

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

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The Rise of the Papacy

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(The following edited study is from D'Aubigne's, History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, pages 8-10 Some of the editing is from a version of it printed in the Signs of the Times, May 8, 1884. . . Editor)

The Church was in the beginning a community of brethren. All its members were taught of God; and each possessed the liberty of drawing for himself from the divine fountain of light. (John 6:45) The epistles which then settled the great questions of doctrine did not bear the pompous title of any single man, or of a ruler. We find from the Holy Scriptures, that they began simply with these words: "The apostles and elders and brethren send greetings unto the brethren." (Acts 15:23)

But these very writings of the apostles already foretell that from the midst of this brotherhood there would arise a power that would destroy this simple and primitive order.

Let us contemplate the formation and trace the development of this power alien to the church.

Paul of Tarsus, one of the greatest apostles of the new religion, had arrived at Rome, the capital of the empire and of the world, preaching, in bondage, the salvation which cometh from God. A Church was formed beside the throne of the Caesars. Composed at first of a few converted Jews, Greeks, and Roman citizens. For a time it shone out brightly, as a beacon upon a hill. Its faith was everywhere spoken of. However ere long it declined from its first simplicity. It was by small beginnings that both imperial and Christian Rome advanced to the usurped dominion of the world.

The first pastors or bishops of Rome employed themselves in the beginning in converting the neighboring cities and towns to the faith of Christ. The necessity which the bishops and pastors felt of applying in cases of difficulty to an enlightened guide, and the gratitude they owed to the church of the metropolis, led them to maintain an intimate union with her. As is generally the consequence in such circumstances, this reasonable union soon degenerated into dependence. The bishops of Rome considered as a right that superiority which the surrounding

Prayer Request

Plans are being laid for Brothers Lynnford Beachy and Howard Williams to visit the country of India this spring to share the good news of the three angels' messages.

Nearly one-sixth of the earth's population, almost a billion people, reside, mostly in poverty and spiritual ignorance, in India. There is truly a great need to share the message with these precious souls.

God has guided us to some Indians who are greatly desiring the message to be given in their country. He has also graciously provided for the means to make the trip possible. We would humbly request your prayers for this endeavor as final plans are being made at this time. May God and His Son be glorified by this gospel outreach endeavor.

Editor

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churches had freely yielded. The encroachments of power form a great part of history; as the resistance of those whose liberties are invaded forms the other portion. The ecclesiastical power could not escape the intoxication which impels all who are lifted up to seek to mount still higher. It obeyed this general law of human nature.

Nevertheless the supremacy of the Roman bishop was at first limited to the overlooking of the churches within the civil jurisdiction of the prefect of Rome. But the rank which this imperial city held in the world offered a prospect of still greater destinies to the ambition of its first pastors. The respect enjoyed by the various Christian bishops in the second century was proportionate to the rank of the city in which they presided. Rome was the largest, richest, and most powerful city in the world. It was the seat of empire, the mother of nations. "All the inhabitants of the earth belong to her," said Julian; and Claudian declared her to be "the fountain of laws."

If Rome is the queen of cities, why should not her pastor be the king of bishops? Why should not the Roman church be the mother of Christendom? Why should not all nations be her children, and her authority their sovereign law? It was natural for the ambitious heart of man to reason so. Ambitious Rome did so.

Thus, when pagan Rome fell, she bequeathed to the humble minister of the God of peace, sitting in the midst of her ruins, the proud titles which her invincible sword had won from the nations of the earth.

The bishops of the different parts of the empire, fascinated by that charm which Rome had exercised for ages over all nations, followed the example of the Campagna, and aided this work of usurpation. They felt a pleasure in yielding to the bishop of Rome some portion of that honor which was due to the queen of the world. There was originally no dependence implied in the honor thus paid. They treated the Roman pastor as if they were on a level with him. But usurped power increased like an avalanche. Admonitions, at first simply fraternal, soon became absolute commands in the mouth of the Roman pontiff. A chief place among equals appeared to him a throne.

