

# Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

July 2009

“Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:2). I pray that the Lord will bless you abundantly with health physically, mentally and spiritually. As the Lord’s return approaches I pray that you will take the time to consecrate and dedicate your lives to God without reserve. We do not have much time left in this old world, and there are many who have not been warned about the dangers of serving themselves instead of God. Please do all in your power to preach the gospel to all the world or help someone who is doing this work.

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## *Did Christ Exist Before Bethlehem?*

by Lynnford Beachy

In our lead article last month entitled, “Faith in the Son of God,” we learned how important it is to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. We must make sure that our beliefs about Christ are in harmony with the Bible. If not, it can weaken our faith in God, and prevent us from seeing a true picture of the love of God.

There are some who believe that Christ began His existence in Bethlehem, 4,000 years after the creation of this world. This theory proposes that Jesus was just an ordinary man like each of us, and that God anointed Jesus and began to call Him His Son, exalting Him to a high position.

The purpose of this study is to examine the Bible to see if this view is Scriptural or not and to make the truth shine more clearly. I pray that you will take the time to investigate every verse,

and only accept what is clearly proven from the Bible. If our understanding on this issue does not agree with all the verses in the Bible, then it is likely that our understanding is faulty and it will affect our ability to love and trust God.

### *Creation*

The first verse in the Bible that indicates that there was more than one individual involved in the creation of the world is Genesis 1:26. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our

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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” (Genesis 1:26, 27). The word “God” in this verse was translated from the Hebrew word *elohim*, which is the plural of *el*, but never indicates plurality when referring to the true God. Every time *elohim* is used referring to the true God, the definition is as follows: “(plural intensive - singular meaning), the (true) God” (*Brown-Driver’s Brigg’s Hebrew Lexicon*).

The use of the word *elohim* does not prove that more than one Person was involved in Genesis 1:26, but the use of plural pronouns does, i.e. “us,” “our.” The true God was speaking in Genesis 1:26 to another individual. Who was that individual? Surely it could not be a man, for man had not yet been created. According to the verse it had to be someone who was in the image of God already. There is only one individual who the Bible informs us was in the image of God besides man. We read that Christ “is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Colossians 1:15). The Bible speaks of Christ “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Philippians 2:6). Not only must the Person spoken to here have the image of God, but He must be involved in the creation process, for God said, “Let us make...”

The first chapter of the book of Hebrews shows the contrast between angels and the Son of God. After showing what God said concerning angels, Paul

wrote, “But unto the Son he [God the Father] saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Hebrews 1:8-12).

Here God said to His Son, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.” God the Father Himself said that His Son laid the foundation of the earth. Paul wrote the following: “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by [through] Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9).

According to the Bible, God the Father created all things through Jesus Christ. What saith the Scriptures? “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son’s name, if thou canst tell?” (Proverbs 30:4). The book of Proverbs was written approximately 950 years before Christ’s birth in Bethlehem. According to the Scriptures, God had a Son long before He sent Him into the world to be our Redeemer.

The Bible says Christ “is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:15-18). According to the Scriptures, all things that were ever created were created by Christ. “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:10, 11). It would be impossible for an individual who was not yet in existence to be involved in creating anything, let alone the entire universe. It is very plain that Christ, the anointed one, was in existence before He came into this world.

What about Isaiah 44:24? “Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself” (Isaiah 44:24). Obviously the Lord was not contradicting His own inspiration in the following verse. “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9). According to the Scriptures God created all things by His Son. Who did the creating? God! Who else? Nobody else! God the Father

created all things. How did He create all things? By His Son Jesus Christ! The Scripture is abundantly clear on this point. Surely this verse in Isaiah is not contradicting the rest of the Scriptures.

John tells us, “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14). Jesus Christ is our Saviour, but so is His Father. “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour” (1 Timothy 2:3). Yet, God said, “I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour” (Isaiah 43:11). There is a sense in which the Father is our Saviour beside which there is none other. Christ would not have come to be our Saviour unless His Father had sent Him. So, the Father is our ultimate Saviour, and there is none other. In a similar way, the Father is the ultimate Creator, and there is none other.

“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, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:1-3). God the Father made the worlds through His Son Jesus Christ. It would not have been possible for God to have made the worlds through an individual that did not exist. Hence, the Son of God had to have been alive during the time that the creation of the world occurred.

“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of [from] whom are all things,

and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by [through] whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Corinthians 8:6). According to the Bible, all things came from God the Father through Jesus Christ.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with [the] God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with [the] God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1-3 - the word “the” has been inserted above to indicate the literal Greek rendering). John informs us that the Word was in the beginning with the God. He clarifies this in the following verses: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

John also wrote, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3).

According to John, the Word was with the Father, and all things were made by Him. John goes on to define who He was referring to when He said that our fellowship is with the Father and His Son. The Son of God is being referred to

as the Word, and according to Scripture, all things were made by Christ.

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning [“that by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause” *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*] of the creation of God” (Revelation 3:14). Jesus Christ is the active cause of the creation of God.

### *The Wisdom of God*

In the first verse of Proverbs 8 it says that wisdom is speaking. Who is wisdom? In verse 8 it tells us that He has a mouth, and speaks, and in verse 17 He loves people. “But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24). “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:” (1 Corinthians 1:30). Christ is Wisdom, and is speaking in Proverbs chapter 8.

There are some who claim that since the feminine pronoun is used that it must be a woman. Just because the noun “wisdom” is feminine in Hebrew does not mean that if this word is used for Christ then He must be feminine. For example, in the Spanish language the noun “Word” is feminine (Palabra). Would anyone claim that because this word is used for Christ that He must also be feminine? Read any commentary on Proverbs chapter eight; they are virtually all in agreement that this is referring to Christ.

“The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from

the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth" (Proverbs 8:22-25).

