

Materialism: Our Forgotten Foundation

**Description**

# MATERIALISM

Our Forgotten Foundation



The purpose of this booklet is to bring to the attention of the Advent people, both ministers and laypersons alike, to one of the oft-forgotten foundations of our faith; that being, materialism. In short, our faith as Seventh-day Adventists has been built within the framework of philosophical materialism, the belief that all things in the universe are composed of only one type of substance — matter. This stands in contrast with idealistic philosophies, which submit that all things are ultimately non-physical, and dualistic philosophies, which espouse the existence of both the physical and the non-physical.

Herein, you will find a non-exhaustive compilation of quotations from the writings of the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers in which they explain, defend, and advocate materialism on the basis of evident facts, sound reasoning, and Scripture. Thus, by reproducing these important articles and statements, we seek to bring to light three main points: (1) that the Seventh-day Adventist faith is thoroughly and strictly materialistic, (2) that the Scriptures are also equally and plainly materialistic, and (3) that materialism is both true and of immense importance.

Since all the contents herein are quotations, we have decided not to use quotation marks for the selections from the pioneers, but have instead preserved the quotation marks within their own writings as they appear in the original.

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### **Ellen White on Pioneer Testimony**

We are now to understand what the pillars of our faith are, — the truths that have made us as a people what we are, leading us on step by step. — Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, May 25, 1905, par. 23

When men come in who would move one pin or pillar from the foundation which God has established by His Holy Spirit, let the aged men who were pioneers in our work speak plainly, and let those who are dead speak also by reprinting of their articles in our periodicals. Gather up the rays of divine light that God has given as He has led His people on step by step in the way of truth. This truth will stand the test of time and trial. — Ellen White, Ms62-1905

### **B.F. Robbins**

*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, April 19, 1860*

MATERIALISM

THERE is scarcely a subject in the range of Bible investigation more unpopular, and which excites more opposition in the professed Christian world, than the subject at the head of this article. It is called infidelity and atheism, while its believers are looked upon with suspicion and contempt. A minister of my acquaintance who a few months ago was favorable and publicly committed himself to the Scripture view of death and consequent unconsciousness, retracted upon the ground that such doctrines avowed must of course lead to materialism. This we of course admit, and the other conclusion which he also avowed we admit, that materialism is opposed and subversive of the faith of the professed Christian world, because that faith is based upon immateriality or nothing.

But what is the popular faith on this subject? I would answer in the language of Dr. Chalmers. "The common idea of paradise is that of a lofty aerial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing, where all the warm and sensible accompaniments which give such an expression of strength and life and coloring to our present world are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element that is meager and imperceptible and utterly uninviting to the eye of mortals here, where every vestige of materialism is done away, and nothing left but certain unearthly scenes that have no power of allurements, and certain unearthly ecstasies with which it is impossible to sympathize.

"The holders of this imagination forget all the while that really there is no essential connection between materialism and sin; that the world which we now inhabit had all the amplitude and solidity of its present materialism before sin entered into it; that God so far on that account from looking slightly upon it after it had received the last touch of his creating hand, reviewed the earth and all the green herbage, with the living creatures and the man whom he had raised in dominion over them, and he saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was all very good.

"They forget all the while that on the birth of materialism, when it stood out in the freshness of those glories which the great Architect of nature had impressed upon it, that then the 'morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.'

"They forget the appeals that are made everywhere in the Bible to this material workmanship, and how from the face of these visible heavens, and the garniture of this earth upon which we tread, the greatness and goodness of God are reflected on the view of his worshipers.

"No, the object of the administration we are under, is to extirpate sin, but not to sweep away materialism; the fires of the last day may melt its solid elements until they are utterly dissolved, but out of the ruins of this second chaos another earth will arise a new materialism in beauty and magnificence a 'new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

But a Bible view of this subject makes it plain and clear; for a Bible faith is founded upon glorious realities, and not upon material shadows.

Heb. 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Here true faith is fixed upon things, upon things substantial; and hope looks for a substance, and not immateriality. This is evident when we consider the object of faith and hope as mentioned by Paul in this chapter; for by faith Enoch and Noah and Abraham with Isaac and Jacob the heirs with him of the same promise, "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," the same city which Isaiah prophesied of in the 65<sup>th</sup> chapter, and that John saw and described in its literal, material glories, as coming down from God out of heaven. Paul says also in Heb. 11:14-16, "For they that say such things (that they are pilgrims and strangers) declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out they might have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." Here the faith of the ancient worthies, the model faith for all believers, fixed itself upon realities; and hope looked for a country and a city, implying materialism.

But another evidence that materialism enters into the faith and hope of the true believer, is the promise of "new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." The promise is in Isaiah 65:19, etc, "For behold I create new heavens and a new earth," etc. The new earth in this promise is the country looked for by Paul's worthies, and is material; because in verse 21 it says, "And they shall build houses and inhabit them, they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them," etc.

I know that the popular faith objects to this prophecy as descriptive of the world to come; but the application of the promise by the apostle settles the question to my mind, and I leave the controversy between them and the apostle. He says, after affirming the dissolution of the heavens and the earth which are now, "Nevertheless we according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. John says, "I saw a new heavens and a new earth," etc. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them," etc. Rev. 21:1-3. "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it." Rev. 22:3. Here materialism is honored and glorified to become the dwelling place of the glorious God, and the seat of his regal authority and power.

Again; materialism is an essential element in the faith and hope of the true believer in regard to the resurrection from the dead. Says Chalmers, "The resurrection will purify our materialism from the taint of corruption inherited from the first Adam, and which is now spread abroad over the whole human family. The old fabric must be taken down and reared anew, and that not of other materials, but of its own materials only delivered of all impurity. It is thus that what is 'sown in weakness is raised in power.' 'It is sown in corruption (or of corruptible material), it is raised in incorruption (or incorruptible material).' Mark, it is the same it; 'It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.' 'For this corruptible (what! this materiality?) must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Then will be brought to pass the saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.'" Here then the evidence is conclusive. This corruptible materiality is to be incorruptible or immortal, and the children born in the resurrection are to possess form, tangibility and identity.

But there is a crowning glory to materialism overlooked by our opponents, and denied by many of them; Jesus Christ is in possession of materiality; for "he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He was in the world in the palpable form and structure of a man, and took with him that same form to the place which he now occupies at the right hand of the Father. That very human form marked by the nails upon the cross, and wherewith he ate and drank with his disciples, now wields the whole power both in heaven and earth, and before the glorified humanity or materiality of Jesus every knee must bow, and every tongue confess to the glory of God the Father.

Yes, and that humanity, that embodied and substantial humanity, will be the center of universal praise and adoration from all creatures, for ever and ever. Amen.

Now we ask, Does this look like the abolition of materialism after the present system of it is destroyed? Does it not rather prove that in the world to come it will be preferred to celestial honors, and prolonged in immortality to all eternity?

Now to me, the charges against us by our opponents so tenaciously urged and repeated, of infidelity and atheism, come from them with an ill grace, to say the least; for certainly the light from the word of God repels these imputations from us, while they recoil upon them. Honestly do I believe that the doctrine of immateriality as taught by them, and which has become so popular in the professed Christian world, to be subversive of the whole Christian faith as taught in the word of God; because their views are not even professedly based upon a literal interpretation of that word, but upon a mystical or spiritual interpretation, and thus their views become a mere conjecture, things of mere fancy and imagination without any foundation for faith, or sure ground for hope.

Cheerfully then will we patiently submit to the imputations and scorn of our opponents. They now have the power, and their influence may affix the brand of infidelity in the estimation of the unthinking multitude upon us; but our faith is the same as that of the ancient worthies which was approved and honored by the Spirit of inspiration, and will finally be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **J.N. Loughborough**

### ***An Examination of the Scripture Testimony Concerning Man's Present Condition and His Future Reward or Punishment, pp. 23.3-32.1***

The first mention made of man in the Bible is in the account of the labor of the sixth day, Gen. 1:26. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion. etc.," Verse 27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." What is meant by saying God created man in his own image? According to the faith of the Church, it cannot be that literally man was made in the form of God; for the Discipline states, "There is but one living and true God, without body or parts," and some say without passions. If this be the case, then man's being in the image of God, must have some other explanation, than that his form was like God. It has been claimed that this was a moral image; that is, man was formed with a character like God; and as God is immortal, man, to be like him morally, must also be immortal. Moral pertains to character. Although the word states, God pronounced all his work very good, yet man, as we shall show, was left to form his own character.

But in carrying out this matter we wish to inquire further in regard to man's creation. Gen. 2:7 states, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." If the image of God referred to in chapter first is a mortal image, then the dust of the ground was in the moral image of God. Man was in the image of God before the breath of life was breathed into him; afterwards he is called a living soul. We see at once that this image of God in which man is formed cannot be a moral image; for it would involve the absurdity that inanimate matter possessed a character like God. If it be a fact that man was made literally in the image of God, we have been taught wrong in regard to the nature of that God.

This leads us to the investigation of the necessary inquiry,

### **IS GOD A PERSON?**

Whatever may be the truth in this matter, it certainly cannot be wrong for us to examine what the Word says respecting it. Many there are that would refrain from the investigation of unpopular truths because the cry of heresy is raised against them. We shall not consider ourselves subjects of the appellation, neither are we prying into the secrets of the Almighty, as we pursue the investigation of this matter. The Bible certainly contains testimony upon this point, and we again repeat, "Things which are revealed belong to us." We inquire

then, What saith the Scripture?

The very testimony we have been examining in regard to man's being formed of the dust in the image of God, proves conclusively that God has a form, although the sentiment is contrary to what we have been taught, while children, from the catechism:

"Question. What is God?

"Answer. An infinite and eternal spirit; one that always was and always will be.

"Q. Where is God?

"A. Everywhere."

But we inquire, Is not God in one place more than another? Oh no, say you: the Bible says he is a spirit, and if so he must be everywhere alike. Well, if when man dies his spirit goes to God, it must go everywhere. But the Bible certainly represents God as located in heaven. "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth." Ps. 102:19. Then certainly heaven cannot be everywhere, for God is represented as looking down from it. "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." 2 Kings 2:11. But, says one, does not the Bible represent God as everywhere present? Ps. 139:8, 9, 10. "If I ascend up into 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 hold me."

We reply, the subject is introduced in verse 7, as follows: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" The Spirit is God's representative. His power is manifested wherever he listeth, through the agency of his Spirit. Christ, when giving the commission to the disciples, says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Now, no one would contend that Christ had been on the earth personally ever since the disciples commenced to fulfill this commission. But his Spirit has been on the earth; the Comforter that he promised to send. So in the same manner God manifests himself by his Spirit which is also the power through which he works. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. 8:11. Here is a plain distinction made between the Spirit, and God that raises the dead by that Spirit. If the living God is a Spirit in the strictest sense of the term, and at the same time is in possession of a Spirit, then we have at once the novel idea of the Spirit of a Spirit, something it will take at least a Spiritualist to explain.

