

The Existence of God (2) WHO IS GOD?

ONE of the greatest revelations in the Scriptures is that of the mystery of God. Although there are many people who believe in His existence, few there are who know Him in truth. And it is the accurate knowledge of Him rather than mere believe in His existence that is essential to salvation.

Owing to the sinful nature of men, and more so because of the ignorance of many about God, the devil always finds them easy tools in carrying out his evil schemes against God and His works. Recently, the wave of godlessness in the United States and parts of Europe rose so high that some who had done a lot of research in religious studies lost their sense of propriety, and even clergymen were drifted into apostasy.

The *TIME* news-magazine (April 8, 1966) published in the United States came out with a cover bearing the startling question: "Is God Dead?" The cover story itself revealed how intellectualism minus God can make a beast of man. Yes. "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." – Psalm 49: 20.

The writer of the long story stated that the question was no longer a taunting jest of sceptics for whom unbelief was the test of wisdom. He added: "Even within Christianity, now confidently renewing itself in spirit as well as form, a small band of radical theologians has seriously argued that the churches must accept the fact of God's death, and get along without him.... The current death-of-God group believes that God is indeed absolutely dead, but proposes to carry on and write a theology without theos, without God."

The least that can be said of these "contemporary concepts of God" is that they are a faggot of misconceptions from corrupt minds. Since it is evident that such ideas are trumped up at the instance of Satan for a wicked purpose and that they are inimical to the spiritual well-being of men, they must be dismissed as unworthy of consideration.

Mystery

No one can by academic research or scientific instruments find out God or understand Him. The mystery of God is far beyond human knowledge. It was Elihu who said: "Behold, God is great, and we know Him not, neither can the number of His years be searched out." (Job 36: 26.) And the Psalmist declared: "O, LORD, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts are very deep, A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this." – Psalm 92: 5,6.

There are questions about God often asked and which people including clergymen and professors have found difficult to answer. How is God like? Is He a person? Has He a body? Or has He a form or shape? And where is He?

It is possible to provide satisfactory or acceptable answers to these questions if only God through His Son working through His Spirit reveals Himself to us and makes us have a clear insight into the revelation of divine truth as contained in the Holy Bible. Said Jesus Christ: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." – Matthew 11: 27.

What is obvious in this statement of Jesus Christ is that the matter of knowing God, rather than being scientific or philosophical, is highly spiritual. It is by revelation and that through the Spirit of God, we repeat the sober words of St. Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians are worthy of note in this respect. He stated: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.... But the natural (worldly, carnal) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." – 1 Corinthians 2: 11-14.

People have various conceptions about God. The pantheists hold to the doctrine that God is everything and everything is God, and so they are absorbed in their heathen worship of all gods. The anthropomorphist attribute human form or personality to God. And while the unitarians believe that God is one person the Trinitarians stick to their belief that there are three persons in one Godhead, and therefore "worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity".

Since ancient time till now men have been very ignorant about God though they have often called His name and purported to worship Him, There was an occasion when Jesus Christ in his days on earth engaged a woman of Samaria in a conversation. And when the issue of worship arose, Jesus told her: "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." (John 4: 22) (Christ did not by this mean that only the natural Jews would obtain God's salvation, we shall treat this matter in a subsequent issue of *The Weekly Sermon*.) The point Christ made against the Samaritans is that they did not know God whom they worshipped, St. Paul also stated in his first letter to the Corinthians that "some have not the knowledge of God". (1 Corinthians 15: 34) And so it cannot be argued that today there are people who claim to be worshipping God, but who do not in fact know Him.

God of gods

The word *god* is derived from an Hebrew word *elohim* which means a mighty or powerful one. There are many gods but the Creator of heaven and earth, by reason of His infinite greatness and excellence over all others, is known as the "God of gods and Lord of lords". (Deuteronomy 10: 17) The Psalmist said: "For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods" (Psalm 95: 3) And St. Paul wrote: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us (Christians) there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." – 1 Corinthians 8: 5,6.