Here are some other translations of these texts:

Even before he made the depths; before the fountains of water came forth: before the mountains were settled, and before all hills, he begets me (An English translation of the Greek Septuagint).

When there was no deep I was given birth, when there were no fountains flowing with water. Before the mountains were put in their places, before the hills was my birth (*Bible in Basic English*).

When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth (*New International Version*).

The Hebrew verb *chuwł* that was translated "brought forth," in this verse is used in the Pual form: the definition for the Pual form is the only definition that can apply here. This definition is as follows: "to be born, to be brought forth" (*Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon*). This verb in this form is only used three places in the Bible, and here are the other two places where it is used in the Pual form.

"Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou **made** [*Chuwł* in the Pual form] before the hills?" (Job 15:7). "Behold, I was **shapen** [*Chuwł* in the Pual form] in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). As you can plainly see the term

"brought forth" in Proverbs 8:24, 25 can mean nothing other than being begotten or born.

If Proverbs 8:24, 25 were talking merely about an intellectual wisdom, then you must say that at some point God acquired wisdom, and that before that He did not have wisdom. These verses cannot be talking about that, but rather the origin of the Son of God.

Let us continue with the rest of the verses in Proverbs chapter eight and learn more about the characteristics of Wisdom.

"While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there [Remember John 1:1, the Word was with God in the beginning when He made the heavens]: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: When He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own

soul: all they that hate me love death” (Proverbs 8:26-36).

It is plain that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who was brought forth from the Father before anything was created. God then created all things by Jesus Christ.

### *The Testimony of Jesus*

“Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I **proceeded forth** [“to come forth from physically, arise from, to be born of” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*)] and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me” (John 8:42). It is impossible to send something which you do not have to send. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:9, 10). It is obvious that God must have had an only begotten Son prior to sending Him into the world.

Jesus said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:56-58). Jesus claimed that He was alive before Abraham was.

Jesus said, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). Jesus Christ testified that He had glory with His Father before the world was. It is not possible to have something, and not

be in existence while you have it. Clearly Christ was in existence before the world was.

Peter writes, “Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Peter 1:11). According to the Bible the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit that inspired the writers of the Old Testament. It is impossible for someone’s Spirit to be in existence and active, and yet that individual not be in existence. Obviously Christ was alive during the Old Testament times, inspiring the writers of the Old Testament.

Jesus said, “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3:13). According to Jesus, He came down from heaven. Obviously He had to be in existence prior to His incarnation for Him to have come down from heaven.

Jesus asks, “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” (John 6:62). According to Jesus, He was up in heaven before He came to earth.

There is a very important record of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ went through by coming down to this earth and dying for us. Please consider the following: “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: But made himself of no reputation [Literally: “emptied Himself”], and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,



and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5-8). According to the Bible, Jesus Christ was in the form of God prior to coming in the form of a man. It was a great sacrifice for Jesus Christ to lay aside the glory, honor, and comfort of heaven to become a baby in a manger of Bethlehem.

“And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world” (John 8:23). Jesus said that He is from above, not from this world. “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38). There is no way that Christ’s words would be true if He did not come down from heaven. If He was never up in heaven in the first place, then He could not have come down from there.

The central theme of the Bible is the fact that God the Father loved us so much that He gave up His only begotten Son. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16-17). John further clarified this by saying that God sent His only begotten Son into the world. There is no way that God could send someone into this world who was not alive to be sent. God the Father had an only begotten Son before He sent Him into this world.

Read these verses carefully: “For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I **came out** [ἐξέρχομαι “to come forth from physically, arise from, to be

born of” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*)] from God. I came forth from the Father, and am **come** [ἐρχομαι “to come from one place to another” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*)] into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father” (John 16:27, 28). Jesus was born of the Father before the world was, then He came into the world. “For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me” (John 17:8). Jesus would have been redundant if He was talking about the same event. Jesus was referring to His coming forth from the Father, and then God sending Him into the world.

“Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (John 18:37). Again Jesus is talking about two separate events.

“Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me” (John 7:28-29). Please notice the word “and” in the preceding verse. Jesus was talking about two separate events, or the word “and” would be meaningless.

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14). God the Father had to have had a Son prior to sending Him to be our Saviour.

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32). “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9). The measure of God’s love is understood in the value of the gift that He gave up for us. If we have a misunderstanding of the value that God the Father placed upon His Son, then our love for God will be hindered. In the same degree that we lessen the sacrifice on God’s part for us, we lessen our own love for God.

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5). There is something about us understanding the true relationship of the Father to His Son that enables us to overcome the world.

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son” (1 John 5:10). “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). God the Father Himself says that Jesus Christ is His Son. Not a Son by adoption as we are, not a Son by creation as are the angels, but a Son by birth. “Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love” (2 John 1:3).

## *The Old Testament*

Let us examine a few instances in the Old Testament. “The LORD

[YHWH] said unto my Lord [adonai], Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Psalm 110:1). Jesus said, “What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?” (Matthew 22:42-45). Nearly a thousand years before Christ came into this world, David called Him his Lord. Obviously Christ was alive before He came into this world.

Remember the incident with Moses at the burning bush? “And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed” (Exodus 3:2). Who was it that appeared to Moses? “The angel of the LORD.” Who is that? “And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exodus 3:5). This is similar to another event.

“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD’s host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the



place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so" (Joshua 5:13-15).

Here, the Captain of the LORD's host appeared to Joshua and told him to loose the shoes from off his feet, because the ground where he was standing was holy. We know this was not an angel, because an angel would not accept worship. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). Paul speaks negatively of worshipping angels. He said, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels,..." (Colossians 2:18). We know that the Captain here is not God the Father, for "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). The only one left that this could possibly be is Christ.