There is at least one impassable difficulty in the way of those who believe God is immaterial, and heaven is not a literal, located place: they are obliged to admit that Jesus is there bodily, a literal person; the same Jesus that was crucified, dead, and buried, was raised from the dead, ascended up to heaven, and is now at the right hand of God. Jesus was possessed of flesh and bones after his resurrection. Luke 24:39. "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." If Jesus is there in heaven with a literal body of flesh and bones, may not heaven after all be a literal place, a habitation for a literal God, a literal Saviour, literal angels, and resurrected immortal saints! Oh no, says one, "God is a Spirit." So Christ said to the woman of Samaria at the well. It does not necessarily follow because God is a Spirit, that he has no body. In John iii, 6, Christ says to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." If that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, then on the same principle, that which has a spiritual nature is spirit. God is a spirit being, his nature is spirit, he is not of a mortal nature; but this does not exclude the idea of his having a body. David says, [Ps. 104:4,] "Who maketh his angels spirits;" yet angels have bodies. Angels appeared to Both Abraham and Lot, and ate with them. We see the idea that angels are spirits, does not prove that they are not literal beings.

It is inferred because the Bible says that God is a Spirit, that he is not a person. An inference should not be made the basis for an argument. Great Scripture truths are plainly stated, and it will not do for us to found a doctrine on inferences, contrary to positive statements in the word of God. If the Scripture states in positive terms that God is a person, it will not answer for us to draw an inference from the text which says "God is a Spirit," that he has no body.

We will now present a few texts which prove that God is a person. Ex. 33:18, 23. "And he (Moses) said, I beseech thee shew me thy glory." Verse 20. "And he said, Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live." Verses 21-23. "And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock; and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen." If God is an immaterial Spirit, then Moses could not see him; for we are told a spirit cannot be seen by natural eyes. There would then be no propriety for God to say he would put his hand over Moses' face while he passed by, (seemingly to prevent him from seeing his face,) for he could not see him. Neither do we conceive how an immaterial hand could obstruct the rays of light from passing to Moses' eyes. But if the position be true that God is immaterial, and cannot be seen by the natural eye, the text above is all superfluous. What sense is there in saying God put his hand over Moses' face, to prevent him from seeing that which could not be seen.

Says one, I see we cannot harmonize the matter any other way, that that there was a literal body seen by Moses; but that was not God's own body, it was a body he took that he might show himself to Moses. Moses could form no just conceptions of God unless he assumed a form. So God took a body. This throws a worse coloring on the matter than the first position; for it charges God with deception; telling Moses he should see him, when in fact Moses according to this testimony did not see God, but another body. A person must be given to doubt almost beyond recovery, that would attempt thus to mystify, and do away with the force of this testimony.

Ex. 24:9. "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness." They were permitted to see his feet, but no man can see his face and live. No mortal eye can bear the dazzling brightness of the glory of the face of God. It far exceeds the light of the sun. For the prophet says, "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Isa. 30:26. Notwithstanding this seven-fold light that is then to shine, the prophet speaking of the scene says, "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Isa. 24:23. The testimony of John is [Rev. 21:23.] "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Infidels claim that there is a contradiction in the testimony of Moses, because he said, he talked with God face to face. We reply, there was a cloud between them, but God told Moses, "No man shalt see me and live." The Testimony of the New Testament is in harmony with that of the Old upon this subject. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12:14. Who with mortal eyes could behold a light that far outshines seven fold the brightness of the sun? Surely none but the holy can behold him, none but immortal eyes could bear that radiant glory. Although the Word says we cannot see God now and live, the promise is, that the pure in heart shall see him. Matt. 5:3. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Rev. 22:4. "And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads."

Paul, [Col. 1:15.] speaking of Christ, says, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature." Here Christ is said to be "the image of the invisible God." We have already shown, that Christ has a body composed of substance, flesh and bones; and he is said to be, "the image of the invisible God." Well, says one, we admit his divine nature is in the image of God. If by his divine nature you mean the part that existed in glory with the Father before the world was, we reply, that which was in the beginning with God, (the Word,) was made flesh, not came into flesh, or as some state, clothed upon with a human nature, but made

flesh. But says another, God is said to be invisible. Because he is invisible now, it does not prove that he never will be seen. The Word says, "The pure in heart shall see" him. Willing faith says, Amen.

Paul's testimony in Phil. 2:5, 6, shows plainly what may be understood by the statement, that Christ is the image of God. "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." How can Christ be said to be in the form of God, if God has no form! Rom. 8:3. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Christ is in the form of God, and in the form of men. This at once reveals to us the form of God.

Daniel speaking of God, calls him the Ancient of days. Dan. 7:9. "And the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool." This personage is said to have a head, and hair; this certainly could not be said of him if he was immaterial and had no form. But Paul's testimony in Heb. i, 3, ought to settle every candid mind in regard to the personality of God. Speaking of Christ, he says, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his (the Father's) person." Here then it is plainly stated God has a person. Christ is the express image of it. Then we can understand Christ where he says, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." John 14:19. He could not have meant, that he was his own father; for when he prayed he addressed his Father as another person who had sent him into the world. He styled himself the Son of God. Then he could not be the Father of which he was the son. When he says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," he must mean, that as he was the express image of the Father's person, those who saw him saw the likeness of the Father in him.

But we will now return to the subject of The creation of man. We have seen already that man's being made in the image of God, could not refer to a moral image, for it would involve the absurdity that the lifeless clay of which man was formed, had a character like God. We now see the Scriptures clearly teach, that God is a person with a body and form. Then Gen. 1:26, may be understood to teach the fact, that man was made in the form of God. Other scriptures agree with this testimony. See Gen. 9:6. "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." This testimony cannot apply to a spirit, or immaterial part of man: that which is the image of God has blood. 1 Cor. 11:7. "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God." James [Chap. 3:9] speaking of the tongue says, "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude (likeness, resemblance-Webster) of God." The foregoing testimony settles the point, that the image of God does not refer to character but to form.

***An Examination of the Scripture Testimony Concerning Man's Present Condition and His Future Reward or Punishment, pp. 41.1-44.2***



Says the objector, your testimony from Scripture seems to show that Adam was not created immortal, yet I believe we are immortal. We inquire, from what source do we derive our immortality? It must be either inherent, derived from Adam, or else it comes to us directly from God. We reply, we did not get it from Adam; for he did not have it himself. If he had immortality, and imparted it to us, his posterity, then the soul cannot be immaterial as claimed by the advocates of natural immortality. Immaterial is the opposite of material. Material is something; matter; has length, breadth and thickness; and one of its properties is said by Philosophers to be Divisibility. Immaterial, is the opposite, not material, not matter: then it does not possess those properties. Matter is capable of subdivisions; for divisibility is one of its properties. But immateriality being the opposite, is subject to no such divisions. Then if the soul of Adam was immaterial, it was not susceptible of subdivisions so as to give immortality to his posterity. Then if man has an immortal soul or spirit, it must come direct from the hand of the Creator at the birth of each individual. This position would be monstrous; for they tell us the soul is the life of the person, and unless this soul was imparted there would be no life. Thus we see that God is charged with giving souls to every being that lives, no matter how miserable their birth. And again, they tell us the soul is the mind: then some of these souls must be very limited in intellect when formed, as appears by the idiotic portion of the community.

One great reason urged that man is in possession of some principle of a higher nature than matter, is that man thinks; and with all candor we are told that matter cannot think, has not the power of self-motion, and would eternally remain inactive, were it not for the immortal power of volition which man possesses. We enquire. Do beasts possess an immortal will? They certainly have the power to will and move their bodies about. Philosophers have only given us the properties of unorganized matter; but every one must admit, that by combination of matter, results are produced, and properties made manifest, which did not exist in the original matter unorganized. Organized in a certain form, matter is made to produce music, and yet music is not a property of matter, but is the result of a peculiar organization of matter. But says one, "The music is not in the material instrument, but in the mind." But the mind does not produce the sound: sound is produced as the result of the organization of the materials of the instrument, the air being the medium through which it is conveyed to the nice organism of the ear, and there the mind takes cognizance of those sounds.

But says the objector, Mans reason, is capable of choosing and refusing. We reply. The same may be said of beasts; they choose. But, say you, this manifestation of knowledge in them is instinct. Is instinct a property of matter? Instinct as it is termed, if traced through the family of the brute creation, would be found to exist in a variety of forms, and so nearly allied in some, to the operations of the human mind, that some men would doubtless call it reason. But few, however, would contend that beasts possess immortal souls. Then instinct as it is termed, is the result of organization, and yet in some animals is pronounced reason. Then we inquire, if beasts are in possession of intellect without immortal souls, why may not man with an organization more refined, and a greater number of reasoning faculties, be in possession of reason, and intellect of a higher tone, and yet not be immortal? We do not wish to be charged with the position, that we claim mind is material; for we do not. We believe, however, that thought is an effect produced by material organization. For this we will assign our reasons briefly. 1st. The mind is developed in proportion to the volume of brain, and temperament of the body. The brain of an ordinary man is about one twentieth part the size of the body, while that of the horse is only one two-hundredth part.

If the mind was immortal, and not the result of the action of the body, why should earnest study cause weariness of body? If the contrary were the case, that the mind exists independent of the body, and that the body was as a clog to the powers of that spirit, as has been claimed, then we should expect the nearer death we came, the brighter the intellect would be; but we find it the reverse. A sound mind in a sound body expresses the truth of this matter.

There is one fact that cannot be explained in harmony with the theory, that the mind is not dependent upon matter for its existence. When the skull of man becomes fractured, and depressed upon the brain, the sufferer is immediately unconscious, and yet the breath of life is in him. Many curious circumstances might be related, illustrative of this point, of individuals who remained unconscious for days, and after being restored to their senses again, were not conscious that any time had elapsed. We refer the reader to Mental Philosophy for testimonies upon this subject. What folly to talk of the mind of man being immortal, and independent in its existence, if disease of the body can affect it. What a sentiment to teach, that a man is conscious after death, when the facts are, injury of the brain makes a man unconscious while living.

