

Table Talk #240 April 15, 1532 God's Presence

“When we were debating whether God truly is in each and every minute creature, in the grass, in a tree, etc., Martin Luther responded, ‘It is so, for God is excluded from no place and is confined to none. He is everywhere and he is nowhere.’

The question was asked whether God is only potentially everywhere or is actually everywhere. Martin Luther replied, ‘God is in every creature in both ways because although a creature acts through its properties, God acts not through his properties but through his being.’

Thereupon somebody said, ‘I do not understand that.’ Luther countered, ‘Do you believe that Christ on the cross was God? Do you believe that God was in the womb of the Virgin?’

The principle here is the same, for it is equally impossible to man’s reason in both cases, as impossible that God can be enclosed in the womb of the Virgin as it is that he can be enclosed in every creature.’ Thereupon the other person said, ‘Then he is in the devil too!’ Yes, and essentially! He’s in hell too, as it is written in II Thessalonians 1:9, ‘They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord.’

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Luther". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first letters of "Martin" and "Luther" being significantly larger and more prominent than the rest of the letters.

Commentary: Many people today accept the fact that God created the world and is not involved in any direct way. Deists teach that we should live a life based on human values or moral principles – just follow the outline of the Ten Commandments! Deism teaches that God is in nature but teachings of the virgin birth and resurrection lack the evidence or knowledge that is needed for acceptance. Lutherans believe that God is actively present everywhere – invisible but always present. In this way God’s presence is as real and vivid as sound and light waves and molecules. We know they exist and there is evidence that they do exist – but yet they are not visible.

Question: Do you believe that God is actively present in all things visible and invisible as stated in **The Nicene Creed**?