Christ appeared to Joshua and told him to take the shoes off of his feet, for the ground whereon he stood was holy. "Behold, I send an Angel ["messenger, representative" (*Brown Driver Briggs's Hebrew Lexicon*)] before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him" (Exodus 23:20, 21). "And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:" (Exodus 14:9). Christ was the one who went before the children of

Israel. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord [adonai], whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger ["messenger, representative"] of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:1). According to this verse, the Lord was going to come to His holy temple. He was also going to send someone to prepare the way before Him. Who is the Lord in this verse? Certainly He is not the Father, for "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18).

"And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my sav-iour; thou savest me from violence" (2 Samuel 22:2, 3). Here we have the LORD as our Rock. In the very next verse it says, "The God of my rock." Some translations render this, "God is my rock." However, if we take it as it reads in the KJV and several other translations, there is a "God of my rock." Who is this referring to? Verse 2 is referring to Christ and calls Him LORD [Yahwah], and verse 3 says that the LORD has a God. This must be

referring to the Father who is “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:17).

“Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God” (Hebrews 10:5-7). According to this verse, the Lord spoke prior to His coming into the earth. Then He said that He would come into the world, in a body which was prepared for Him. Notice it is the Lord that came into the world. He was conscious and speaking prior to this. This prophecy is recorded in Psalm 40:7, 8, and according to the Bible it was the Spirit of Christ that gave this prophecy. “Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Peter 1:11). “When he [the Father] bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he [the Father] saith, And let all the angels of God worship him” (Hebrews 1:6).

There is a record in Daniel chapter three concerning three men who were cast into a fiery furnace. Yet Nebuchadnezzar saw four men in the fire. “He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (Daniel 3:25). It would be quite difficult for the Son of God to have been in the fiery furnace over 600 years before Bethlehem unless He was alive before He came into this earth. This is verified in

the book of Proverbs. “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son’s name, if thou canst tell?” (Proverbs 30:4).

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth 4163 [“origin”] (*Gesenius’ Hebrew Lexicon*) have been from of old, from everlasting [Margin: “the days of eternity”]” (Micah 5:2). “Whose origin is from of old, from ancient days” (Revised Standard Version).

This verse is talking about the Son of God, whose origin (beginning) was long before the beginning of this world; and time as we know it. We know that this verse is talking about the Son of God, because it is quoted in reference to Him. “And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel” (Matthew 2:4-6).

The testimony of Scripture is in abundance in favor of the position that Jesus Christ was alive prior to coming into this world. Please notice that this study was not intended to prove that Jesus Christ is the Most High God, for the Scriptures say that He is “the Son of the

Most High God” (Mark 5:7). Personally, from reading the Scriptures, I find it impossible to believe that Christ began His existence in Bethlehem.

### Answering Objections

There are two verses that the propagators of the idea that Christ began his existence in Bethlehem use to support this idea. Let us examine them in detail. Keep in mind all the verses that have just been cited. Each and every verse has to be taken into account, or we will surely have an unbalanced view of these things.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4). Please notice that the sending forth of God’s Son occurred before He was “made of a woman, made under the law.” God had a Son prior to sending Him into this world. Clearly this verse does not prove that Christ did not exist before He came to this earth.

The other verse that is supposed to have great weight in this matter is the following. “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was **manifest** [Φανερωω “to make known what has been hidden or unknown” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*)] in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:20). Notice that the word manifest means to reveal or make known something that has been hidden. Clearly this word does not indicate the beginning of an existence. The same word is used in the following verse. “And when the chief Shepherd shall **appear** [Φανερωω], ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter

5:4). Certainly no one would claim that Christ begins His existence at His second coming. Therefore, the fact that Christ was manifest in these last days does in no way signify that He began His existence at this time.

What about the term that says that Christ “was foreordained before the foundation of the world?” The word foreordained means “to have knowledge before hand” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). The same Greek word is used in the following verse. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). God foreknew His people before they were born. Do you suppose that God foreknew Abel before Abel was born? Certainly He did. I was born approximately 6,000 years after Abel was born, and God foreknew both Abel and me. Certainly, God the Father foreknew His Son before He was born, yet that does not prove when He was born. The Scriptures state that His beginning was long before the foundation of this world. God knew that He was going to have a Son before He brought forth His Son. According to the Bible, He was brought forth before the hills. “When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth” (Proverbs 8:24, 25).

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of

God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:24-26). It was taken for granted by the writer of Hebrews that the reader knew that Christ was alive since the foundation of the world.

The Scriptures are full of references to the existence of Christ before He was sent into this world.

### *Early Church Fathers on the Pre-existence of Christ*

#### **The Letter of Barnabas:**

And further, my brethren: if the Lord [Jesus Christ] endured to suffer for our soul, He being Lord of all the world, to whom God said at the foundation of the world, "Let us make man after our image, and after our likeness," understand how it was that He endured to suffer at the hand of men (*Letter of Barnabas*, chapter 5, written around AD 74-100).

#### **Hermas:**

The Son of God is older than all His creatures, so that He was a fellow-councilor with the Father in His work of creation:... (*The Shepherd*, chapter 12, written around AD 80-150).

#### **Justin Martyr (lived from AD 110-165):**

God speaks in the creation of man with the very same design, in the following words: "Let us make man after our image and likeness" ...I shall quote again the words narrated by Moses himself, from which we can indisputably learn that [God]

conversed with someone numerically distinct from himself and also a rational being.... But this Offspring who was truly brought forth from the Father, was with the Father before all the creatures, and the Father communed with him (*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, chapter 62, written around AD 150).