But we return to the Bible. Our reasoning would be but vain, except it were in harmony with the Word of inspiration. We have already seen that the Scriptures do not tell us that man is in possession of immortality in his present state of existence, but they exhort him to seek for it. Doubtless this sentiment is contrary to the early teaching of most of our readers. We have been taught, "The body is mortal, it will soon die; the soul is immortal, it can never die." The Bible, however, contradicts this sentiment. Eze. 18:4, 20. "Behold all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine, the soul that sinneth it shall die." Here theologians have found themselves in a difficulty, and to extricate themselves from it, have stated that the death of the soul, was the death that never dies. What death is that? We should consider it a contradiction of terms, and that there was no death about it. What would you think if some one should begin to talk to you about a person, and tell you they lived a life that never lived? You would certainly think the person was not yet born. So with the expression, death that never dies," it carries with it the idea of eternal life.

#### ***An Examination of the Scripture Testimony Concerning Man's Present Condition and His Future Reward or Punishment, pp. 144.2-144.4***

The first question, and one that is very properly asked in investigating the subject before us is, Where are the saints to be rewarded! With those that hold to the immortality of the soul, the sentiment has been taught according to the language of the poet, that the inheritance of the saints is

"Beyond the bounds of time and space;

Look forward to that heavenly place,

The saints' secure abode."

If we had found it to be a fact, that the man to be rewarded was an immaterial soul, of course we should have to claim that the saints' inheritance was as immaterial as that which was to be rewarded. And, without doubt, beyond the bounds of time and space, is just that which would reward an immaterial soul; viz., nothing.

In this investigation we have found that the Bible treats men as a unit, and as a literal being. In the resurrection he is to be literally raised, with a body of flesh and bones. Such a being cannot be rewarded with immateriality, or with what has been commonly described as heaven. Says God, [Prov. 8:29, 21,] "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love me to inherit SUBSTANCE." The testimony of Christ is, in Matt. 5:5, when pronouncing blessings upon different characters, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

***Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, April 15, 1858***

Where shall we learn that any immaterial part has ever been given to man? There is certainly no text in the Scriptures that states it, and this account of creation shows that the combined substances of man are "dust of the ground," and "breath." But we learn from Eld. K. something concerning Gen. 1:27, which no individual could ever have learned by reading the text, namely, that "the human soul is a created essence." He says, "God is a spirit. There can be no resemblance between gross matter, such as composes the human body, and pure spirit; it must then have been the soul that was in the image of God." But this statement has its origin in the assumption that whatever is spirit, must be immaterial and has no form. Paul states, Heb. 1:7, "Who maketh his angels spirits," but when angels appeared to Abraham he supposed them to be men. We read concerning Christ in Heb. 1:31, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his PERSON," etc. From this we should understand that although "God is a Spirit," he has a form. But Paul tells us plainly in Phil. 2:5, "Who being in the FORM of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Here is plain testimony that God has a form, and this is plainly implied in Gen. 1:26,27. "God created man in his own image." Gen. 2:7. "The Lord formed man of the dust." Here is truth plainly stated, that man made of DUST was in the image of God. But Eld. K. sees no way to maintain his position but to deny this.

## Uriah Smith

*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Dec. 10, 1861*

### THINGS

THE word, things, when used otherwise than to denote actions or events, signifies, according to Webster, "any substance, that which is created, any particular article or commodity." A thing, then, is something which has substance; it has length, breadth, and thickness; it occupies space; it can be measured, seen, felt, and handled. It is matter, and possesses all the properties of matter. Among every people on the earth, thing means something material and tangible; and in every book on the face of the globe when the reader meets with this word, he attaches to it, and correctly, too, a similar meaning. I said every book; perhaps one must be excepted: for there is a book which in common with all others uses this word, and in which it is made to mean something entirely different, or rather, nothing. That book is the Bible; and whether it is lawful to thus change the meaning of this word, when found in this book, from that which is given to it in all other books, and under all other circumstances, is the point in question.

To illustrate, see Col. 3:1: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Things above! What! are there things above? No, says the rarefied theology of the present day; there is immateriality above and nothing more. There is an immaterial heaven, an immaterial God and Christ, immaterial angels, and immaterial spirits of dead people. But the text speaks of things above. Can these things by any process be evaporated into the immateriality which the popular belief attaches to them? It cannot certainly be done by the definition of the word; for that signifies any substance, something actual and real, and it cannot be done by its use as applied to any object on this earth; for here it always means something material, something that has body and parts. There seems then to be no reason for the meaning that is attached to the word things when applied to objects above, save the mysterious belief that substance and reality are incompatible with the state of the blessed; and no reason can be given for this belief except the fact of its own existence; but behind this fact it thus entrenches itself; and while it forbids all questioning as to the right of its existence, it holds the theological world in slavery to its mystical demands.

Perhaps, however, this theory is wrong, and the Bible right. Perhaps the word things, when found in that book, with no conceivable reason to affect its signification, may mean the same as in any other book. The arbitrary claim of the popular view is set forth still more strikingly in the following verse, which reads: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Things above and things on the earth. What do we understand by things on the earth? Anything immaterial and invisible? None will so claim; but things real and tangible. By what principle, therefore, can things above, in the antithetical portion of the sentence, be construed to mean

just the reverse? When things means something in one place, how can it in just three words from where it is so used, mean nothing at all. Let every lover of consistency who is troubled with the mysticism that has been thrown over the word of God, consider this point.

Other scriptures bear testimony to the reality of heavenly things. Peter, in his first epistle 1:4, speaks of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for us. In Heb. 9:34, Paul says, "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves, that ye have in heaven, a better and an enduring substance." This language is unmistakable: we have in heaven not immateriality and nonentity, but a substance. And when Paul would set before us the hope that inspired the worthies of old, he speaks of it in contrast with this earth, as "a country," a "better country," a "heavenly country." Strange language, if this earth is the only real and substantial thing of the two. He also tells us that they looked for, not an airy nothing, but a tangible city; not founded on nothing, but one which had foundations, whose builder and maker was God.

Yes, there are things above. We can rejoice in the glorious hope of something real, something upon which a scriptural, sober, and intelligent faith can lay hold, an inheritance as literal as the earth upon which we now tread, glorified as infinite power, exerted in infinite wisdom can alone do it, where we shall know as we are known, and with the fine strung sensibilities of the redeemed, be enabled to appreciate the exquisite joys that dwell in the presence of God, and at his right hand forevermore.

Things above. But perhaps some one may ask, May there not be things somewhere above, and yet heaven itself be the intangible, spiritual place it is commonly supposed? Let the apostle answer. He tells us in the very text under notice, the definite location of these things; he tells us just where they are: "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." That is sufficient. The things above, are just where God and Christ have their glorious abode. There is the holy city. New Jerusalem, with its rainbow of precious foundation stones underlying its jasper wall; there are its gates of pearl, and its streets of gold; there is the tree of life, and the river of the water of life; there is the true tabernacle, pitched not by man, but by the living God, where our great High Priest is now ministering for us; there is the great original of the ark, the mercy-seat, and the tables of testimony, inscribed with the great law of Jehovah; there is the throne of God and the Lamb, and there the many mansions of the Father's house, made ready for those who are found prepared when the Lord shall return, to be taken with him.

It is the things above that we are to seek. How shall we seek them? The next verse explains: Set your affection, your mind, your earnest desire, upon things above. And is it necessary for the apostle to exhort us to do this? Must a people so prone as we are to set our affections on the blighted and perishing things of this earth, when we have revealed to us the incorruptible, the surpassing, and unfading glories of heaven, which may be had by seeking – must such a people be exhorted before we will turn our attention to them? Not when faith in the reality and certainty of these things is lively and strong. Lord, increase our faith, and give us an earnest of the inheritance prepared for thy faithful followers.

### ***Here and Hereafter, pp. 29.1-36.2***

It is supposed by some that the expressions used in connection with the record of man's creation, are such as to show that he has an immortal soul, or is an immortal being. Let us candidly examine them to see if such is really what they teach.

The first of these expressions is the opening testimony of the Bible concerning man, which asserts that he was to be made in the image of God. Gen. 1:26,27: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

The first impulse of a person unacquainted with this controversy would be to ask in astonishment what this has to do with the immortality of man; nor would his astonishment be in any wise diminished when he heard the reply that "as God is immortal, man must be immortal also" because made in his image. Has God, then, no other attribute by immortality, that we must confine it to this? Is not God omnipotent? – Yes. Is man? – No: Is not God omnipresent? – Yes. Is man? – No. Is not God omniscient? – Yes. Is man? – No. Is not God independent and self-existent? – Yes. Is man? – No. Is not God infallible? – Yes. Is man? – No. Then why single out the one attribute of immortality, and make the likeness of man to God consist wholly in this? In the form of a syllogism, the popular argument stands thus:- Major Premise: God is immortal. 1 Tim. 1:17. Minor Premise: Man is created in the image of God. Gen. 1.27. Conclusion: Therefore man is immortal.

This is easily quashed by another syllogism equally sound, thus:-

1. God is omnipotent.
2. Man is made in the image of God.
3. Therefore man is omnipotent.

This conclusion, by being brought within the cognizance of our own senses, becomes more obviously, though it is not more essentially, absurd. It shows earlier that the argument for immortality drawn from the "image" of God, is unqualified assumption, or that puny and finite man is clothed with all the attributes of the Deity.

In what respect, then, is man in the image of his Maker? The only correct and safe rule of interpretation, applying to language in the Bible as well as elsewhere, is to allow every word its most obvious and literal import, unless some plain reason exists for giving it a mystical or figurative meaning. The plain and literal definition of "image" (see any good lexicon), is, "An imitation, representation, or similitude of any person or thing, sculptured, drawn, painted, or otherwise made perceptible to the sight; a visible presentation; a copy; a likeness; an effigy." We have italicized a portion of this definition as containing an essential idea. An image must be something that is visible to the eye. How can we conceive of an image of anything that is not perceptible to the sight, and which we cannot take cognizance of by any of the senses? Even an image formed in the mind must be conceived of as having some sort of outward shape or form. In this sense the word is used in the thirty-one times of its occurrence elsewhere in the Old Testament.

The second time the word "image" is used, it is used to show the relation existing between son and father, and is a good comment on the relation which Gen. 1:26,27 asserts to exist between man and God. Gen. 5:3: "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." Every one would at once understand by this language, physical resemblance, and similarity of nature. Now put the two passages together. Moses first asserts that God made man in his own image, after his likeness; and a few chapters farther on he asserts that this same man begat a son in his own likeness, after his image. And while all must admit that this latter includes bodily form or physical shape, the theological schools tell us that the former, from the same writer and with no intimation that it is used in any other sense, must refer solely to the attribute of immortality. There is no room for any other conclusion than that just as a son is, in outward appearance, the image of his father, and possesses like mental and moral characteristics, so man possesses, not the attributes of God in all their perfection, but a likeness, or image, of him in his physical form and moral nature.