The Western bishops favored this encroachment of the Roman pastors, either from jealousy of the Eastern bishops, or because they preferred submitting to the supremacy of a pope, rather than to the dominion of a temporal power.

On the other hand, the theological sects that distracted the East, strove, each for itself, to interest Rome in its favor they looked for victory in the support of the principal church of the West.

Rome carefully recorded these requests and intercessions, and smiled to see all nations voluntarily throwing themselves into her arms. She neglected no opportunity of increasing and extending her power. The praises and flattery, the exaggerated compliments and consultations of other churches, became in her eyes and in her hands the titles and documents of her authority. Such is the heart of man exalted to a throne; flattery intoxicates him, and his head grows dizzy. What he possesses impels him to aspire after more.

The doctrine of "the church," and of "the necessity for its visible unity," which had gained footing as early as the third century, favored the pretensions of Rome. The great bond which originally bound together the members of the church, was a living faith in the heart, by which all were joined to Christ as their one Head. But various causes ere-long conspired to originate and develop the idea of a necessity for some exterior fellowship. Men, accustomed to the associations and political forms of an earthly country, carried their views and habits of mind into the spiritual and everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ. Persecution, powerless to destroy, or even to shake the new community, compressed it into the form of a more compacted body. To the errors that arose in the schools of deism, or in the various sects, was opposed the truth "one and universal" received from the apostles and preserved in the church. All this was well, so long as the invisible and spiritual church was identical with the visible and outward community.

But soon a great distinction appeared; the form and the vital principle parted asunder. The semblance of identical and external organization was gradually substituted in place of the internal and spiritual unity which is the very essence of a religion proceeding from God. Men suffered the precious perfume of faith to escape while they bowed themselves before the empty vase that had held it. Faith in the heart no longer knit together in one the members of the church. Then it was that other ties were sought; and Christians were united by means of bishops, archbishops, popes, mitres, ceremonies, and canons. The living church retiring by degrees to the lonely sanctuary of a few solitary souls, an exterior church was substituted in place of it, and installed in all its forms as of divine institution. Salvation no longer flowing forth from

that word which was now hidden, it began to be affirmed that it was conveyed by means of certain invented forms, and that none could obtain it without resorting to such means! No one, it was said, can by his faith attain to everlasting life; Christ communicated to the apostles, and the apostles to the bishops, the unction of the Holy Spirit; and this Spirit is found only in this order of communication. In the beginning of the gospel, whosoever had received the spirit of Jesus Christ was esteemed a member of the church; now the order was inverted; and no one, unless a member of the church, was counted to have received the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

As soon as the notion of a supposed necessity for a visible unity of the church had taken root, another error began to spread, namely, that it was needful that

there should be some outward representative of that unity. Though no trace of any primacy of St. Peter above the rest of the apostles appears in the gospels; although the idea of a primacy is at variance with the mutual relations of the disciples as “brethren,” and even with the spirit of the dispensation which requires all the children of the Father to minister one to another (1 Peter 4:10), acknowledging but one Master and Head; and though the Lord Jesus had rebuked his disciples whenever their carnal hearts conceived desires of pre-eminence,—a primacy of St. Peter was invented, and supported by misinterpreted texts, and men proceeded to acknowledge in that apostle, and in his pretended successor, the visible representative of visible unity—and head of the whole church! ✍

Freedom of Thought

“Freedom belongs to man on religious grounds. Freedom is the gift of God. ... The most troublesome thing is suppressed truth. It will not stay suppressed. ... Religion that is afraid of investigation and scholarship tends towards superstition and emotionalism. ... Blind credulity as to the truth one holds is the refuge of sluggish minds. It relieves the individual from the real study of God’s word. It settles all differences by silencing all opposing voices and denying the right to ask questions. This takes the meaning out of religion, leaving it ignorant, superficial, intolerant. ... The Christian possess both love of the truth and love of his neighbour. As the man who is sure of his wife is free from jealousy, so the man who is sure of the truth he holds can afford to be courteous and tolerant with others. ... It is easier to abuse a man by charging him with error and wrong motives than to take time to find out what he actually does believe.” (Edward Heppenstall, “Academic Freedom and the Quest for Truth,” *Spectrum*, Winter 1972, pp. 34-38 as quoted in, *In the Shadow of Ellen White, Fundamental and Evangelical Seventh-day Adventists in Conflict*, p. 77)

“Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. ... It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought.” (E. G. White, *Education*, p. 17)

Pope John Paul II Calls for Peace

CNN news reported on the pope’s new year’s address in part:

“In his annual New Year’s Day Mass, the pope repeated themes from his other recent public pronouncements, including a Christmas Day message in which he urged world leaders to avoid war in Iraq.

“He told the crowd gathered for Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica on Wednesday: ‘Despite the serious and repeated attacks to the serene and joint cohabitation of peoples, peace is possible and right.’” (cnn.com January 1, 2003)

The pope said that peace “is possible and right.” While we all desire and pray for peace, let us remember the words of Jesus:

“And *ye shall* hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things *must* come to pass, but the end is not yet. For *nation shall rise* against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” (Matthew 24:6-8)

Worldly peace will never come, but Jesus has promised His followers true peace of heart and soul. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)

Answers to Objections

(Concerning the truth about God as often given by Trinitarians, “Jesus Only”, and others who oppose the truth about God.)

Part 2

As many of our readers are aware, we have been producing a series of video and audio cassette tapes on the truth about God. We have entitled this series, “The Good News About God.” “Answers to Objections” is taken from our latest study in this series. This study carefully examines some Bible texts that are used to object to the truth about God. To help examine some of these texts, we assembled a panel of Bible students composed of: Pastor David Clayton and Brother Howard Williams of Restoration Ministries, Jamaica, West Indies, and Brother Lynnford Beachy of Smyrna Gospel Ministries. A question is introduced by the moderator, Allen Stump, and one of the panelists gives a response.

Last month we covered the introduction of the study which included a short outline on the truth about God. After the outline we examined questions on the following texts: 1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and Matthew 3:16, 17. This article continues the study.

Allen

Genesis 1:26 states, “And God said, Let us make man in our image.” Brother Beachy, who is the “us” in this verse and doesn’t this teach a triune God?

Lynnford

That’s a very good question, Brother Allen. Some people suppose that we can find the Trinity

doctrine in the first chapter of the Bible. They make this claim because the Hebrew word *elohim* that was translated “God” is plural, and they believe the plural pronouns in Genesis 1:26 help to support the Trinity doctrine as well.

The Hebrew word *elohim* is plural, but it never indicates plurality when referring to the true God. Every time *elohim* is used referring to the true God it has a singular meaning. *Gesenius’ Lexicon* calls it “the plural of majesty” and the *Brown-Driver’s Brigg’s Hebrew Lexicon* says that when it refers to the true God it is “plural intensive” with a “singular meaning.” There are a few places in the Bible where *elohim* has a singular meaning even when it refers to men or false gods. For example read Exodus 7:1 and 1 Kings 11:5.

Also, whenever New Testament writers quoted from the Old Testament they used the singular Greek word *theos* to denote the true God as a translation of the word *elohim*. This proves that *elohim* has a singular meaning when referring to the true God. If *elohim* really indicated a plurality in the true God, then the New Testament writers should have been consistent and used the plural form of *theos* when speaking of God. Instead, they used the singular every time, even though they used the plural form 8 times when referring to men or false gods. (You can read these for yourself in John 10:34, & 35; Acts 7:40; 14:11; & 19:26; 1 Corinthians 8:5; and Galatians 4:8.)

Regarding the plural pronouns in Genesis 1:26, the pronouns are plural in the original Hebrew, forcing it to be translated, “God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

Those who claim this verse teaches a Trinity point out that *elohim* is plural and the pronouns are plural, therefore there must be a plurality in God. If we’re to take this explanation we would have to translate it, “Gods said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” This translation would do injustice to the true meaning of *elohim*, and it would have several Gods speaking in unison, saying, “Let us make man in our image.” Is that what God is trying to tell us? Did several Gods create man, or was there just one?