But so much is written for the sake of proving that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God and His Apostle, being of old the Word, and appearing sometimes in the form of fire, and sometimes in the likeness of angels; but now, by the will of God, having become man for the human race, He endured all the sufferings which the devils instigated the senseless Jews to inflict upon Him; who, though they have it expressly affirmed in the writings of Moses, "And the angel of God spake to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, and said, I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," yet maintain that He who said this was the Father and Creator of the universe. Whence also the Spirit of prophecy rebukes them, and says, "Israel doth not know Me, my people have not understood Me." And again, Jesus, as we have already shown, while He was with them, said, "No one knoweth the Father, but the Son; nor the Son but the Father, and those to whom the Son will reveal Him." The Jews, accordingly, being throughout of opinion that it was the Father of the universe who spake to Moses, though He who spake to him was indeed the Son of God, who is called both Angel and Apostle, are justly charged, both by the Spirit of prophecy and by Christ Himself, with knowing neither the Father nor the

Son (*The First Apology of Justin Martyr*, chapter 63).

"I shall give you another testimony, my friends," said I, "from the Scriptures, that God begat before all creatures a Beginning, [who was] a certain rational power [proceeding] from Himself, who is called by the Holy Spirit, now the Glory of the Lord, now the Son, again Wisdom, again an Angel, then God, and then Lord and Logos; and on another occasion He calls Himself Captain, when He appeared in human form to Joshua the son of Nave (Nun). For He can be called by all those names, since He ministers to the Father's will, and since He was begotten of the Father by an act of will,..." (*Dialog of Justin with Trypho, a Jew*, chapter 60).

Justin Martyr, quoting from Proverbs 8, refers to Christ in the following statement: "The Lord... begets me before all the hills." He adds: "You perceive, my hearers, if you bestow attention, that the Scripture has declared that this Offspring was begotten by the Father before all things created; and that that which is begotten is numerically distinct from that which begets, any one will admit" (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chapter 129).

#### **Tertullian (lived from AD 145-220):**

We do indeed believe that there is only one God, but we believe that under this dispensation, or, as we say, oikonomia, there is also a Son of this one only God, his Word, who proceeded from him and through whom all things were made and through whom nothing was made (*Against Praxeas*, chapter 2, written around AD 216).

#### **Irenaeus (lived from AD 120-202):**

For that all things, whether Angels, or Archangels, or Thrones, or Dominions, were both established and created by Him who is God over all, through His Word, John has thus pointed out. For when he had spoken of the Word of God as having been in the Father, he added, "All things are made by Him, and without Him was not anything made." David also [declared]:... "For He commanded, and they were created; He spake, and they were made." Whom, therefore, did He command? The Word, no doubt, "by whom," he says, "the heavens were established, and all their power by the breath of His mouth." But that He did Himself make all things freely, and as He pleased, again David says, "But our God is in the heavens above, and in the earth; He hath made all things whatsoever He pleased." But the things established are distinct from Him who has established them, and what have been made from Him who has made them. For He is Himself UNCREATED, both without beginning and end, and lacking nothing. He is Himself sufficient for Himself; and still further, He grants to all others this very thing, existence; but the things which have been made by Him have received a beginning.... so that He indeed who made all things can alone, together with His Word, properly be termed God and Lord... (*Irenaeus Against Heresies*, book 3, chapter 8, written around AD 180).

#### **Hippolytus (lived from AD 170-236):**

Therefore this solitary and supreme Deity, by an exercise of reflection, brought forth the LOGOS FIRST... Him alone He produced



from existing things; for the Father Himself constituted existence, and THE BEING BORN FROM HIM was the cause of all things that are produced. The Logos was in the Father Himself, bearing the will of His progenitor, and not being unacquainted with the mind of the Father. For simultaneously with His procession from His Progenitor, inasmuch as He is this PROGENITOR'S FIRST -BORN, he has, as a voice in Himself, the ideas conceived in the Father. And so it was, that when the Father ordered the world to come into existence, the Logos one by one completed each object of creation, thus pleasing God.... "God, who is the source of all authority, wished that the Logos might render assistance in accomplishing a production of this kind. ...For as many things as He willed, God made from time to time. These things He created through the Logos (*The Refutation of All Heresies*, book 10, chapter 29, written around AD 200).

**Novatian (lived from AD 210-280):**

And yet Christ, although He is born of Abraham, says that He is before Abraham. Either, therefore, He says what is not true, and deceives, if He was not before Abraham, seeing that He was of Abraham; or He does not deceive, if He is also God, and was before Abraham (*A Treatise of Novatian Concerning the Trinity* - This is a misnomer since the trinity doctrine did not even exist at this time, and the document is clearly non-trinitarian, chapter 15, written around AD 235).

**Conclusion**

Please ask yourself a few questions. Does the Bible anywhere prove that

Christ was not alive prior to coming to this world? If so, where? What negative implications are there if indeed Christ did exist prior to coming into this world? If so, what are they? If a person did not already have the idea that Christ began His existence in Bethlehem, could they read the Bible and come to that conclusion? If so, why?

I have not found a single Bible verse that teaches that Christ began His existence in Bethlehem; not ONE! Yet I have found 43 places in the Bible that are mentioned in this study which are irrefutable proof that Christ existed before Bethlehem. That is zero verses in favor of the idea that Christ began His existence in Bethlehem, and 43 verses in favor of the idea that Christ began His existence long before the creation of this world. Surely you can see why I cannot help but believe that Christ existed prior to being sent into this world. Even if there was one verse that seemed to prove conclusively that Christ began His existence at Bethlehem, then I would have to seriously evaluate the 43 places in the Bible which are clearly proving that Christ existed before Bethlehem. I have shared 43 separate instances in the Bible that must be explained if one is to hold to the view that Christ began His existence in Bethlehem.