It may be said that the word "image" is used in a different sense in the New Testament, as, for example, in Col. 3:9,10: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the

new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Granting that the word here refers only to the inward nature, instead of the outward form, it must still ever be borne in mind that the point which popular theology has to prove is that man is immortal because in the image of God. This text is against that view; for that which is here said to be in the image of Him that created him, is not the natural man himself, but the new man which is put on, implying that the original image had been destroyed, and could be restored only in Christ. If, therefore, it meant immortality as used by Moses, this text would show that that immortality was not absolute but contingent, and having been lost by man, can be regained only through Christ.

Eph. 4:24 shows how this new man is created: “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Nothing is said about immortality even in connection with the new man. It is simply a new moral nature.

Again: the word here translated image is defined by Greenfield as meaning, by metonymy, “an exemplar, model, pattern, standard; Col. 3:10.” No such definition as this is given by Gesenius to the word in Genesis. So, though this Greek word may here have this sense, it affords no evidence that the Hebrew word in Gen. 1:26,27 refers to immortality, and may not be confined to man’s outward form and moral nature.

The same reasoning will apply to 1 Cor. 15:49, where the “image of the heavenly,” which is promised to the righteous, is something which is not in possession of the natural man, but will be attained through the resurrection: “We shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” It cannot, therefore, refer to the image stamped upon man at his creation, unless it be admitted that that image, with all its included qualities, has been lost by the human race, – an admission fatal to the hypothesis of the believers in the natural immortality of man.

In 1 Cor. 11:7 we read that man, as contrasted with woman, is “the image and glory of God.” To make the expression “image of God” here mean immortality, is to confine it to man, and rob the better part of the human family of this high prerogative.

In Gen. 9:6 we read: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.” Substituting what the image is here claimed to mean, we should have this very singular reading: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood [or taketh man’s life], by man shall his blood be shed [for his life be taken]: for immortal made he man,” so that his life could not be taken. Evidently the reference in all such passages is not only to “the human face divine,” but to the whole physical frame, with its mental and moral capabilities, which, in comparison with all other forms of animated existence, is upright and godlike.

But here the mystical interpretation of our current theology has thrown up what is considered an insuperable objection to this view; for how can man be physically in the image of God, when God is not a person, is without form, and has neither body nor parts? In reply we ask, Where does the Bible say that God is a formless, impersonal being, having neither body nor parts? Does it not say that he is a spirit (John 4:24)? – Yes; and we inquire again, Does it not say that the angels are spirits? Heb. 1:7,14. And are not the angels, saying nothing of those instances in which they have appeared to men in bodily form, and always in human shape (Gen. 18:1-8, 16-22; 32:24; Hos. 12:4; Num. 22:31; Judg. 13:6,13; Luke 1:11,13,28,29; Acts 12:7-9, etc., etc.), – are not the angels, we say, always spoken of as beings having bodily form? A spirit, or spiritual being, as God is, in the highest sense, so far from not having a bodily form, must possess it, as the instrumentality for the manifestation of his powers. 1 Cor. 15:44.

Again: it is urged that God is omnipresent; and how can this be, if he is a person? Answer: He has a representative, his Holy Spirit, by which he is ever present and ever felt in all his universe. “Whither shall I go,” asks David, “from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” Ps. 139:7. And John saw standing before the throne of God seven lamps, which are declared to be “the seven Spirits of God,” and which are “sent forth into all the earth.” Rev. 4:5; 5:6.

We now invite the attention of the reader to a little of the evidence that may be presented to show that God is a person, and so that man, though of course in an imperfect and finite degree, may be an image, or likeness, of him, as to his bodily form.

1. God has made visible to mortal eyes parts of his person. Moses saw the God of Israel. Ex. 33:21-23. An immaterial being, if such a thing can be conceived of, without body or parts, cannot be seen with mortal eyes. To say that God assumed a body and shape for this occasion, places the common view in a worse light still; for it is virtually charging God with a double deception: first, giving Moses to understand that he was a being with body and parts; and secondly, under the promise of showing himself, showing him something that was not himself. And he told Moses that he would put his "hand" over him as he passed by, and then take it away, that he might see his "back parts," but not his "face." Has he hands? has he back parts? has he a face? If not, why try to convey ideas by means of language?

Again: Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders saw the God of Israel. Ex. 24:9-11. "And there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone." Has he feet? Or is the record that these persons saw them a fabrication? No man, to be sure, has seen his face, nor could he do so and live, as God has declared. Ex. 33:20; John 1:18.

2. Christ, as manifested among men, is declared to be the "image" of God, and in his "form." Christ showed, after his resurrection, that his immortal, though not then glorified, body had flesh and bones. Luke 24:39. Bodily he ascended into heaven, where none can presume to deny him a local habitation. Acts 1:9-11; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 8:1. But Paul, speaking of this same Jesus, says, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." Col. 1:15. Here the antithesis expressed is between God, who is invisible, and his "image" in the person of Christ, which was visible. It follows, therefore, that what of Christ the disciples could see, which was his bodily form, was the image to give them an idea of God whom they could not see. This of course would not exclude the moral attributes manifested by Jesus, but which could not be manifested without some bodily organization.

Again: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Phil. 2:5,6. It remains to be told how Christ could be in the "form" of God, and yet God have no form.

Once more: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," etc. Heb. 1:1-3. This testimony is conclusive. It is an inspired declaration that God has a personal form; and to give an idea of what that form is, it declares that Christ, just as we conceive of him as ascended up bodily on high, is the express image thereof. It said that the word "person," should here be rendered "substance." But this does not affect the conclusion in the least; for if there is substance, there must be shape, and the only indication given in the Bible of what that shape is, is the human form.

The evidence already presented shows that there is no necessity for supposing that the image of God, in which man was created, consists of immortality; and Paul, in his testimony to the Romans, forever destroys the possibility of making it apply to immortality. He says (Rom. 1:22,23): "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." The word here rendered "uncorruptible" is the same word that is translated "immortal," and supplied to God in 1 Tim. 1:17. Now if God by making man in his image, stamped him with immortality, man is just as uncorruptible as God himself. But Paul says that he is not so; that while God is uncorruptible, or immortal, man is corruptible, or mortal. The image of God does not, therefore, confer immortality, though it does indicate the high organization and godlike nature of man.

***Mortal or Immortal? Which?, p. 24.2-24.3***

Although we noted in the outset that the light of nature and reason is insufficient to decide the immortality of the soul, yet as there are a few points to which some may be fondly cleaving, in the belief that the doctrine can be fairly demonstrated therefrom, it may not be amiss to briefly notice them. The first is the argument drawn from immateriality. The soul, it is claimed, is immaterial, and hence immortal in its nature. Having progressed so far as we have in this investigation, this point need not detain us long. We reply, then, 1. We neither know what matter is, nor what spirit is, but only some of the qualities of each. 2. Where is the proof that the soul is immaterial? It certainly is not drawn from nature, for all nature is material; it is not drawn from reason, for reason cannot comprehend the existence of immateriality; it cannot be drawn from revelation, for that expressly declares that man is dust. We do not mean to be understood that the mind is material; but we do claim that all vital and mental phenomena result from material causes.

But, allowing the utmost latitude to this view, it equally proves the souls of all animals, fishes, reptiles and insects immaterial; for they remember, fear, imagine, compare, manifest gratitude, anger, sorrow, desire, etc. Bishop Warburton expressly says, "I think it may be strictly demonstrated that man has an immaterial soul; but then, the same arguments which prove that, prove, likewise, that the souls of all living animals are immaterial." Whoever, therefore, affirms the immortality of man from the immateriality of his soul, is bound to affirm the same, not only of the nobler animals, but also of all the lower orders of the brute creation. Here, again, believers in natural immortality are crushed beneath the weight of their own arguments. If it be said that God can, if he choose, blot from existence the immaterial soul of the beetle and the titmouse, we reply, so can he that of man; and then its immortality is at an end, and the whole argument abandoned.

***Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, July 22, 1858***

The opposition preaching has turned and established some in the present truth. We entertain no fears of those "good ground" hearers who learn of our faith with a full determination to live it out, being "turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (the Sabbath;) but only such as love the traditions of men, as Sunday-keeping and other unscriptural doctrines that are not in the Bible at all, such as an immaterial God without body, the Son of God being his own father, heaven beyond space, that is nowhere, with an immaterial immortal soul just like God, being part of God himself, going to heaven or hell at death, that is, a part of God going to hell, then to be called out of hell to be united with the body to be sent back again to remain to all eternity to die the death that never dies, while the righteous may live the life that never lives.

**A.T. Jones**

***Signs of the Times, Aug. 19, 1886***



"I GO to prepare a place for you." Where did Jesus go? Luke tells us that on the day of His ascension, "It came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven." Luke 24:51. On the same occasion Mark says: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Mark 16:19. When Stephen was about to die, he said, "Behold, I see the Heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Acts 7:56. Jesus then has gone to Heaven where God is, and he has gone there to prepare a place for his disciples,â??for all who put their trust in him. Heaven, therefore, is a place, and not an imaginary, immaterial, intangible nothing, "beyond the bounds of time and space." The people of God are to be taken to a real place. "That I may excise those that love me to inherit substance," saith Wisdom. Prov. 8:21. And Paul says that a certain people took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, "knowing in yourselves that ye have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance." Heb. 10:34. There is then in Heaven a substantial place for the believers in God and in Christ.

## George Storrs

### ***Six Sermons on the Inquiry Is There Immortality in Sin and Suffering?, p. 29***

What is immateriality? Strictly speaking it is, not material – not matter. In other words – it is not substance. What is that which has no substance? – What kind of creation is it? If the Creator formed "all things out of nothing," it would seem that man's soul has taken the form of its original, and is nothing still; for it is not matter, we are told. If it is said – "It is a spiritual substance" – I ask, What kind of substance is that, if it is not matter? I cannot conceive, and I do not see how it is possible to conceive, of substance without matter, in some form: it may be exceedingly refined. I regard the phrase, immaterial, as one which properly belongs to the things which are not: a sound without sense or meaning: a mere cloak to hide the nakedness of the theory of an immortal soul in man; a phrase of which its authors are as profoundly ignorant as the most unlearned of their pupils.

## J. H. Waggoner

***Angels: Their Nature and Ministry, pp. 10.2-16.2***<sup>1</sup>This work was written by D. M. Canright, but later revised by J. H. Waggoner and is usually included in collections of his works.

### Angels are Real Beings

The angels of God are not mere incorporeal phantoms, as is generally taught. They are real personal beings, possessing form and substance. The tendency of investigation, in the present day, is toward Spiritualism; there is, on almost every hand, a needless and very unreasonable prejudice existing against the idea that all created beings must be material. The Spiritualistic view is not at all the theory of the Scriptures.