Those who promote the idea that Gods said, “Let us make man,” run into a big problem in the next verse, because all of a sudden the pronouns switch to singular, both in Hebrew and in English, while the plural *elohim* is still used. Why was there a change? The next verse says, “So God made man in His own image, in the image of God created He him.” If we’re expected to believe that Gods are speaking in verse 26, to be consistent we must believe that Gods are being referred to in verse 27, but instead of plural pronouns the Bible changed to singular pronouns as if only one person was referred to.

Now, there is a very simple explanation for this. The use of plural pronouns after a singular noun

doesn't indicate that the singular noun should really be plural. For example, let us suppose the president said to the attorney general, "let us make a law." This wouldn't indicate that there are two presidents just because he used a plural pronoun. The plural applies to the two who will be involved in making the law rather than to the president. In like manner, the "us" and "our" in Genesis 1:26 applies to the Two who were involved in the creation of the world rather than to the one who is speaking.

The Bible says, "God... created all things by Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 3:9) It is obvious that the God in this verse is someone other than Jesus Christ. And according to Hebrews 1:2, God the Father created all things by His Son.

Now we can know for sure who is speaking in Genesis 1:26, and to whom He is speaking. God the Father said to His Son, "let us make man in our image." Remember, Christ is "the express image" of the Father, so anyone created in the Father's image is automatically created in His Son's image.

Commenting on Genesis 1:26, Ellen White wrote:

"After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God says to his Son, 'Let us make man in our image.'" (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume 1, pages 24, 25)

Allen

Brother Lynnford's answer demonstrates the principle of exegesis, that of allowing the text to speak for

itself and taking the truth from the text instead of reading our own ideas into the text, a procedure the theologians call eisegesis.

Brother David, Jesus said in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one." The advocates of the "Jesus Only" doctrine use this text to teach there is only one person, who is both a Father and a Son as well as the Holy Spirit. What can you tell us about it?

David

There really should be no difficulty in understanding the true meaning of this text if we simply go by the rule that Scripture should be used to explain Scripture. In three verses in John, chapter 17, Jesus prayed for unity among His disciples and in all three places He compared the unity that He desired among His people to the unity which exists between Himself and God the Father. Note His words in the following passages:

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." (John 17:11)

"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." (John 17:21)

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17:22)

Nobody would be foolish enough to suggest that Jesus wanted His disciples to become one person, or even one being. His meaning is that He wants them to be united, to be in perfect harmony, to enjoy a unity of thought, purpose and action such as

He enjoyed with His Father. This text no more indicates a unity of substance between the Father and the Son, than the unity between Christians suggests that all Christians are of one substance.

Allen

Thank you, David. Brother Lynnford, Isaiah 9:6 is another text that some people are confused on. Both the "Jesus only" and the Trinitarians use this text to show the oneness of God and Christ. What can you share with us that can clarify this verse?

Lynnford

You're right Brother Allen, a lot of people get confused by this verse because Jesus is called "the everlasting Father." Let us turn there and read it. It says,

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Now, is this verse teaching that Christ is God the Father? If so, how can He be the Son? And if He is both Father and Son, how can there be a trinity, for a trinity is three. This verse certainly doesn't support a trinity doctrine. And, as we compare Scripture with Scripture, we can be sure that neither does it support the "Jesus only" doctrine.

Jesus is referred to as the Father, not the Father of Himself, but the Father of the children which His Father gave Him.

In Hebrews 2:13 Paul quoted from Isaiah 8:18 and applied it to Christ. Here Christ says, "Behold, I

and the children whom the LORD hath given me.”

Christ is called everlasting, and that is appropriate, since He will last forever. He is also called Father, not of Himself, but of the children which God has given Him.

Many Trinitarians have said that the word everlasting in this verse means that Christ always was, and that He never had a beginning. Yet when the term “everlasting life” is applied to us they all admit that it simply means that we will live forever in the future, not that we always were in existence.