I can see that there are severe negative implications if we accept the idea that Christ had no existence prior to Bethlehem. God manifested His love toward us by giving up His only begotten Son. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him"



(1 John 4:9). The measure of God's love is understood by the value which He placed upon His only begotten Son. The more exalted we understand this relationship, the more we will love God in return. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). If the Bible says that God loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son into this cursed world to die for us, then I believe it. A great part of the sacrifice on the part of the Father or the Son was the fact that Christ left heaven to become a feeble baby in a manger. In doing this, God the Father risked the chance that His only begotten Son would fail when He was tempted. Jesus Christ risked the chance of failing, and the result would have to have been eternal death. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Praise God that He did not fail!

If we degrade the Father-Son Relationship in any way, we are depriving ourselves of a full comprehension of God's love for us. In so doing, we deprive ourselves of the chance to love God perfectly like He has commanded. In proportion to the way that we perceive God's love for us, we will love Him in return. If we perceive that God loved us a little bit, then our love for God will be a little bit. But if we perceive that God loved us to a great degree, then our love for God will be much greater.

I can clearly see how the idea that Christ began His existence in Bethlehem degrades the love of God, the Father. I do not see how believing that Christ was brought forth of His Father


long before Bethlehem degrades in any way the love of God.

Over and over again, Christ lifted up the Father's character before the people. He always focused the attention of the hearers on the love that His Father had for them. The greater our understanding of God the Father's love for us, the greater will be our appreciation for Him, and hence the more we will love to serve Him.

The key lies with our understanding of the relationship between the Father and His only begotten Son. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:5). There is something about us understanding the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God that enables us to overcome the world. Certainly, Satan would try to distort this understanding.

As we can see, the key to our overcoming the world is a correct understanding of the relationship of the Father to His only begotten Son. Any deviation on this point from the revealed word of God is a deviation from our ability to overcome the world. This is a serious matter my friends. Please take the time to examine this thoroughly. What does it hurt in anyone's relationship with God to believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of His Father before the world was? I see no harm in it, and moreover, it is the testimony of the Scriptures, and it elevates our understanding of God's love.

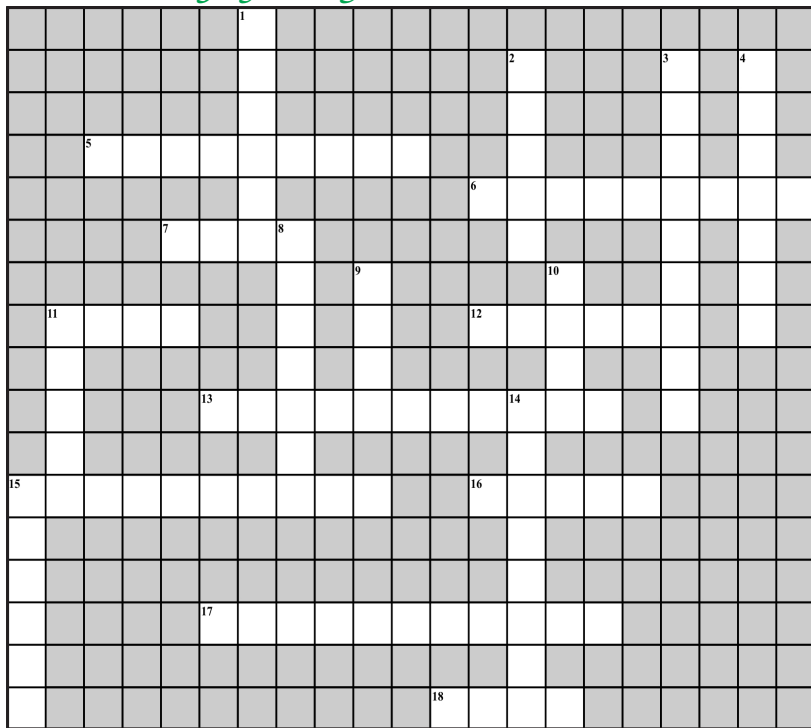
All untruthfulness regarding the Father and His Son, by which their characters are presented in a false light, are to be regarded as grievous sins.

May the Lord abundantly bless you as you continue to study this subject 

# Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies based on a series of Bible Lessons written by Lynnford Beachy, entitled, "God's Love on Trial," taken from the book by the same title. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line. (The KJV is required.)

## The Holy Spirit of God - Part 1 (Lesson 9)



Answers will be printed on the back page of next month's issue

**Note:** The Bible speaks of many spirits. There are spirits of men, spirits of beasts, spirits of devils, etc. (Hebrews 12:23; Ecclesiastes 3:21; Revelation 16:14). In fact, every living being has a spirit. The type of spirit is often differentiated by the adjective used to describe it. We read in the Bible about "foul spirit," "evil spirit," "unclean spirit," "dumb spirit," "excellent spirit," "humble spirit," "wounded spirit," "broken spirit," "haughty spirit," "faithful spirit," "good

spirit." All these spirits are distinguishable by the adjectives used to describe them.

- There is a \_\_\_\_ in man. Job 32:8—**12 Across**
- David's spirit was \_\_\_\_ within him. Psalms 142:3—**13 Across**
- Daniel was \_\_\_\_ in his spirit. Daniel 7:15—**4 Down**
- Isaiah said that he would \_\_\_\_ God with the spirit within him. Isaiah 26:9—**7 Across**

- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ in His spirit what others were reasoning in their hearts. Mark 2:8—**5 Across**

**Note:** Based upon the testimony of Scripture we can conclude that the spirit of a man is the part of him that seeks God, can perceive things, can be grieved, overwhelmed, or troubled (Genesis 41:8; Daniel 2:3). It is the thinking, conscious, reasoning part of man. Ezekiel wrote, “And the **Spirit** [Hebrew: *ruwach*] of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your **mind** [Hebrew: *ruwach*], every one of them” (Ezekiel 11:5). We can see that the words “spirit” and “mind” can be used interchangeably.

