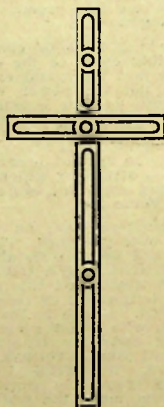


The
Personality
of
God



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THE CHURCH OF GOD
OF THE
FAITH OF ABRAHAM

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THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.

'But without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He IS and that He is a rewarder of them that DILIGENTLY seek Him." Heb. II:6.

Here is a plain statement, that it is IMPOSSIBLE to please God without a hearty belief in His existence. Such belief must be founded on evidence. Inasmuch as He has seen fit to reveal Himself to man by means of His written Word, the Bible, it is to it we must turn and there search for what He has given of Himself. The Bible is the written word of God, given to the human family by chosen men, the prophets, who became His spokesmen; thus He manifested Himself, also His will and purpose. (Amos 3:7. Jno. 15:15.) As He has made Himself known by this means, it is to these witnesses we must go and take the sum of their united testimony. (Isa. 28:10.) Notice the strong language. "But without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please Him." "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen!" (Heb. 11:1). "So faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17.) Then it is impossible to please God without faith and faith cometh by hearing. To one who hears the testimony of God's chosen witnesses and believes it, such belief becomes evidence. Such a one stands in that happy position of pleasing God, as it is by this means it becomes possible to please Him. Having found the means of pleasing God, let us keep in mind the fact, that before we can have faith in the things He has promised, we must first believe in His existence.

Man by his wisdom, through observation and research, might possibly come to the conviction, in the abstract, that there is a ruler and creator of the universe; but he has not the power within himself to search out and prove beyond question, that such is the case. Take for example the experience of the apostle Paul in the city of Athens. (Act. 17). Athens at this time, the beginning of the Christian era, was acknowledged to be the seat of human learning. "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear some new thing." Verse 21

The Greek philosophers were as wise, perhaps, as any the world has ever produced. They, as the result of their research, had erected an altar with this inscription: "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD!" Here then is the acme of human wisdom on this subject. This inscription was within itself a confession that man by wisdom knew not God. Listen to the testimony of the apostle Paul, a man who declares his ability to reveal to them the living and only true God. "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device." While the men of Athens confessed their belief in God, at the same time they acknowledged their ignorance concerning Him; the Apostle boldly states, "Him declare I unto you." By quoting from their own poets he calls their attention to the fallacy of their reasoning. If we are the offspring of God, what would be the logical conclusion concerning His being? Certainly not gold, silver or stone. Why not? Because we are not composed of such substance. If we are the progeny of God, we must be in form and substance like unto our progenitor, otherwise the rea-

soning falls to the ground. Therefore as we are physical beings and the progeny of God, we are compelled to believe that He is a physical being also.

Gen. 1; 26:27. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness:—So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." As God created man a material being and yet made him in His own likeness, the only conclusion permissible is that God is a material being also. That God's abode is not on the earth is evident; yet the earth and all things therein are the works of His hands. Thus saith the Lord, "The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool:—For all these things hath my hand made." (Isa. 66; 1, 2.) As has been said, He revealed Himself to men, by chosen ones from among themselves, that by this means they might have knowledge of their Creator, and His plan and purpose in bringing them into existence. That we might have a more perfect knowledge, He sent His Son into the world as His personal representative. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." (Heb. 1:1.) "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (Jno. 6:38). "And John bare record saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not, but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." (Jno. 1:32,34.) "And Jesus when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him; and lo a voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:16, 17.) This then is the testimony of three witnesses, that Jesus was the Son of God. As He was the offspring of God and His personal representative on earth, what was the nature of His being? "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. 2:6.) "Who is the image of the invisible God . . ." (Col 1:15.) "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express IMAGE of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1:3.) These are some of the evidences of the divine Sonship, and they reveal the Father in the Son. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (Jno. 1:18.) "Philip saith unto Him, Lord show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me has seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, show us the Father?" (Jno. 18:8-9.) This then is the manner in which the Son declared the Father. Philip's request was made on the night the Christ was betrayed. He was teaching them the necessity of the sacrifice He would make, knowing their belief in God, He appealed to them to believe in Him. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." (Jno. 14:1.) Hence Philip's request and the answer of Jesus to him, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The same method of reasoning is here employed by Jesus, as that of the Apostle Paul at the city Athens; that the progeny is in the likeness of the progenitor.

This was said by Him before His death and resurrection, but can the same be said of Him after His resurrection from the dead? As He was born of a woman, (Gal. 4:4) and was of human likeness and nature He was subject to death. (Heb. 2:14). But He was brought to life again by the power of God, His Father. "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: But in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." (Rom. 6:9-10.) As has been shown, He was a physical being before His death, what are the evidences of His being after His resurrection? "And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, peace be unto you. But they were terrified and af-

frighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your heart? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy and wondered, He said unto them, have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and of an honey comb and He took it and did eat before them." (Luke 24; 36:43.) Here we have from His own lips that he is a physical being, of flesh and bones. His disciples were eye witnesses to the cruel wounds which were made in the flesh of His hands and feet; they had witnessed His agony on the cross, had prepared His body for burial; the wounds were stamped indelibly on their minds. When He, therefore, appeared to them and showed them the wounds in His flesh, it was for the purpose of teaching the truth of the resurrection of the dead.

Man is under the sentence of death because of disobedience to God, but Christ came to show the way to Life through obedience. He being restored to Life by the power of God, appeared to His chosen disciples. "To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." (Acts 1;3). Some of the proofs that He showed to them were the wounds in His flesh, and the eating of food in their sight. "And He said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. And said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and arise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are my witnesses of these things." (Luke 24; 44-48.) Having shown Himself to them that they might become witnesses of His resurrection to life, He walked and talked with them for a period of forty days; at the end of which time, He was caught up to the presence of His Father. "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11.) "This same Jesus!" He was walking and talking with them when He was caught up, a physical being of flesh and bones; and the two angels promised them He should so come in like manner as they had seen Him go away. He came upon the earth and showed Himself to man that man might know the truth. "And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1st. Tim. 3; 16.) Christ being the Son of God, God was thus made manifest in the flesh; and Christ being the child of woman, He bore the image of man.

We have noted in the record of man's creation that he was made in the IMAGE and LIKENESS of God. We recognize the fact that man is a physical being. We have seen by indisputable testimony that Christ, the Son of God, is a physical being also, for thus He showed Himself to be, both before and after His resurrection. Then can there be any other logical conclusion than that God Himself is a physical, corporeal being. From the testimony of the Scriptures so we believe and teach. So we believe that God IS and is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

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President, A. L. CORBALEY, Waterville, Wash.

Secretary, VIVIAN HOWARD, Wenatchee, Wash.