We can from this understand that the word *god* is a common noun. But we simply write it in capital when we use it in reference to the Creator. God, therefore, is not His name. Moses said, "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain." In our Lord's Prayer, we say: "Hallowed be Thy name." And Jesus commanded the apostles to baptise people "in the name of the Father, and of the Son" Well, we know the name of the Son as Jesus Christ, but what is the name of the Father?

The Bible clearly shows that the name of the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth, is JEHOVAH. He revealed this to Moses the prophet when He said: "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them" (Exodus 6: 3) And the Psalmist stated: "Fill their (unbelievers') faces with shame; that they may seek Thy name, O LORD. That men may know that Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth."-Psalm 83: 16, 18.

Jehovah also has many titles and by all these, which signify His purpose, majesty and supremacy, He distinguishes Himself from other gods. He appeared to Abraham as ALMIGHTY GOD (Genesis 17: 1). He is further known as I AM, JEALOUS, MOST HIGH, JAH, ANCIENT OF DAYS, and so forth – Exodus 3: 14; 34: 14; Numbers 24: 16; Psalm 68: 4; Daniel 7: 13.

His name JEHOVAH in Hebrew language means "self existing one". In both heaven and earth, He alone is uncreated. He has neither beginning nor end, and, in the words of the Psalmist, He is "from everlasting to everlasting". (Psalm 90: 2). Concerning God, the Psalmist further said: "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands...Thou art the same and Thy years shall have no end."-Psalm 102: 25-27.

In Genesis 1: 1 it is written: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The question sometimes asked is: Before heaven and earth were created, where was God? The answer is that He was certainly upon nothing. Concerning Him, the Psalmist said: "Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment: Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain ... Who walketh upon the wings of the wind." – Psalm 104: 1-3; cp. 2 Peter 3: 3-5.

The beginning of the creation of God was the LOGOS (Greek) or WORD (English)-an angel who was later made flesh or human, for the purpose of redemption of sinful mankind, and is known today as Jesus Christ. He became the creative instrument through whom the Father Almighty created all other good things. – Proverbs. 8: 22-30; John 1: 1-3,10,14; Ephesians 3: 9; Revelation 3: 14.

Some people believe and teach that God is not a person and that He has no body, shape or form. Rev. Billy Graham, in his book *PEACE WITH GOD*, stated: "We do know that the spirit is not something that is bound in a body. Spirit is not wearable as a body. Spirit is not changeable as a body The Bible declared that God is such a Spirit – that He is not limited to body; He is not limited to shape; He is not limited to boundaries or bonds." (Page 25)

In answer to Question 23 *The Explanatory Catechism of Christian Doctrine* states: "God has no body: He is a Spirit." But in answer to questions 25-27 and 29, the Roman Catholics say, "there are three persons in God". If there are three persons in God, why do they say that God is not a person and that He has not a body or shape? How can a person be without form or shape?

We agree that God is a Spirit. Jesus said so. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4: 24) This by no means rules out the fact that God is a personality, having a body and shape. Angels too are spirits but they are persons and they possess the spiritual body. St. Paul stated: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." – 1 Corinthians 15: 44.

God and the angels whom He created have the spiritual body but we human beings possess the natural body. Some of the differences between the two kinds of bodies were shown by Jesus Christ when he said that "a spirit hath not flesh and bone." (Luke 24: 39) And St. Paul made it known that the saints who go to heaven must be changed to spirits, at the Resurrection so as to "bear the image of the heavenly" because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God". – 1 Corinthians 15: 49, 50.

Jesus said to the Jews: "And the Father Himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape." (John 5: 37) He told the Jews that God has shape, but that they had not seen His shape. In fact, He (God) being a Spirit is invisible to human eyes. He told Moses: "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exodus 33: 20) And St. Paul wrote of Him, to wit: "Who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom, be honour and power everlasting. Amen." – 1 Timothy 6: 16.