- The things of God \_\_\_\_\_ no man but the Spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 2:11—**8 Down**

**Note:** God has a Spirit, and that Spirit is holy, for God is holy. That is why God’s Spirit is often called, the Holy Spirit. The word “Holy” is an adjective in every case, whether in English or in Greek. “Holy Spirit” is not a name, but a description of the Spirit of God.

- We should \_\_\_\_\_ not the Holy Spirit of God. Ephesians 4:30—**1 Down**
- The \_\_\_\_\_ is the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit). John 14:26—**3 Down**
- Jesus said His Father would \_\_\_\_\_ us another Comforter. John 14:16—**10 Down**
- The \_\_\_\_\_ cannot receive this gift. John 14:17—**2 down**
- Jesus said His disciples \_\_\_\_\_ the Comforter. John 14:17—**9 Down**

**Note:** Jesus said the Comforter was dwelling *with* His disciples and would soon be *in* them.

- The Holy Spirit was not given until Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_. John 7:38, 39—**6 Across**

- If Jesus would not go \_\_\_\_\_, the Comforter would not come. John 16:7—**11 Across**

**Note:** How could the disciples know the Comforter that had not yet been prayed for, nor given, and could not be given as long as Christ was physically present?

- Jesus said, “I will not leave you \_\_\_\_\_: I will come to you.” John 14:18—**17 Across**

- Jesus said, “At that day ye shall know that... I am \_\_\_\_\_.” John 14:20 (2 words)—**16 Across**


**Note:** Jesus had just told His disciples that the Comforter was dwelling with them, and would soon be in them. Then He said that when this takes place they would know that Jesus was in them. Jesus said the Comforter is the Spirit of truth (v. 17), and Jesus said that He is the truth (v. 6). Jesus promised to return to His disciples after His resurrection, in another way, this time by His Spirit living within them.

- Judas asked how Jesus would \_\_\_\_\_ Himself to His disciples. John 14:22—**14 Down**

- Jesus answered saying that He and His Father would make their \_\_\_\_\_ with the disciples. John 14:23—**11 Down**

**Note:** The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the indwelling presence of both the Father and His Son.

- Our \_\_\_\_\_ is with the Father and with His Son. 1 John 1:3—**15 Across**
- If you abide in the doctrine of Christ, you have \_\_\_\_\_ the Father and the Son. 2 John 1:9—**18 Across**
- If you acknowledge the Son, you have the \_\_\_\_\_ also. 1 John 2:22, 23—**15 Down**

**Note:** The Comforter the Father promised to send is the indwelling presence of both the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. It is an awesome privilege to be blessed with the living presence of God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. Praise God for such a wonderful gift. 

## *The National Sunday Law (Part 9)*

by Alonzo T. Jones

(The following is a portion of an argument of Alonzo T. Jones before The United States Senate, December 13, 1888, opposing the Blair Bill that promoted a Sunday law. *Editor*)

**Senator Blair:** You come here and seriously argue against these people, because they and the atheists black-guard each other. What have we to do with that? They abuse each other. It is worse in the Christian than in the atheist, because the Christian has some rules to guide his conduct, which the atheist has not. Here seems to be some strong intemperate language which one human being makes use of towards another. An atheist or a Christian alike may find fault with that. I do not know any way that we can interfere with it; but if you claim to argue against this bill because these people abuse atheists, I reply to that by saying that many atheists are for this bill just as these people are. They unite in support of this bill, therefore mutual recriminations amount to nothing.

**Mr. Jones:** But the mutual recrimination amounts to this, that although this is confined simply to words between them now:

**Senator Blair:** I do not think you ought to argue to us by taking this precious time of yours and ours to show that these people use intemperate language towards each other.

**Mr. Jones:** But I am doing it to show that they use the intemperate language now, but if they get the law, they will use more than the language against them. These men only want to make the State a party to their religious disputes. They want to get the nation by law to commit itself to the defense of religious observances, so they can add its power to their side of the controversy, and send

to "hell" or some other place where the Devil is, those who even accidentally disagree with them. But the State has no business to allow itself to be made a party to any religious controversy. That has been the bane of every nation except this, and God forbid that this one should be dragged from its high estate, and made the tool of the irregular passions of religious parties. The State will find its legitimate employment it seeing that these parties keep their hands off each other, and that the ebullitions of their religious zeal are kept within the bounds of civility. It is not safe to put civil power into the hands of such men as these. But that is just what this Sunday bill will do if it shall pass.

**Senator Blair:** The atheist is for this proposed law. He is not intelligently going to support a law which enables these people to burn him at the stake.

**Mr. Jones:** I know he is not intelligently going to do it.

**Senator Blair:** He is liable to be as intelligent as they are. Mr. Hume was a very intelligent man; so was Voltaire; so was Franklin, if Franklin was an atheist; Franklin was a deist, at all events.

**Mr. Jones:** It is safe to say that not one in ten of the people whose names are signed in behalf of this Sunday law know what is the intention of it, and what those will do with it when they get it.

**Senator Blair:** Then it is a lack of intelligence on their part.

**Mr. Jones:** I know people who signed that petition who would now be just as far from signing it as I would.

**Senator Blair:** That is because you told them of those terrible consequences which they had not believed would follow. The masses of the people do not believe that the Christian people

of this country have united in every State in this Union for such a purpose.

**Mr. Jones:** Here is the principle: Here are six million Protestants and seven million two hundred thousand Catholics:

**Senator Blair:** Cardinal Gibbons has written a letter which is in evidence. He is for it, and a great many Catholics are also for it; but it does not follow that those Catholics are for it simply because Cardinal Gibbons wrote that letter. They were for it before Cardinal Gibbons wrote the letter. You must remember that the Catholics in this country are intelligent, as well as we. Some of them are ignorant, some of us are ignorant.