Notice also that Isaiah 9:6 says that “His name shall be called... The mighty God.” Some use this phrase to mean that Christ is the supreme God. This might be a good argument if the verse had referred to Christ as the Almighty God, but it uses the term mighty God. In the Bible we read of mighty men, but never of Almighty men. It is certainly appropriate to refer to the Son as mighty, for He is powerful. It is also appropriate to refer to Him as God, for the Most High God Himself refers to His Son as God in Hebrews 1:8. Therefore the terms “everlasting Father” and “The mighty God” can rightly apply to the Son.

Allen

Brother Lynnford, along this same line of thought, concerning the oneness of God and Christ, some people have misunderstood Isaiah 44:6 and Revelation 1:17 where we find the terms, “The first and the last.” What does the Bible say about this?

Lynnford

I’m glad you brought that up, Brother Allen. Some people link these two verses together to try to

prove that Jesus is the one God of the Bible.

Let us read them for ourselves and see what God is trying to tell us.

Isaiah 44:6 says, “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.”

Because the term “I am the first, and I am the last” is used by Jesus in Revelation, some people conclude from reading this verse that Jesus is the one and only God of the Bible, or at least part of the one God.

Let us read a couple places in Revelation where Jesus applied this term to Himself. When John saw Christ in vision, he said, “I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.” (Revelation 1:17)

Jesus didn’t end His conversation here. In the next verse, He went on to say, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.”

Jesus used the term again when He spoke to the church at Smyrna. He said, “These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.” (Revelation 2:8) Jesus said that He, “the first and the last,” was dead. If He was the one and only God, He couldn’t have died, for the Bible says, in 1 Timothy 6:16, that God cannot die.

Therefore we must conclude that the person speaking in Isaiah 44:6 was someone other than Jesus Christ. There are other titles and names in the Bible that are shared by both the Father and the Son, and the title, “the first and the last” must be one of these titles.

Let us go back to Isaiah 44:6 and find out for sure who is speaking. The speaker says, “beside me there is no God,” and in verse 8 He says,

“Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.” This is very precise language to indicate that the speaker is alone. All of the pronouns are singular, indicating that only one person is speaking. Who is this one person? The New Testament clarifies this.

In 1 Corinthians 8:4, Paul wrote, “we know... that there is none other God but one.” And to make it abundantly clear who he was referring to as the God beside which there is none other, Paul continued. In verse 6 he wrote, “to us there is but one God, the Father.” Paul understood the one God of the Bible to be God the Father and no one else.

Jesus had the same understanding. After Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4 a scribe told Him, “Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he.” (Mark 12:32) Who is the one God the scribe was referring to? Was he referring to Jesus as the one God? Certainly not! He was referring to God the Father, and Jesus knew it.

At another time, while Jesus was talking to the scribes and Pharisees, He said, “If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God.” (John 8:54) Jesus knew that when the scribes and Pharisees said “God,” they were referring to His Father. When this scribe said, “there is one God; and there is none other but he,” Jesus knew that he was talking about His Father.

Did Jesus correct the scribe by saying, “You’ve got it wrong, I am really the one God of the Bible”? Not at all! To the contrary, Jesus complimented him for his good answer by exclaiming, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” Jesus knew that this man was

correct, that there is one God, the Father, and there is none other God but He.

Friends, I'd like you to notice something. To the best of my knowledge, every time singular pronouns are used of God or Christ, such as "he," "him," "his," "I," "me," etc., they always refer to one person. Whenever a Bible writer wanted to speak of both the Father and Son, they always use plural pronouns like, "them," "they," "us," "we," "our," etc. So far, I have not found any exceptions to this rule. When the scribe said, "there is one God; and there is none other but HE," he was referring to only one person, God the Father.

With this clarification from the New Testament, we can be completely sure who is speaking in Isaiah 44:6. He is God the Father and no one else. He is the ultimate first and last, even though He allowed His Son to carry this title as well.

Allen

Thank you Brother Lynnford. Brother David, in Revelation 1:8 we find these words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." In many Bibles, the first part of this text is in red letters. Is Jesus the "Almighty"?