On this point J. H. Kurtz, doctor of theology, has some just remarks in "Bibel and Astronomie," chap. 4, sec. 14, on 1 Cor. 15:40. He says; "We cannot conceive of a creature without a body, because everything created can only as creature live, act, and exist in space and time, and it is bodily form alone which binds the creature to space and time." "If we conceive of the angels as being ever so spiritual and heavenly, ever so exalted over the obnoxious laws of our bodily form, over the hindrances of our grosser substance, still they are creatures, and must, as such, pay the tribute of bodily form, be this ever so ethereal, fine, and incomprehensible to our senses." "Therefore in creation, bodily form is the condition of all existence."

To the same intent Zeller's Bible Dictionary, art. "Angels," says: "They are not without body, as we cannot very easily conceive of any creature without bodily form; but they have a higher, finer, ethereal bodily form, which is according to the heavenly world system to which they belong."

The same idea is taught in many instances where the angels are mentioned in the Scriptures. Isaiah describes them as possessing a face, feet, wings, etc.: I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." Isa. 6:1, 2. Ezekiel also describes them in a similar manner. Of the cherubim he says: "And their whole body [margin, "Heb., flesh"], and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and their wheels, were full of eyes," etc . The whole description indicates an actual bodily existence-a body having hands, feet, wings, etc.

In Gen. 18:1-8 we read: "And the Lord appeared unto him [Abraham] in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day, and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant; let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on; for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat."

Here it is said that they did eat the food which Abraham prepared for them. That they were angels, we learn from what follows: "And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way." Two of them went on to Sodom. "And there came two angels to Sodom at evening; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." Gen. 19:1-3.

Here those who met Abraham are called angels. They are represented as having hands and feet; and it is said they did eat material food, which shows that they were material beings. It seems, also, that angels have food expressly prepared for their use. David says: "Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and given them of the corn of heaven. Man did 'eat angels' food." Ps. 78:23-25. Manna is here called the grain of heaven, and the food of angels. Therefore, angels do eat food, and are material beings. We could not imagine that immaterial beings should eat material food, such as the manna which God sent from heaven.

This idea is further sustained by the fact that Jesus, after His resurrection, had flesh and did eat. At His appearing to His disciples, He said: "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." Luke 24:36-43.

But Jesus is the first fruits, the example of the saints in the resurrection. He ate with His disciples; and so He promised them that they shall eat and drink with Him in His kingdom. See Matt. 26:29; Luke 12:37; 22:16, 18, 29, 30. And speaking of the new earth, where the immortal saints shall dwell, the Lord says; "From one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me." Isa. 66:23. The saints will be called flesh in the kingdom of God. And as Christ is, and the immortal saints will be, material, so also we conclude that the angels are material beings.

In the history of Balaam we have an interesting incident bearing upon this point. Thus we read: "And God's anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand, and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field; and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way." "Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand." Num. 22:22-31. The angel appeared to Balaam with a sword drawn in his hand. Spiritualists tell us that the angel created his body and the sword, for the occasion, out of the materials which surrounded him, making it appear like a body and a sword when there was none. Then the angel really deceived Balaam, leading him to think that he had a body and a sword when he had none; and the record deceives the reader in the same manner. But it will be observed that the record says, "Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel," and not that the angel created an appearance that might be seen.

As soon as Balaam's eyes were opened, he saw the angel. The idea is conveyed clearly that the angel was just the same before Balaam saw him as he was afterwards. This is further evident from the fact that the beast could see the angel, while Balaam could not see him. With regard to this occurrence, one of two things is true, either the angel had a material form before the eyes of Balaam were opened so that he could see him, or the dumb brute saw an immaterial spirit. The last will scarcely be claimed; therefore it must be acknowledged that the angel was there in his own bodily form before Balaam saw him.

An objector says, "If the angels are material, how can it be that they can be present and be seen at one moment, and not seen the next moment, while occupying the same position?" It is not correct to claim that all matter can be seen. Air is material, but its presence is not detected by the eye, though it is by other senses. Much of the prejudice upon this subject arises from not duly considering the almost infinite diversity of forms under which matter may appear. Here it is a ball of mud, and there it is a fine gold watch. Both are material, but how different! Here is a piece of ice, and there is a jet of the hottest steam. Each seems to be exactly the opposite of the other; yet they are only different conditions of the same matter. One is water frozen; the other is water highly heated. So some matter we see in a gross form, and some most exquisitely organized. Still it is all matter, and the same matter may be visible at one time and invisible at another, as is the case of water converted into steam and dissolved in the air.

An objection is raised on the fact that angels are called spirits. Heb. 1:13, 14. But there is no just ground for the objection. The saints will have bodies after their resurrection, yet they will be spiritual bodies. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." 1 Cor. 15:44. On this point Dr. V. Baader, *Anthropolog. Schr.*, remarks: "A spirit without body is also, according to the Scriptures, simply a shadow, and in this sense the Scriptures are all the way through materialistic, in opposition to the spiritualism of the moderns; only they place imperishable matter everywhere in contrast with the perishable matter." And so also Rudolph, in *Die Lehre Vom Menschen*, says: "The Holy Scriptures do not know of any formless being or life." These remarks are truthful, as every careful reader has perceived. Not a text in the Bible can be produced which teaches the existence of a formless or immaterial being.

## R. F. Cottrell

*The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Nov. 24, 1863*

### Man Made in the Image of God

We take two plain and positive statements of the word of God, place them side by side, and draw a simple, legitimate conclusion.

1. "God formed man of the dust of the ground."
2. "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."

CONCLUSION. That which was formed of dust was made in the image of God.

But it is objected that God is "without body or parts," and therefore this conclusion must be erroneous; that man was morally in the image of God. That his likeness to God must be a moral likeness. That man was like God in moral character, or in his attributes, or both. Those ministers that say, as many do, that man lost the image of his Creator, in his fall, must refer to man's moral character; for they do not wish to be understood that he lost the immortality of the soul. Now man could have no real, positive moral character, till he had formed it, by his own action in reference to moral law. When first created, his character was not formed. He was innocent, and was pronounced very good; but it could not then be said to him, "Well done;" for he had done nothing to form a character either way. But man was made in the image of God. Then, if we understand it of moral image, it could mean nothing more than innocence. The tiger, and every four-footed beast, were equally innocent, were "very good;" but it is evident they were not created in the image of God. Man's innocence, then, was not what distinguished him, as being in the image of God.

"Admitted," says an objector; "but the image of God was found in the natural attributes of the soul. Thus:

1. Man was made in the image of God. 2. But God is immortal. 3. Therefore man was made immortal.

Now, my friend, if that argument is good and sound, another formed upon the same plan would be equally good. But by forming syllogisms after your pattern we might make it appear that man is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent; yes; and further, that man "only hath immortality," for this is affirmed of God.

This mode of arguing proves too much; therefore it proves nothing. Hence, we must take the most simple and obvious conclusion, namely; that man was made in the form of God. Christ was in the "form of God," and is the "express image of his Father's person." Col. 1:15; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 1:3. In Gen. 9:6, we read, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man." And an apostle says, that men "are made after the similitude of God."

Daniel says of the Father, "The Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. Chap. 7:9. John describes the Son as follows: "One like unto the Son of man, clothes with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if it burned in a furnace." Rev. 1:13-15. A comparison of these scriptures would give us the idea that the Son had the personal appearance of the Father.

"That view is grossly material," says one.

If it is so, the fault is in the Bible. Why not say finely material? We “believe that God is:” others say they believe he is – immaterial. We do not say that he is of the earth, earthy: but man thus formed of the dust of the earth, was made in the image of God. This fact has no bearing on the question of the immortality of the soul.

***Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Nov. 7, 1865***

We do not teach that “the soul sleeps with the body in the grave! We believe, that man is a unit—that soul and body are not separate beings; but that it takes the whole body soul and spirit, if you please, to constitute a living man or soul. The living man became subject to death on account of sin, no part being exempt, and there is no remedy but the resurrection. “If the dead rise not, then they that have fallen asleep in Christ are perished” See 1 Cor. 15:16-18.

You represent us as teaching “that the final Heaven of the saints is to be a sort of Garden of Eden restored; with all its material and voluptuous delights.” You must be aware that the Scriptures promise a restitution—a new Heavens and a new earth—and also the resurrection of the body. And where is the evidence that a resurrected, spiritual body is immaterial—that it has not “flesh and bones” as our Lord had after his resurrection? Why should material men sigh for immateriality? Can we not, while we are here in our fleshly bodies, worship God in spirit and in truth? Some such true worshipers were on the earth in the time of our Saviour; for he says, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” We need not become immaterial in order to worship God aright.

***Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Oct. 27, 1863***

The Creation of Man

IF man has an immortal soul, it would be reasonable to look for some information concerning it in the account given of his creation. We could not think that the most important part of man – that without which man would not be man – should be left entirely out of that account. Then let us read the record.

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul.” Gen. 2:7.

Perhaps there is no argument more relied on to prove the immortality of the soul (for the Bible nowhere asserts it), than that which is drawn from its immateriality. It is held that that which is, properly speaking, the man, is immaterial, that is, composed of nothing, and that that which is immaterial cannot die, therefore man is immortal. Where did they get this so valuable information? From what source did they learn that immateriality could not die? Not from the Bible, for it says nothing about it. Do you say, Reason teaches it? How did human reason discover that that which is immaterial can live, but cannot die? that God has created beings material and immaterial, that he can destroy one class, but cannot destroy the other, because it is immaterial?

But if the real man, the soul, is immaterial, only dwelling in a material house, the author of the text above quoted made a great mistake; for he says, God formed man of the dust of the ground. And he further declares that the man thus formed of dust, when the breath of life was added, became (not an immaterial and immortal, but) a living soul. If the man proper is immaterial, this is a very improper account of him: for it not only neglects to tell us that he was immaterial, but, on the contrary, states the material of which he was formed. And instead of telling us that an immaterial soul was put into this dust, it declares that the man thus formed of dust, became a living soul when life was given. The soul was the man, and the man was the soul: and the man was formed of the dust.

God knows the end from the beginning. And the reason he inspired Moses to write this account of the formation of man, was, doubtless, that he foresaw that men would be deceived with this doctrine of immateriality, and flattered with the idea of his natural immortality, and thus be prepared for the seductions of the Devil, and led on, through spiritualism, to reject the word of God and the hope of the gospel – immortality through Christ. The inspired account of man's creation puts an everlasting veto on this doctrine of immateriality, with those who believe, with full assurance, the word of the Lord. O, that men would believe! It would save them from being puffed up with the idea that they are naturally immortal, warn them of the awful whirlpool of spiritualism which threatens to engulf them, and make them willing to accept of immortality through Jesus Christ, the only name given under heaven whereby they can be saved.