**Mr. Jones:** But here is the point. These people are complaining of the continental Sunday:

**Senator Blair:** They do not complain of it because it is Catholic; they complain of it because it is not as good for the people as our form of Sunday:

**Mr. Jones:** Certainly. And in this movement, the American Sunday, they say, comes from the Puritans, and these people know:

**Senator Blair:** Do you argue against it because it comes from the Puritans, or because it comes from the Catholics? It comes from both, you say; we say it is for the good of society, and that God is for it, because it is for the good of man.

**Mr. Jones:** But let me state the point that I am making: I think everybody knows that it is perfectly consistent with the Catholic keeping of Sunday for the Catholic to go the church in the morning and to the pleasure resort if he chooses in the afternoon. These men stand here in convention, and cry out against the continental Sunday and against its introduction here. Everybody knows that the continental Sunday is the Roman Catholic Sunday. Yet these men, while denouncing the continental Sunday, join

hands with the Roman Catholics to secure this Sunday law. They have counted here six million Protestants and seven million two hundred thousand Catholics. Suppose this law were secured in answer to these petitions, would they then have a Puritan Sabbath, or a continental Sunday? In other words, would the six million Protestants compel the seven million two hundred thousand Catholics to keep Sunday in the Puritan, or even the Protestant way, or will the seven million two hundred thousand Catholics do as they please on Sunday, and let the six million Protestants whistle for "the breath of the Puritan" which Dr. Herrick Johnson invokes? More than this, if it should come to compulsion between these, would not the seven million two hundred thousand Catholics be able to make it unpleasant for the six million Protestants?

**Senator Blair:** I have been all through this that the working people go through. I have been hungry when a boy. The first thing I can remember about is being hungry. I know how the working people feel. I have tugged along through the week, and been tired out Saturday night, and I have been where I would have been compelled to work to the next Monday morning if there had been no law against it. I would not have had any chance to get that twenty-four hours of rest if the Sunday law had not given it to me. It was a civil law under which I got it. The masses of the working people in this country would never get that twenty-four hours' rest if there had not been a law of the land that gave it to us. There is that practical fact, and we are fighting with that state of things. The tired and hungry men, women, and children, all over this country, want a chance to lie down, and rest for twenty-four hours out of the whole seven days.

**Mr. Jones:** So have I been through this that the working people go through. I

have carried the hod by the day. I have swung the hammer and shoved the plane by the day. I am a working-man now just as much as I ever was, though not in precisely the same way; and I say to you that I never was robbed of that twenty-four hours' rest. Nor are there so many compelled to lose it as these Sunday-law advocates try to make out. Dr. Crafts said last night over in that convention that he had had communication with people in every nation but two, and:

"In the world around he could not find a man who had financially lost by refusing to work on Sunday. But many have gained by the conscientious sacrifice."

Much testimony was borne in the Chicago convention last month to the same effect in this country; and in the convention now in session in this city, the Hon. Mr. Dingley, member of Congress from Maine, said last night that the American working-men are indifferent to the efforts which are put forth in this direction.

**Senator Blair:** He is wrong about it. Mr. Dingley didn't know what he was talking about when he said that.

**Mr. Jones:** He said he had investigated the matter.

**Senator Blair:** I have investigated it, and I say that Mr. Dingley was simply laboring under a misapprehension.

**Mr. Jones:** Dr. Crafts said this morning that he talked two hours with a convention of laboring men at Indianapolis, answering their questions, until at the end of two hours they indorsed this movement. If they are crying for it, if they are fairly tearing their hair for it, how can it be possible that he had to talk two hours to persuade them that it was all right?

**Senator Blair:** Take his statement in full, if you take it at all. He says they are crying for it.

**Mr. Jones:** Then why was it necessary to talk to them for two hours?

**Senator Blair:** Then you simply say he did not tell the truth? You discredit the witness?

**Mr. Jones:** I do.

**Senator Blair:** You say perhaps he did not tell the truth, that is all. I think he was right.

**Mr. Jones:** But the two things do not hitch together properly. If they are calling for it so loudly, certainly it ought not to require two hours to convert them. The fact is that the laboring men are not calling for it. Great effort is being made to have it appear so. But the Knights of Labor never took any such step except at the solicitation of Dr. Crafts. This bill had scarcely been introduced last spring before Dr. Crafts made a trip to Chicago and other cities, soliciting the indorsement of the Knights of Labor. Instead of their petitioning for this Sunday law, they have first been petitioned to petition for it; the object of it had to be explained, and objections answered, before they could even be brought to support it. The object of the petition for this bill was explained by Dr. Crafts to the Central Labor Union of New York, and its indorsement secured. The Central Labor Union embraces a number of labor organizations, and the Christian Union declares the Central Labor Union to be a "radically Socialistic" organization. This, in itself, would not be particularly significant were it not for the fact that the arguments which Dr. Crafts presents to these organizations to gain their support are entirely Socialistic. Nor are these confined to Dr. Crafts. Other leaders of the movement also advocate the same principles.

**To be Continued...**

(This article was taken from pages 101-106 of the book entitled, *The National Sunday Law*, by Alonzo T. Jones. Some editing was done for this publication.

*Editor)*



# The Gospel in Creation (Part 6)

by Ellet J. Waggoner

So when God would make the light, He caused it to shine out of darkness. Shall we say that He made the light out of the darkness? It would not be improper, for that is in God's power. "If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee" (Psalm 139:11, 12). And in speaking for the comfort of His people in time of trouble, God says: "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them" (Isaiah 42:16).