David

This text is sometimes used to suggest that Jesus is called the Almighty, a term which is used several times in the book of Revelation, but always with reference to the Father exclusively. The mistake in believing that this verse refers to Christ stems from faulty reading

and carelessness on the part of some Bible publishers. In red letter editions of the Bible, this verse is usually printed in red, indicating that it is Christ who is speaking. This misleads many readers. The publishers, and many others, come to this conclusion because of reading verse 11, where Jesus states, "I am alpha and omega, the first and the last." The terms used in this verse, "alpha and omega," and "first and last" seem to correspond with the identical term, "alpha and omega," and the similar term, "beginning and the ending" in verse 8 and seem to indicate that it is Jesus who is speaking in verse 8. A closer examination of the passage, however, reveals that this is not so.

Let us begin a little earlier in the passage, in verses 4 and 5, where a greeting is given from the Father, from the seven spirits and from Jesus Christ. We read:

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." (Revelation 1:4-5)

Now notice that a definite description or designation is given to each of them. The one who sits on the throne is definitely described as Him "which is, and which was, and which is to come." The seven spirits simply as being before His throne, while Jesus is "the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth."

There is no mistaking the Father's description. He is the one

"which is, and which was, and which is to come." Nobody else is given that description. In fact, this description is in definite contrast to Jesus who is "the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead..."

So when, a few verses later, we come upon this statement, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty," to whom should we legitimately apply it? Clearly, it refers, not to Jesus, but to the Father. He is the one who "is and was, and is to come."

Allen

Brother Williams, 1 John 5:20 says, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." Is this text saying that Jesus is the "true God"?

Howard

Friends, I would like for you to follow me through a closer examination of the text in question.

After looking at the text, what would we say the subject of the text is?

I would say, and I'm sure you will agree, that the subject of the verse is "him that is true."

The one who has come to give us an understanding of "him that is true" is the "Son of God."

His purpose in giving us an understanding is that we may know "him that is true."

Thus to know "him that is true" we have to come to Jesus.

Jesus himself said, "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)

Here Jesus shows us that, for us to be in "him that is true" we have to go through the Son.

Paul understood this quite well, let us look at what he wrote to the Christians in Ephesus, "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Ephesians 2:18)

By being in Christ we are in "Him that is true," who is the true God, or the original God, and eternal life.

This is what Jesus himself says in another place, and I think the meaning of both passages are the same, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3)

David

Titus 2:13 is another text which seems to speak in a similar manner. It says, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

The question is, should this verse be read to say, "the appearing of the great God who is our Saviour Jesus Christ," or should it be read as saying, "the appearing of the great God, as well as of our Saviour Jesus Christ?" Some Bible Commentaries state that, "The Greek of this expression is ambiguous, hence uncertainty exists as to whether Paul is speaking of both the Father and the Son or of Christ only..." On the surface it would seem to be speaking of Jesus Christ only, since when He returns the Father is not expected to return with Him. The verse would then suggest that Jesus

is the great God referred to. This would be puzzling, to say the least, especially in the writings of Paul who regards Jesus as being a divine being, but who consistently insists that "there is but one God, the Father." (1 Corinthians 8:6)

The problem is solved when we realize that the Greek rendering of the text suggests that the text is referring not so much to the appearing of either Christ or of God or even of them both, but rather to the appearing of the glory of them both. The literal translation of the Greek in the passage is, "the appearance of the glory of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ."

This idea, that the text refers to the appearing of the glory of God rather than to the appearing of God Himself, is supported by many different translations of the Bible. Some of them are; *The Revised Standard Version* which says, "awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." *Young's Literal Translation* says the same thing basically, "waiting for the blessed hope and manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Likewise, the *Modern King James Version* as well as *The Bible in Basic English*. These translations have been faithful to the Greek text in recognizing that the "appearing" has reference to the glory of God, rather than to God Himself.

