23). It extends to all the divisions of time, the past, present and future alike (Job 14 17; Ps 56 8; Isa 41 22-24; 44 6-8; Jer 1 5; Hos 13 12; Mal 3 16). It embraces that which is contingent from the human viewpoint as well as that which is certain (1 S 23 9-12; Mt 11 22.23).

Scripture brings God's knowledge into connection with His omnipresence. Ps 139 is the clearest expression of this. Omniscience is the Mode of omnipresence of cognition (Jer 23 the Divine 23 ff). It is also closely related to Knowledge God's eternity, for the latter makes Him in His knowledge independent of the limitations of time (Isa 43 8-12). God's creative relation to all that exists is represented as underlying His omniscience (Ps 33 15; 97 9; 139 13; Isa 29 15). His all-comprehensive purpose forms the basis of His knowledge of all events and developments (Isa 41 22-27; Am 3 7).

This, however, does not mean that God's knowledge of things is identical with His creation of them, as has been suggested by Augustine and others. The act of creation, while necessarily connected with

the knowledge of that which is to be actual, is not identical with such knowledge or with the purpose on which such knowledge rests, for in God, as well as in man, the intellect and the will are distinct faculties. In the last analysis, God's knowledge of the world has its source in His self-knowledge. The world is a revelation of God. All that is actual or possible in it therefore is a reflection in created form of what exists uncreated in God, and thus the knowledge of the one becomes a reproduction of the knowledge of the other (Acts 17 27; Rom 1 20). The Divine knowledge of the world also partakes of the quality of the Divine self-knowledge in this respect, that it is never dormant. God does not depend for embracing the multitude and complexity of the existing world on such mental processes as abstraction and generalization.

The Bible nowhere represents Him as attaining to knowledge by reasoning, but everywhere as simply knowing. From what has been said about the immanent sources of the Divine knowledge, it follows that the latter is not a posteriori derived from its objects, as all human knowledge based on experience is, but is exercised without receptivity or dependence. In knowing, as well as in all other activities of His nature, God is sovereign and self-sufficient. In cognizing the reality of all things He needs not wait upon the things, but draws His knowledge directly from the basis of reality as it lies in Himself. While the two are thus closely connected it is nevertheless of importance to distinguish between God's knowledge of Himself and God's knowledge of the world, and also between His knowledge of the actual and His knowledge of the possible. These distinctions mark off the theistic conception of omniscience from the pantheistic idea regarding it. God is not bound up in His life with the world in such a sense as to have no scope of activity beyond it.

Since Scripture includes in the objects of the Divine knowledge also the issue of the exercise of freewill on the part of man, the problem arises, how the contingent character of such decisions and the certainty of the Divine knowledge can coexist. It is true that the knowledge of God and the purposing will of God are distinct, and that not the former

but the latter determines the certainty of the outcome. Consequently the Divine omniscience in such cases adds or detracts nothing in regard to the certainty of the event. God's omniscience does not produce but presupposes the certainty by which the problem is raised. At the same time, precisely because omniscience presupposes certainty, it appears to exclude every conception of contingency in the free acts of man, such as would render the latter in their very essence undetermined. The knowledge of the issue must have a fixed point of certainty to terminate upon, if it is to be knowledge at all. Those who make the essence of freedom absolute indeterminateness must, therefore, exempt this class of events from the scope of the Divine omniscience. But this is contrary to all the testimony of Scripture, which distinctly makes God's absolute knowledge extend to such acts (Acts 2 23). It has been attempted to construe a peculiar form of the Divine knowledge, which would relate to this class of acts specifically, the so-called *scientia media*, to be distinguished from the *scientia necessaria*, which has for its object God Himself, and the *scientia libera* which terminates upon the certainties of the world outside of God, as determined by His freewill. This *scientia media* would then be based on God's foresight of the outcome of the free choice of man. It would involve a knowledge of receptivity, a contribution to the sum total of what God