Personality

That God is a person is a revealed truth about which there can be no doubt. In Genesis 1: 26, 27, it is plainly stated that Jehovah made man in His own image after His likeness. The word *image* means form, resemblance or an imitation of the external form of an object. The fact that man who is God's image is a person having a body and shape proves conclusively that the Creator Himself is a person – of course, a personality of the highest category.

In a plain language, Paul the Apostle positively stated that Jesus Christ is "the brightness of His (God's) glory and the express image of His person". – Hebrews 1: 1-3.

Addressing the Athenians who were saturated with superstition, St. Paul said: "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. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" – Acts 17:29,30.

Ezekiel was a priest and one of the holy prophets of old. He was, by divine grace, privileged to see visions of God. He said that he saw the likeness of the Lord "as the appearance of a man" upon His throne in heaven, and offered a vivid description of the resplendent brightness of His person. (Ezekiel 1:26-28) This is a very striking testimony to God's personality.

When Stephen fell into a trance, being full of the Holy Spirit, he declared: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7: 55, 56) The "Apostles' Creed" often recited in the Churches contains the statement that after Jesus rose from the dead, "he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right-hand of God, the Father Almighty". The question is, how does it make sense to say that Christ stood or sat at the right-hand of God, if He (God) has not a body or form, or is not a person?

Micaiah the prophet also saw a vision of God, and he said: "I saw the LORD sitting upon His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and on His left." (2 Chronicles 18: 18) Can one who has neither form, shape nor body sit on a throne or have right and left hands?

A wicked man thinks that God has no eyes to see his evil deeds or ears to hear his blasphemies. But the psalmist said: "Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?...The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity." – Psalm 94; 8-11.

Jehovah has four infinite attributes, which, He endowed man with and which are His likeness in man. They are, wisdom, power, justice and love. He manifested them at different times and in diverse ways. The heavens and the earth and other good things in them are the evidences of the infinitude of His wisdom and power. "He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion" – Jeremiah 10: 12; see also Psalm 104: 24; Proverb 3: 19.

He showed His power in destroying the first world with the Deluge because of the sins of men but saved Noah and His family. (Genesis 7: 1-24; 2 Peter 2: 5) God further demonstrated His power when He delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and destroyed the Egyptians in the Red Sea. (Exodus 9: 16; 15: 1-13) And in a greater measure the Lord of hosts will exhibit His power at the time of the Battle of the Great Day in this last day in the destruction of Satan and all his followers. – Isaiah. 26: 21; Zephaniah 1: 14-18; Romans 16: 20; Revelation 20: 1-3.

Justice was manifested when God sentenced Adam to death for violating His perfect law. (Genesis 2: 17; 3: 9-12, 19) "For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6: 23). And the Psalmist declared: "Justice and Judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face." – Psalm 89: 14.

Jehovah showed His love by sending Jesus Christ to this earth in order to redeem mankind from sin and death. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” – John 3: 16; see also Romans 5: 8.
Dwelling Place

With regard to the dwelling-place of the Almighty God, the Bible makes it plain that He is in the highest habitation – the heaven of heavens. But He, being the Infinite, knows and sees everything anywhere in the whole universe at all times. Nothing can be hidden from Him. (Job. 34: 21,22; Hebrews 4: 13) In Psalm 11: 4, it is written: “The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD’S throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men.” God Himself said: “The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool...” – Isaiah. 66: 1 2; see also Matthew 5: 34, 35; Acts 7: 47-60.

Whatever may be the achievement or glory of anyone in this world without the accurate knowledge of God, it is nothing to Him. “Thus saith the LORD, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the, mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me that I am the LORD which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, said the LORD.” – Jeremiah 9: 23, 24.

It is very important that we have the true knowledge of God because without it we cannot be saved. Jesus in his prayer to the Almighty Father, said: “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” – John 17:3.

Let us therefore put our confidence in Jehovah, the Almighty God, and worship Him in truth. Those whose minds are stayed on Him He keeps in perfect peace. And the prophet Isaiah exhorts: “Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength – Isaiah. 26: 3, 4.