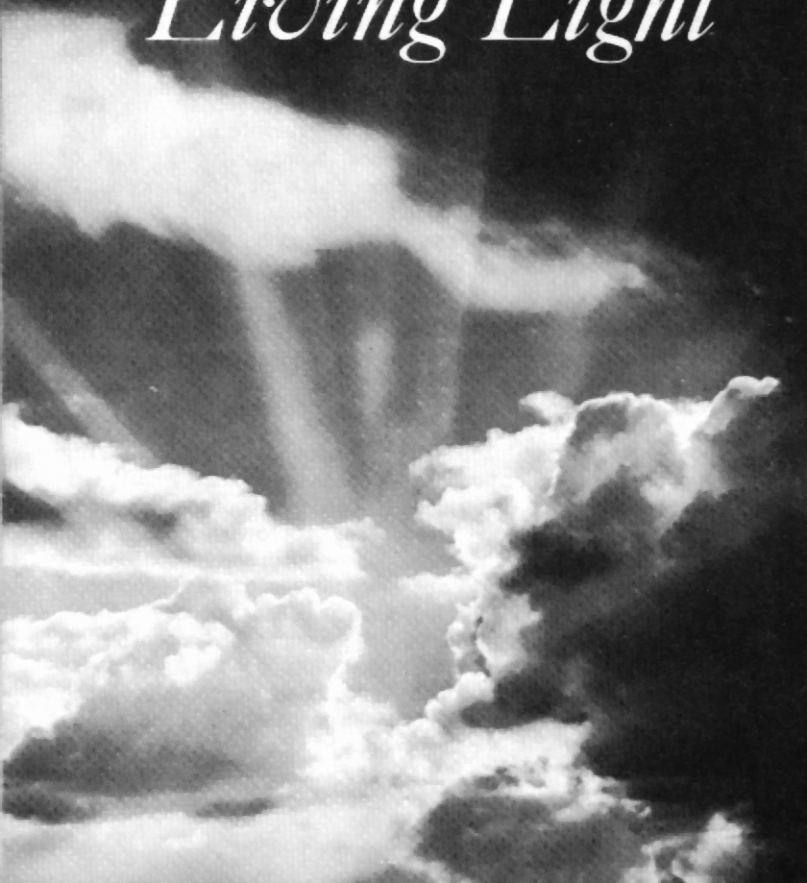


FAITH

*Rays of
Living Light*



FAITH

BY PRESIDENT CHARLES W. PENROSE

IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

The first principle of revealed religion is faith in God. True religion must begin with faith in the true God. Faith in false gods leads to false religions. Without faith there can be no religion in the soul of man. "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."¹ In a general sense, faith is the assurance in the soul of the existence of unseen things, that is, unseen by the natural eye. The principle of faith, that is, the power to believe, is planted in many by the gift of God. It is developed by evidence. Faith in God is brought into action by the word of God. Whether spoken by Deity himself, by angels sent from his presence, or by men divinely authorized and appointed to speak in his name under the influence of his Holy Spirit, the word of God is the same. When that word is written it is Scripture.

THE HEAVENS PROCLAIM THE GLORY OF GOD

Evidences of the existence of a Supreme Being are seen in vast profusion. They appeal to every rational mind. The order, beauty, and sublimity of the heavenly bodies, moving through space in silent majesty, each in its own orbit, balancing and counterbalancing each other without an error in time or revolution, each preserving its own identity and performing its own mission, proceeding thus through everlasting ages, are perennial witnesses of the existence, power and glory of God. The earth itself, with its relations to other planets, its products, its seasons, its adaption to the needs of the creatures that inhabit its surface or its atmosphere, joins in the grand chorus of the music of the spheres, "Forever singing as they shine; the hand that made

¹Hebrews 11:6.

us is Divine." Nature, however, while proclaiming the existence of Deity, does not disclose his personality or reveal his will. A knowledge of God can only come from God. Faith leads to that knowledge.

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT CONCERNING OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

The greatest religious teacher among men was Jesus, the Nazarene. In his personality, God was manifest in the flesh. He revealed Deity to humanity. He showed that God was in reality the Father of the spirits of men. He proclaimed that he was in the beginning with God; that he came forth from God, and would return to God, and that all mankind were his brethren, made in the image of God and part of his eternal family. This presents God as actually and literally "Our' Father which art in heaven." It takes away the mystery with which false faiths have enveloped the Supreme Being, beclouding the minds of men, and making God utterly incomprehensible. Jesus taught that his Father and our Father is a personal being, man being in his likeness, Jesus himself being in his express image. He taught also that he was sent into the world to save mankind, and bring them back to the Father's presence; that no man could come unto God but by him. The true Christian religion, therefore, combines faith in Jesus Christ the Son, with faith in God the Eternal Father.