#### ***Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Aug. 16, 1864***

##### Infidelity is Infidelity Still

Man without the Bible is like a mariner upon a vast ocean without chart or compass, whose point of destination is utterly unknown to him, and, consequently, having no port to gain and no means of finding it if he had, he is the sport of every wind until he is wrecked in some storm or sinks to the bottom from a leak. And yet proud man, fancying himself immortal while he rejects his only hope of immortality, that which is brought to light through the gospel and offered to him through a crucified Redeemer, endeavors to philosophize away the dread reality of death, transform it into a friend-a most benignant arrangement to break the monotony of earth-life, and afford them a delightful transition to a higher life on the peaceful shores of immateriality, where pleasures never cloy and where the freed spirit, which is now puffed up nigh to bursting with pride, may expand to all eternity without danger of ever coming in contact with anything else!

While Satan has been persevering in his efforts to persuade men that the first lie he ever uttered to our race, namely, "Ye shall not surely die," is the truth, he has been equally laborious, and successful too, in inflating the mind with the other idea advanced at the same time: "Ye shall be as gods." Pride, self-exaltation, is the natural attendant of the doctrine of natural immortality; and this is a chief reason why men are unwilling to hear the Bible on this question. Their self-conceit makes them unwilling to learn the fact that they are "but men," but "dust and ashes," whose "days are as grass." whose life is "a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanishes away." They think they are degraded-brought down to a level of the brutes,-when they are told that they have no immortality out of Christ: and this fact, appearing more and more apparent to the Bible student, furnishes a new pretext for discarding that sacred Book.

Infidelity, which was wont, in time past, to deny the existence of God and consign man, at death, to blank nothingness, denying a future life altogether, has, in these last days, seized upon the popular fable of the natural immortality of the soul, and is battling against the Bible and its Divine Author, with all the assurance and audacity of conscious immortality independent of Christ and the resurrection. Instead of denying the existence of God, now everything is God, or there is a certain something or nothing called immateriality, which pervades every part of the universe, and this is their God-everywhere in general and no where in particular—a thing of nought-nonentity. It amounts to the doctrine of no God.

But they themselves, in their fancied immortality, are the greatest gods they know of or care for; and they bid defiance to every power that would bring them to an account. Such is the full-ripe fruit of the doctrine of the natural immortality of man. Christian, pause and consider whether you are sustaining the foundation of this last phase of infidelity.

***Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Nov. 15, 1864***

“Materialism.”

Under this heading, the Sabbath Recorder, the organ of the S. D. Baptists, recently published an essay, prepared by D. E. Maxson, which, from the following expression of his, I conclude was not intended for that class of infidels generally called Materialists, but for the especial benefit of Sabbath-keeping Adventists, or for those who are in danger of becoming such. Of what he is pleased to call materialism, he says, “It is at the basis, the very corner-stone, of the creed of a whole denomination of Christians rapidly growing up in this country; and for palpable reasons, growing more rapidly here in the West than elsewhere, and seeking by certain affinities to link themselves with Seventh-day Baptists.” From this I think he refers to S. D. Adventists; and yet in quoting authors on our side of the question, in order to make a show of fairness by giving our own words, not a word is taken from any writer of our denomination. But certain ones are quoted, some of whom seem to be wise above that which is written; and then, from such expressions of theirs as these: “Man is entirely dependent upon his (physical) organization for all his thoughts,” and the “mind” is an “attribute of living organized dust,” he seems to infer a proposition which none of these writers affirm, viz: “All mental phenomena are the result of organization.” He then proceeds to combat this creature of his own creation in the following masterly style.

“Let us pursue this wonderful method of thought-producing into its laboratory, and see if we can catch a glimpse of the process by which thought is produced. Here, then, is a human bone to be organized. It has carbonate of lime, phosphate of lime, gelatine, etc., in its constitution. In the carbonate of lime are three simple elements, carbon, oxygen, and calcium. To produce the lime, the oxygen and calcium must unite; this they do by the strong affinity of the one for the other. This is organization—that process which originates all mental phenomena, according to the hypothesis under consideration. Now look out for a thought! Perhaps the immortal Iliad will come forth, for a particle of oxygen is going to unite with one of calcium to make a bone. The wonderful union is consummated, and lime is organized. Did you see the thought that was produced? Did you see the lime think? There was organization, and ‘all mental phenomena are consequent upon organization,’ says the Materialist.”

The Materialist says so, for aught I know, but I have had no acquaintance or connection with him. And I venture the assertion that no professed Christian can be found, who holds that the "process" of organization "originates all mental phenomena," or ever produced one thought. Did not our essayist know that he was beating not so much as the air, but a phantom of his own imagination? And yet he represents that a denomination of "Christians" hold such views; and one might infer that he thought his own denomination badly infected with such ideas; for he says, "A gross materialism is sapping the foundation of our spiritual life, and shivering down the soul of man to its own earth-born nature."

Now, Bible Christians believe that the first man of our race was perfectly and completely organized, his brain as well as the rest, and yet that he had not a thought till the will and life-giving power of his Creator made him a living soul. The faith of such does not stand in the wisdom of men, nor in the workings of natural affinities of dead matter, but in the power of God. Our creed says, "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Living souls are capable of thought; though not always the best. But our creed further says of man, "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Our essayist made but the slightest allusion to this creed; his argument was altogether what is termed philosophical.

I will notice one of his chief arguments, and conclude my remarks. I call it his principal argument, because he seems to think it the most important, having put it in the form of a syllogism "for the benefit of any who may wish to combat it." He says,

1. Substances, all of whose phenomena are different, are them-selves different;
2. The phenomena of matter and mind are different;
3. Therefore matter and mind are different.

"Whatever, then, matter is, mind is something else, or not matter.

"Now, since the major premise is based on a law fundamental in all philosophy, if the reasoning be faulty, it must be in the minor premise. Are the phenomena of matter and mind different, then? If you affirm that they are alike, then you and I will go to the laboratory and test their qualities. I will take an apple, and you shall take a thought. If the apple and the thought are alike, i. e., if they are both matter, then the same test will apply to both; they will have the same qualities. Now begin. I hold the apple up between my thumb and finger. Now you hold your thought up between your thumb and finger. I press the apple, and find it hard. Do so by the thought. I see the apple; it is red and round. What color and shape is your thought? I bite the apple; it is sour. How does your thought taste? Smell of it; is it fragrant? Now I let go the apple, and it falls to the floor; it is heavy. Now let go your thought; is it heavy? O, Materialist, your materialism is heavy. It will fall, whether you let go or not.

"We have now tested the truth of my minor premise. Thought is a phenomenon of the mind. Color, form, etc., are phenomena of matter, and they are as unlike as things can possibly be; and therefore mind and matter are as unlike as they can be; and therefore material-ism, which affirms that mind is matter, is as untrue as it can be.

"That part of man, then, which thinks, and feels, and wills, not being matter, is consequently neither dependent upon matter for existence, nor subject to any of the laws which govern matter. Physical dissolution, then, of the body, can affect only the body, having no effect whatever upon the mind, in respect of its essential essence or qualities. What it was before the death of the body, it must remain after that event-essentially a thinking, willing, and feeling entity."

A vastly large conclusion to draw from so small premises. My pony's thoughts are different from his body; they do not present the same phenomena. And sometimes when he comes to cross-roads, he chooses and wills to take the road that he thinks leads toward home. Yet I never thought of inferring such astonishingly large conclusions from these facts. Our friends of the opposite side of the question, always forget to take the



thoughts of the inferior animals into the laboratory for a test and comparison with human thoughts. We, as a people, cannot answer for others, but our materialism never "affirms that mind is matter;" and we doubt very much the propriety of packing us in the same box with infidels, and then condemning the lot.

But to discover the fallacy of my friend's reasoning, I inquire, Do thoughts think? I remember of reading in the old spelling-book, "Thinkers think thoughts." Thinkers and thoughts are two things. Take a thinker then to the laboratory, i. e., one who thinks, and you will find him possessed of as many palpable qualities as your apple. Is it the mind that thinks? But what is a man's mind but his thoughts? My friend speaks correctly. He speaks of "matter and mind," and then as a specimen or sample of each, he takes an apple and a thought. But, says my friend, "Thought is a phenomenon of the mind. Color, form, etc., are phenomena of matter." Then we have not had a fair test, and we must go again to the laboratory. As I have only a thought, a phenomenon of something that has no appearance, you shall leave your apple behind, and take only some of its phenomena-its color or form, its sourness, its hardness or its heaviness. Now hold up your shape of an apple between your thumb and finger. Press it; is it hard? Look at it, taste it, smell it, weigh it. What is the difference between it and a thought? If you are dissatisfied with this test, and must have your apple, I will take a man, one of whose attributes is mind, or thought, and then we will have a fair test. We shall find that living matter is decidedly in advance of dead matter in its qualities and capabilities. "A living dog is better than a dead lion."

We have no controversy with our friends of the opposition in respect to there being a difference between mind, or thoughts, and matter. We do not claim that mind is matter; and those who would fairly oppose our views should cease to misrepresent us. The connection between matter and mind is a mystery, which neither our friends nor ourselves are able to explain. Neither do we know how matter can be endowed with animal life. But we know that life is connected with material organizations, and that matter thus endowed is vastly superior, in its susceptibilities, to dead matter. This our friends seem entirely to forget. Their philosophic reasonings concerning matter, all relate to dead matter. Dead brains cannot think. So they come to the conclusion that immaterial thought can have no connection with matter, but must be the product of an immaterial soul, which comes in between the mind and matter, and does the thinking; making a chain of two immaterial links and one material. They are not aware that it is just as difficult to connect this middle link-this immaterial soul with matter, as it is to connect immaterial thoughts with the same; and yet they hold that this soul is connected with matter, and they have never been able to discover one that was not, although they claim to have just such a soul themselves.

They leave out of the controversy the wisdom and power of God, which can as easily connect immaterial thoughts, as an immaterial soul, with matter, and pursue a course of reasoning which, if valid, would make it just as necessary for horses and dogs to have immaterial souls to connect their immaterial intelligence with their material bodies; and if immateriality is a proof of immortality, man, who boasts of his immortality, is, in this respect, no better than the brute.