Nothing is too hard for the Lord. He Himself is the source of all things. The wise soul sees God in all His works. He has impressed Himself upon all creation. It is all stamped with His own personality. The gross darkness of the heathen came from perverting this truth. Instead of seeing the power of God in everything, they said that everything is God. Thus they turned the truth of God into a lie. But it is a fact that from God Himself everything springs. So God could make light shine out of darkness, because He Himself is light. "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

Let us not forget as we study creation, that Christ is the Creator. He is the wisdom of God and the power of God. He it was that created light. He made it from Himself, for in Him are all things created. It is not alone in the spiritual sense that Christ is the light of the world. The light that rejoices the eyes of all mankind is light that is shed on them from Christ. The visible is to

teach us the invisible. From the natural we are to learn of the spiritual. The physical light that shines in the world is designed to teach us that God is light, and that spiritual light from Him shines as freely for all, and is none the less read. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness" (Psalm 112:4), so that He may say, "Rejoice not against Me, O Mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto Me" (Micah 7:8).

Christ is the light of the world. So we read that when He went into Galilee the words of the prophet concerning that region were fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun, the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up" (Matthew 4:15, 16, R.V.). Sin is darkness. It comes from the prince of darkness, and it brings darkness. The word of the Lord is light; but that was virtually hidden from the people when the Lord came to earth. Men wise in their own conceit had taken upon themselves the "interpretation" of the law of God, and, as a consequence, had covered it up. They had taken away the key of knowledge. Even thus it was in the Middle Ages, which are generally known as the Dark Ages, for then the Bible was a proscribed book. It was imprisoned in the dark cell, and its rays did not enlighten the people. Men groped for light and did not know which way to go. The knowledge of God well-nigh departed from the land; for even the priests, whose lips should keep knowledge, were ignorant of the Living Oracles. Satan had caused false ideas of God and the right to prevail.

It was into darkness similar to this, that Christ, the Light of the world, came. To

them that sat in darkness, light sprang up. The light shone in the darkness, and the darkness did not apprehend or overcome it. Nothing could quench that holy, living Light. When men groped in darkness, and knew not the way of truth, the light of Christ's life shone forth in the darkness, to show them the way. All this the aged Simeon saw when he took the infant Jesus in his arms and said, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32).

**THE LIGHT OF LIFE:** As sin is darkness, so it is death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). "For to be carnally minded is death" Romans 8:6. "Sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15, R.V.); for "the sting of death is sin" (1 Corinthians 15:56). Sin and death come from Satan, for it is he that has the power of death. Therefore it is that we are told that we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with the rulers of the darkness of this world. The darkness of this world is the darkness of sin, and that is the darkness of the shadow of death. Those who sit in sin, sit in the shadow of death; and the light that springs up to such is the light of Christ's sinless life.

As sin is death, so righteousness is life. "To be spiritually minded is life." To be spiritually minded is to have the mind of the Spirit of God; and that is to have His life and righteousness. It is to have the law of God in the mind, "for we know that the law is spiritual." The only thing that can dispel darkness is light. So the only thing that can take away sin is righteousness. And the only thing that can overcome death is life.

But the life of man cannot gain the victory over death, for it is death itself. Sin is

natural to the heart of mankind. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). But the heart is the seat of life, "for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Therefore, since sin is death and sin in all its various forms springs from the heart, it follows that the very source of man's life is poisoned with death. The life of man is but a living death. The apostle Paul, after bemoaning the utter sinfulness of the natural man, cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24, margin).

Since righteousness, and that alone, is life, man can have no hope of life from himself, for he can get no righteousness from himself. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil" (Luke 6:45). Man has only evil in his heart by nature, therefore he can bring forth only that which is evil. The Scriptures give abundant witness to this. Let them tell their own story.

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12). "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7,8). No matter how much the awakened soul may wish that he could do what he knows is right, he has no power in himself to do it. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so

that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:17).

Now, since only evil can come from evil, and the heart of man brings forth only evil, it is a denial of the Scripture to claim that man can of himself do any good thing. First, because the Bible says that he cannot. Second, whoever says that there is any power in man to do that which is good, thereby denies that there is any such thing as evil in man. For there cannot be some evil and some good in man by nature. A fountain cannot send forth from the same opening both sweet water and bitter. A little poisonous water will taint the entire fountain. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1 Corinthians 5:6). So, if there is any evil in a man by nature, he must be, as the Scripture says, wholly evil. Therefore it is, that whoever says that he can of himself do any good thing, however small, denies that there is any trace of evil in him. But Christ has told the truth about man in the words, “Apart from Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5, R.V.).

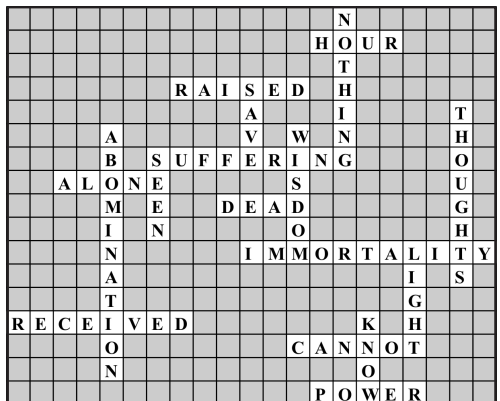
Third, there is one other possible position for the one who says that he can of himself do that which is good, and that is to claim that he can make good out of evil. There are many who openly claim that evil is only “undeveloped good”; but they do not any more strongly assert that claim than do those who think that they are able of themselves to do that which is good. To say that evil is undeveloped good is to deny the Bible,

which says that man has no good thing in him. And to intimate that sin can be changed into goodness is to set one’s self above God; for He cannot do that. To do that would be to deny Himself, for He is righteousness.

God alone is good. This the Scriptures plainly declare. When Christ was on earth “there came one running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but one, that is God” (Mark 10:17, 18). Since God alone is good, it follows that for any one to claim that he has goodness in himself, is to make himself equal to God. The man who does that virtually makes himself God.

*To be Continued...*

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*Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle*

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