THREE PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, form the Eternal Godhead. They are not one person, as erroneously declared by modern Christian churches, but are separate and distinct substances, though one in mind and power and dominion. Jesus of Nazareth, as the Son of God, was a personality as distinct from the personality of the Eternal Father as is that of any earthly son from his father. The Holy Spirit is not either of them, but has an identity of

his own. It is true that Jesus said, "I and my Father are one."² But he also said, "My Father is greater than I."³

SCRIPTURES THAT PROVE THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

That the unity of the Godhead is not oneness in person is made very clear in the account of the baptism of Jesus Christ; the Son on that occasion coming up out of the waters of Jordan, the Holy Spirit descending upon him in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father from heaven proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."⁴ Jesus said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."⁵ He also prayed the Father and in the prayer recorded by John explained in unmistakable language what he meant when he declared "I and my Father are one." After praying for his Apostles, he said: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."⁶ Concerning the Holy Spirit he said: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."⁷ Many more of the sayings of the Savior might be adduced, but these are sufficient to show the distinct personality of each of the three that form the Godhead while they are in perfect unity of mind and purpose and action. If they are one substance, as taught in modern Christendom, then all who believe on them, in all ages, are to be made also one substance, thus losing their identity and becoming one vast, incomprehensible and inconceivable finality.

²John 10:30.

³John 14:28.

⁴Matthew 3:16-17.

⁵John 16:23.

⁶John 17:20-21.

⁷John 16:7.

FAITH A PRINCIPLE OF POWER

Faith in God, the Father, and in Jesus Christ, the Son, and in the Holy Ghost is but the beginning of true religion. It is exhibited in works of obedience which will be explained in other tracts of this series. Faith is also a principle of power. All human exertion springs from its exercise. This is exemplified in all the acts of life. In a higher sense it is a spiritual force. It was by faith, in this degree, that the wonderful works of the Prophets and Apostles and other holy men of old, were accomplished, as recorded in the Old and New Testaments, and in the sacred books of the Seers and Sages who were not of the Hebrew race. For faith is the same principle in all ages and among all nations. It was by this faith that the sick were healed, the blind received their sight, the lame were made to walk, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the sting of the serpent and the virulence of poison were made harmless, divine dreams and heavenly visions were beheld, and the glories of eternity were unfolded to the Saints and servants of God in the early Christian Church. It was by faith that lepers were cleansed, water was turned into wine, multitudes were fed with a few loaves and fishes, the winds and the waves were stilled, and the dead were raised to life, when the Divine Master walked on the earth in the flesh. These marvels are called "miracles." They are deemed supernatural, but they were the natural results of the exercise of the spiritual force called faith. It was by the same power that the heavens were closed that there was no rain for three years and six months; that the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil failed not, and that the ravens brought food in the days of Elijah the Prophet. By the same faith the children of Israel were led out of Egypt by Moses, the Red Sea was divided, manna was brought from heaven and water from the rock, and people bitten by serpents were healed in the wilderness. It was also by that same faith that the early patriarchs prevailed, and some of them walked and talked with God. And

indeed, it was by faith that the worlds were brought into material existence, order coming out of chaos, light springing forth from darkness, and life, in its various forms, being developed through the word of the Eternal God, in whom this principle of faith is manifest in its full and complete perfection.

LAW OF FAITH UNCHANGEABLE

This is the faith spoken of in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. Also in the Epistle of Jude, in which he urged upon the Church when writing upon the "common salvation," that they should "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints."⁸ In modern Christendom it is taught that this faith, with all the gifts, signs and glorious manifestations which it produces, are "done away and no longer needed." But this is another of the many grievous errors of spiritual Babylon. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. A principle of truth never changes. Cause and effect do not vary by the lapse of time. The faith exercised in the first century of the Christian era of human existence on earth, must inevitably bring forth similar results in the latter days. The absence of the effect proves the absence of the cause.

FAITH LEADS TO KNOWLEDGE

The true religion contains the true faith. It is the one thing needful. It is the one way of salvation. To know the only living and true God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, is to gain eternal life.⁹ Living faith is the starting point in the path to that knowledge. While it has existed in a small degree, and has been exercised occasionally and in a limited manner during the centuries that have passed since the Apostolic age, the faith once delivered to the Saints has faded almost out of active life, even among professing

⁸Jude 2.

⁹John 17:3.

Christians, whose minds have been blinded by the traditions of men and the dogmas and theories of human invention. While good men and women have served God, and sought after him to the best of their ability, through the long night of darkness which has intervened from the days of divine revelation down to the present century, they have not been able to find that "closer walk with God" and exercise that mighty faith enjoyed in ancient times, and which is essential to the true religion. Thank God that faith has been restored to earth, and through it divine communication is once more opened up, man may commune again with his Maker, and all the blessings obtained at any time thereby may now be received by the obedient sons and daughters of God. Concerning this all-important matter other tracts of this series will be presented to the public, that truth may prevail and that Divine light may shine upon the world.

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