The world by wisdom does not yet know God. All that we know of the mysterious connection between mind and matter, or concerning a future life, is what he has seen fit to reveal to us in his word. And since our wisdom or folly cannot improve this revelation, we shall do better to accept of it as it is. That word tells us plainly that man who was made of dust, on receiving the breath of life, became a living soul. Of the immaterial, immortal soul it says nothing. On the contrary, it calls man mortal, with no part excepted, but promises him a future life by means of a resurrection of the dead, and immortality on condition of his seeking for it in the way of faith and obedience. Our philosophic friends may imagine that they aid the belief in a future life through the resurrection, by proving that man is immortal independent of it; but the effect of their reasoning must be to weaken faith in it, by making it appear that there is no need of it—that man is immortal without it, and can feast his “immortal mind” on all the joys of Paradise, should his corruptible “clay tenement” never be brought up from the dust. And it is having this effect. Thousands upon thousands are coming to deny the resurrection and reject revelation, as the legitimate fruit of their faith in the natural immortality of man. Did our Christian friends realize the real tendency of their efforts in behalf of natural immortality, they would drop their vain philosophy, and maintain the faith of a future life through the resurrection of the dead, instead of asserting that there can be no resurrection of an individual, if he is really and wholly dead. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with them that God should raise the dead? But they virtually deny his power to endow animated matter with thought, and positively declare that he cannot raise the dead, if consciousness has ceased, and all this in the face of innumerable facts of the cessation of consciousness, while the person was living.

But while we mourn over the fact that our friends are unwittingly aiding the cause of Spiritualism, the present, and most popular form of infidelity, and therefore the most dangerous; they, in turn, feel deeply over our supposed tendency to ancient, materialistic, Epicurean, infidelity, a thing that has had its day and run its race, is unpopular, and is now discarded even by Satan himself; he having discovered a more plausible form of deception for this age, suited to the prevailing philosophy.

Who are in danger of being deceived? Where lies the truth? Not in human philosophy or wisdom, either ancient or modern, but in the word of God. May Heaven aid the honest inquirer to lay aside human wisdom, and receive that word in its native simplicity, harmony, and beauty, and thus escape the subtle snare, which Satan has been so long weaving for this last generation.

## **D.M. Canright**

***Review and Herald, Sept. 12, 1878.***

### PERSONALITY OF GOD

Another convincing proof that God is a real person, having a form and parts, is the fact that man is said to have been made in the image of God.

“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.” Gen. 1:26, 27. If man was made in the image and likeness of God, then we know how God looks, what shape he has; he is in the shape of man. A poor evasion is attempted here, by asserting that it is the spirit of man that is in the image of God. But the text says no such thing. It says, “Let us make man in our image.” Then we are told how this was done: “And the Lord God formed man in the dust of the ground.” Gen. 2:7. Of what did God form man? It was directly said that he was formed of the dust of the ground. Very well; then that which was formed of the dust of the ground is in the image of God. Gen. 9:6 confirms this fact: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man.”

If a man killed a beast, was he to die for that? No; but if he shed the blood of a man he must die. The reason is stated: “For in the image of God made he man,” i.e., he has killed and destroyed that which is made in the

image of God. Now the question is, what has he killed? Not an immortal spirit of soul, but the body, that which had blood, that which was in the image of God. Hence it is the body which is in the image of God.

The words image and likeness are thus defined by Webster:-

Image, n. 1. A representation or similitude of any person or thing formed of a material substance: as, an image wrought out of stone, wood or wax. 2. A statue. • Its meaning is plain. It is a representation of something else in the same form. • Likeness, n. Resemblance in form; similitude. The picture is a good likeness of the original. 2. Resemblance; form: external appearance. 3. One that resembles another; a copy; a counterpart. • Plainly, then, an image or likeness is that which is in the form of, and looks like, that which it is to represent. Man is in the image and likeness of God; hence God has a body in form like that of a man.

Let us now turn to the Bible, and find the meaning of the word image as it is there used. It will be found that every time it refers to something that has a form, a real substance, a shape.

Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up an image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it; for I am the Lord your God. • Lev. 26:1. • And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed. • 1 Sam. 19:13. • And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God. • 2 Chron. 33:7 • Thou, O king, sawest, and beheld a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. • Dan. 2:31. • Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits. • Dan. 3:1. • And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? • Matt. 22:20. • Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshiper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? • Acts 19:35. • I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. • Rom. 11:4. • Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and did live. • Rev. 13:14. • Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land. • 1 Sam. 6:5. • For when she saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermillion. • Eze. 23:14. • Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. • Ex. 20:4.

All these texts abundantly show that in Bible language an image is something that has a real form and shape. Man is made in the image of God • the man that was made of the dust, too. Gen. 2:7

God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. • Rom. 8:3

Here it is definitely stated what part of man constitutes the likeness. • Sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. • It is his flesh, then, in which the likeness consists. Phil. 2:5-8 is absolutely decisive upon this point. • Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God. • Here we stop to ask how Christ could be in the form of God, if God had no form. But Jesus was in the form of God; hence the argument is conclusive that God has a form. • Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant (man), and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, • etc. Here it is declared that Christ was in the form of God, in the form of a servant, in the likeness of man, in the fashion of man. We know that this was his body; for Christ was both in the form of God, and in the form of man. Then God and man both have the same form.

Of Jesus Paul says, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." Heb. 1:3. It is the person of God, then, of which Jesus was the image. Then God has a person. Now what is the meaning of the word person? It seems that on so simple a word as this there could be no mistake. It does not and cannot mean an immaterial, intangible, shapeless, formless essence. It always means an intelligent being, having a body, shape and form.

Again we appeal to the word of God. Let us carefully read a few plain scriptures where the word person is used; and it will be seen that it always means an individual with an organized shape and form.

"Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." Gen. 14:21. "And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there." Num. 19:18. And he "slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons." Judges 9:5

"I have seen a son of Jesse, . . . a comely person." 1 Sam. 16:18. "And Dorg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod." 1 Sam. 22:18. "Wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed." 2 Sam. 4:11. "That thou go to battle in thine own person." 2 Sam. 17:11 "Likewise the fool and the brutish person perish." Ps. 49:10. "There was not one feeble person among their tribes." Ps. 105:37. "a man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit." Prov. 28:17. "And every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left." Jer. 43:6. "He carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons." Jer. 52:29. "Thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born." Eze. 16:5. "And they shall come at no dead person." Eze. 44:25. "For thou regardest not the person of men." Matt. 22:16. "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." Matt. 27:24. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." 1 Cor. 5:13. "But Noah saved the eighth person." 2 Peter 2:5.

By these passages we find what the Bible means by the word person. It never means a being without body, parts, or passions. Now the Bible, after using the word person hundreds of times in the sense indicated above, says that God is a person. We believe it, and are willing to leave it there.

### ***Review and Herald, Sept. 5, 1878***

#### THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

God is a real person, having a body, form, and local habitation. Man is made in his image. The God of the Bible is not a mere principle, an essence or soul of the universe, but he is a real, personal being, having a body, form, shape, and local habitation, a throne, etc. But let us listen first to what the creeds say of him. The Methodist Discipline, in its articles of religion, Art. 1, says:—

"There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts."

The articles of faith of the Episcopal church are even worse. Art. 1 says:—

“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions.” Other creeds go still further, and say that he is without center or circumference. In all candor, I submit that such a description of God annihilates him entirely. He has no body, no parts, no passions, dwells nowhere in particular, has no center, no circumference. If a man were called to describe a nonentity, he could not do it more perfectly than it is done in the above language.

But notice further, these same creeds teach that Jesus Christ is the very and eternal God. Thus Art. 2 of the Episcopal creed says:—

“The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father,” etc. Now notice that this Son of God is the very and eternal God himself. And then it continues: “took man’s nature in the womb of the blessed virgin, of her substance, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man.”

Art. 4 says:—

“Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things pertaining to the perfection of man’s nature, wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all man at the last day.”

Several queries present themselves here: is Christ the very and eternal God? So they say. Did Christ have a body? This they positively affirm. Is he inseparably connected with that body? and has he not that body in Heaven? This they plainly declare. Is he not the true God? So they say. Then has not the true God a body? This the creed directly says. Then certainly God has a body—occupies a body. Why then do the creeds say that he has no body?

Again we are told by these creeds that God is everywhere, as much in one place as another, and no more in one place than another. But the Bible says that Jesus ascended up on high, and is at the right hand of the Father. Did he ascend everywhere? Was his body divided into innumerable particles, and scattered throughout the universe? If the Father is everywhere and nowhere in particular, where did Jesus go? Again it is claimed that saints at death go to Heaven, where God is. Do they go everywhere, and nowhere in particular? All this seems to me to be the sheerest nonsense. It is opposed to common sense and to the Bible. No; God is a person, a real being.

I do not believe that any person, whatever his creed may be, ever prays to God without conceiving of him as having a body, form, and shape, being located upon a throne in Heaven. When he closes his eyes upon the world and begins to pray to God, he immediately looks up to Heaven by faith, and beholds God upon his throne in the form of a man, and prays to him as such. Nor is this merely imaginary. The Bible has everywhere so described him; and it is from these oft-repeated descriptions that these ideas are formed. Then either the whole tenor of the Bible misleads us, or else our position is true.

Furthermore, how could a person pray with any intelligence to a mere essence, a mere principle, and an immaterial spirit that had no body, parts, or shape, that was just as much in one place as in another? The idea is absurd. Then, again, what the Bible says of going to God and coming from God takes for granted that he is a personal being, located in a definite place. Let us read a few scriptures.

“Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” John 20:17. Jesus said that he was about to ascend to God.

â??Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me.â?• John 7:33. â??And her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.â?• Rev. 12:5. To Cornelius the angel said, â??Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.â?• Acts 10:4.

Hundreds of texts like these occur throughout the Bible; but they would neither be true nor sensible if God is a mere essence, an immaterial spirit, as much in one place as another. How many times we read in the Bible of angels coming from God. Jesus says of himself, â??I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.â?• John 8:42. â??Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.â?• John 13:3. â??I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.â?• John 16:28.

This last texts is very expressive. â??I came forth from the Father,â?• says Jesus, â??and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.â?• Is the Father, then, just as much in the world as anywhere? If so, how could Christ come forth from the Father by coming into the world, and again go to the Father by leaving the world? No; the Father is just as much a personal being as a man is. He has a personal presence. Thus Gabriel says, â??I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God.â?• Luke 1:19. Then God has an an immediate presence which is not everywhere. Where did Gabriel come from? He came directly from Heaven. Is the presence of God everywhere? How, then, could Gabriel say that he stood in the presence of God more than anyone else? True, there is one sense in which God is everywhere. We will notice this by and by. Again: â??I say unto you, that in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven.â?• Matt. 18:10. Here, again it is said that the angels in Heaven behold the face of the Father. Then how many scores and hundreds of times it is declared in the most emphatic and unmistakable language that God is in Heaven, and not upon earth. Says the wise man, â??God is in heaven, and thou upon earth.â?• Eccl. 5:2. Our Saviour taught his disciples to pray, â??Our Father which art in Heaven.â?• Matt. 6:9. Why say, â??Which art in Heaven,â?• if he is as much in the earth, and in the sea, and everywhere, as he is in Heaven?

Furthermore, it is many times positively declared that he sits upon a throne in Heaven. We will read a few passages. â??The Lord hath prepared his throne in the Heavens.â?• Ps. 103:19. â??The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in Heaven.â?• Ps. 11:4

â??In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.â?• Isa. 6:1-3. How explicit is this text. The prophet saw the Lord sitting upon a throne. He describes that throne, and the angels standing by it, and tells what the angels said.

So Jesus says, â??And he that shall swear by Heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.â?• Matt. 23:22. Then the throne of God is in Heaven, and God sits upon that throne. Is the throne of God everywhere? Is it on this earth? Is it in America? Is it in the State of New York? Is it in the city of Rochester? No; But it is in Heaven, and God sits upon it.

In Rev. 4:2-5 we read:—

And immediately I was in the Spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in Heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. Indeed, we might read on through the whole chapter. It is a minute description of the throne of God, of God's person, of angels, and of the living creatures around that throne. If all this is denied one might as well deny the whole Bible.

Once more: After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood around about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth in the throne shall dwell among them. Rev. 7:9-11, 15.

This is in strict harmony with all the Scriptures, and it is also in harmony with common sense.

It is declared that God sits between the cherubim. The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubim; let the earth be moved. Ps. 99:1. The said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. Zech. 4:14.

The Scriptures described God as a person, having a form, the shape of a man. Daniel, in his vision of God, describes him thus: I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool. Dan. 7:9. God is here described as having a head and hair.

Ezekiel, in his vision of the throne of God, says:—

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphires stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it; and I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. Eze. 1:26-28. This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chebar. Eze. 10:20.

To Moses the Lord said:—

Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away mine hand and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen. Ex. 33:20-23. No man can see the Lord's face. Then he has a face. But he said, I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will pass by, and thou shalt see my back parts, and he did so. Now was this all a farce, a deception? Did the Lord deceive Moses, and make him think he had a face, and hands, and parts, when he had none? No, indeed. Then God has parts, notwithstanding the creeds say he is without body or parts.

Again we read: “Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink.” Ex. 24:9-11. Here it is positively declared that they saw the God of Israel, it tells what was under his feet, and how he looked. They saw his shape and form, but did not see his face, for God has said that no man should see his face and live.

All through the Scriptures God is described as a being in the form of man. Thus he is said to have a head, and hairs of his head, Dan. 7:9; and hands, Ex. 33:22; feet, Ex. 24:10; loins; Eze. 1:27; face, Matt. 18:10; hearth, Gen. 6:6; parts, Ex. 33:23; a form, Phil. 2:6; shape, John 5:37; person, Heb. 1:3; soul, Jer. 5:9; and spirit, Matt. 12:28. Thus it is declared that God has all the members and parts of a perfect man. This is not said once, not twice, but many times, not in parables and symbols, and figures, but directly and plainly.

## James White

**Personality of God** This was published as a pamphlet. More information and a scan of the original can be found [HERE](#).

### Personality of God

MAN was made in the image of God. “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.” Gen. 1:26, 27. See also chap. 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7. Those who deny the personality of God, say that “image” here does not mean physical form, but moral image, and they make this the grand starting point to prove the immortality of all men. The argument stands thus: First, man was made in God’s moral image. Second, God is an immortal being. Third, therefore all men are immortal. But this mode of reasoning would also prove man omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, and thus clothe mortal man with all the attributes of the deity. Let us try it: First, man was made in God’s moral image. Second, God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Third, therefore, man is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. That which proves too much, proves nothing to the point, therefore the position that the image of God means his moral image, cannot be sustained. As proof that God is a person, read his own words to Moses: “And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by. And I will take away mine hand and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen.” Ex. 33:21-23. See also chap. 24:9-11. Here God tells Moses that he shall see his form. To say that God made it appear to Moses that he saw his form, when he has no form, is charging God with adding to falsehood a sort of juggling deception upon his servant Moses.

But the skeptic thinks he sees a contradiction between verse 11, which says that the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, and verse 20, which states that Moses could not see his face. But let Num. 12:5-8 remove the difficulty. “And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently.”

The great and dreadful God came down, wrapped in a cloud of glory. This cloud could be seen, but not the face which possesses more dazzling brightness than a thousand suns. Under these circumstances Moses was permitted to draw near and converse with God face to face, or mouth to mouth, even apparently.

Says the prophet Daniel, “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hairs of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.” Chap. 7:9. “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man



came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom." Verses 13, 14.

Here is a sublime description of the action of two personages; viz, God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. Deny their personality, and there is not a distinct idea in these quotations from Daniel. In connection with this quotation read the apostle's declaration that the Son was in the express image of his Father's person. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." Heb. 1:1-3.

We here add the testimony of Christ. "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. See also Phil. 2:6. To say that the Father has not a personal shape, seems the most pointed contradiction of plain scripture terms. OBJECTION. – "God is a Spirit." John 4:24.

ANSWER. – Angels are also spirits [Ps. 104:4], yet those that visited Abram and Lot, lay down, ate, and took hold of Lot's hand. They were spirit beings. So is God a Spirit being.

OBJ. – God is everywhere. Proof. Ps. 139:1-8. He is as much in every place as in any one place.

ANS. – 1. God is everywhere by virtue of his omniscience, as will be seen by the very words of David referred to above. Verses 1-6. "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high; I cannot attain unto it."

2. God is everywhere by virtue of his Spirit, which is his representative, and is manifested wherever he pleases, as will be seen by the very words the objector claims, referred to above. Verses 7-10. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into 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 hold me."

God is in heaven. This we are taught in the Lord's prayer. "Our Father which art in heaven." Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2. But if God is as much in every place as he is in any one place, then heaven is also as much in every place as it is in any one place, and the idea of going to heaven is all a mistake. We are all in heaven; and the Lord's prayer, according to this foggy theology simply means, Our Father which art everywhere, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is everywhere.

Again, Bible readers have believed that Enoch and Elijah were really taken up to God in heaven. But if God and heaven be as much in every place as in any one place, this is all a mistake. They were not translated. And all that is said about the chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and the attending whirlwind to take Elijah up into heaven, was a useless parade. They only evaporated, and a misty vapor passed through the entire universe. This is all of Enoch and Elijah that the mind can possibly grasp, admitting that God and heaven are no more in any one place than in every place. But it is said of Elijah that he "went up by a whirlwind into heaven." 2 Kings 2:11. And of Enoch it is said that he "walked with God, and was not, for God took him." Gen. 5:24.

Jesus is said to be on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. 1:3. "So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Mark 16:19. But if heaven be everywhere, and God everywhere, then Christ's ascension up to heaven, at the Father's right hand, simply means that he went everywhere! He was only taken up where the cloud hid him from the gaze of his disciples, and then evaporated and went everywhere! So that instead of the lovely Jesus, so beautifully described in both Testaments, we have only a sort of essence dispersed through the entire universe. And in harmony with this rarified theology, Christ's second advent, or his return, would be the condensation of this essence to some locality, say the mount of Olivet! Christ arose from the dead with a physical form. "He is not here," said the

angel, "for he is risen as he said." Matt. 28:6.

"And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held him by the feet, and they worshiped him." Verse 9.

"Behold my hands and my feet," said Jesus to those who stood in doubt of his resurrection, "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 24:39-43.

After Jesus addressed his disciples on the mount of Olivet, he was taken up from them, 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. J. W.

### IMMATERIALITY

THIS is but another name for nonentity. It is the negative of all things and beings – of all existence. There is not one particle of proof to be advanced to establish its existence. It has no way to manifest itself to any intelligence in heaven or on earth. Neither God, angels, nor men could possibly conceive of such a substance, being, or thing. It possesses no property or power by which to make itself manifest to any intelligent being in the universe. Reason and analogy never scan it, or even conceive of it. Revelation never reveals it, nor do any of our senses witness its existence. It cannot be seen, felt, heard, tasted, or smelled, even by the strongest organs, or the most acute sensibilities. It is neither liquid nor solid, soft nor hard – it can neither extend nor contract. In short, it can exert no influence whatever – it can neither act nor be acted upon. And even if it does exist, it can be of no possible use. It possesses no one, desirable property, faculty, or use, yet, strange to say, immateriality is the modern Christian's God, his anticipated heaven, his immortal self – his all!

O sectarianism! O atheism!! O annihilation!!! who can perceive the nice shades of difference between the one and the other? They seem alike, all but in name. The atheist has no God. The sectarian has a God without body or parts. Who can define the difference? For our part we do not perceive a difference of a single hair; they both claim to be the negative of all things which exist – and both are equally powerless and unknown.

The atheist has no after life, or conscious existence beyond the grave. The sectarian has one, but it is immaterial, like his God; and without body or parts. Here again both are negative, and both arrive at the same point. Their faith and hope amount to the same; only it is expressed by different terms.

Again, the atheist has no heaven in eternity. The sectarian has one, but it is immaterial in all its properties, and is therefore the negative of all riches and substances. Here again they are equal, and arrive at the same point.

As we do not envy them the possession of all they claim, we will now leave them in the quiet and undisturbed enjoyment of the same, and proceed to examine the portion still left for the despised materialist to enjoy.

What is God? He is material, organized intelligence, possessing both body and parts. Man is in his image.

What is Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God, and is like his Father, being "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." He is a material intelligence, with body, parts, and passions; possessing immortal flesh and immortal bones.

What are men? They are the offspring of Adam. They are capable of receiving intelligence and exaltation to such a degree as to be raised from the dead with a body like that of Jesus Christ, and to possess immortal flesh and bones. Thus perfected, they will possess the material universe, that is, the earth, as their "everlasting inheritance." With these hopes and prospects before us, we say to the Christian world who hold to

immateriality, that they are welcome to their God – their life – their heaven, and their all. They claim nothing but that which we throw away; and we claim nothing but that which they throw away. Therefore, there is no ground for quarrel or contention between us.

We choose all substance – what remains  
The mystical sectarian gains;  
All that each claims, each shall possess,  
Nor grudge each other's happiness.

An immaterial God they choose,  
For such a God we have no use;  
An immaterial heaven and hell,  
In such a heaven we cannot dwell.

We claim the earth, the air, and sky,  
And all the starry worlds on high;  
Gold, silver, ore, and precious stones,  
And bodies made of flesh and bones.

Such is our hope, our heaven, our all,  
When once redeemed from Adam's fall;  
All things are ours, and we shall be,  
The Lord's to all eternity.

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To learn more about this subject, see the articles at our tags [materialism](#) and [personality of god](#).

- 1  
This work was written by D. M. Canright, but later revised by J. H. Waggoner and is usually included in collections of his works.
- 2  
This was published as a pamphlet. More information and a scan of the original can be found [HERE](#).