This interpretation of the verse is in perfect harmony with the statement that Jesus made that when He returns it will be with His glory as well as with that of the Father. His exact words, found in Luke 9:26 are:

"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be

ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

Once we understand this, the meaning of the text becomes clear and is in perfect harmony with the rest of Scripture.

Allen

Brother Williams, John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This text is used a lot to prove the Trinity doctrine. How does it harmonize with the body of Scripture?

Howard

Bro. Allen, I'm happy we got a chance to look at this verse.

Friends, you know that this verse has been used by many to advance the idea that Jesus is God Himself.

Look at this text with me, and let us examine the message of the text to see what God wants us to understand from it.

My first question then would be, "Who is the Word referred to here in this text?"

I am sure you will all agree that *the Word that was made flesh, and dwelt among us*, in verse 14 of the same passage, is Jesus. Substituting Jesus for Word, the text would read this way: "*In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God.*" The next question I would ask is this, "Was Jesus the same God He was with?" Think about this friends!

In other words, is the text trying to tell us that in the beginning Jesus was with himself? I don't believe this is what the text is telling us, and I know you'll agree with me, so let us look at the verse very carefully to see what it is really saying.

Clearly Jesus, at the beginning, was with someone else, and this person he was with is God. The second time the term God is used, it is used in a descriptive way and not in reference to the person called God.

Let me give you an example I heard Pastor Clayton use before. Let us say that Adam, in the beginning was called “the human” and Eve was just referred to as “the woman.” Listen to this and ask yourselves whether the verse in question is not structured in the same way.

“In the beginning was the woman, and the woman was with the human, and the woman was human.”

Clearly the first time the word human is used it is speaking directly about the person the woman was with. The second time the word human is used it is used in a descriptive way to describe the nature of the woman.

I am suggesting that this is the same way the text we are looking at should be viewed.

“In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God [(by nature) or], and Jesus was divine”

The second verse tells us this, “The same (**Jesus**) was in the beginning with God (**the Father**).”(John 1:2)

What is obvious from the passage, is that there were two Beings at the beginning, God and Jesus, and Jesus has the same nature that God has, a divine nature. So here we see, friends, that Jesus is fully divine as God, His Father is divine. But Jesus is not the Father, He is the Son of the Father. A Greek rendering of the text supports this conclusion.

Allen

Brother David, in the second chapter of Philippians is a verse that speaks of Jesus “being in the form of God.” Where is that verse and what can you share with us on it?

David

The text is Philippians 2:5-9, which says, “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, 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. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”

The question here is, what does the phrase, “being in the form of God,” mean? Does this mean that Jesus was God Himself? This phrase is evidently set in opposition to the phrase, “took upon him the form of a servant.” The intent of the passage is to show the degree of the condescension of the Son of God by highlighting the immensity of the humiliation which He embraced when He took humanity upon Himself. The difference between humanity and divinity is vast, with divinity being at the pinnacle of existence, and humanity being far down on the scale. What was the position of Christ before He came to earth? Was He human? Was He angelic? Where would He fall in the classification of beings? Clearly, He was divine; He was in the category of divinity. He was in the form of God. It was from this position that He descended to the level of

humanity. In other words, it was not an angel who came, it was not a human being, but rather one who was at the utmost height in terms of the classification of beings, even one who was divine, and in this respect, equal with God.

Let us note that it is not the divinity of Christ which is in question. It is not the fact that He is equal with the Father in nature, which is in question. Rather, the problem is that concept of the Godhead which makes Jesus God Himself, thereby destroying the truth that the Father is the highest authority in the universe, the source of all, and that Jesus is His true begotten Son, in the giving of whom the Father demonstrated the immensity of His love for mankind.

What many find it difficult to come to grips with is the concept that Jesus could be a divine being, one who is God by nature, yet not the most high God Himself. However, this is the clear teaching of the Bible and it is only as we pursue our studies upon the basis of what the Bible clearly teaches that we can arrive at a proper understanding of biblical truth.

The true position of Jesus in relation to the Father is brought out in two verses in Colossians, which make the matter clear in a very simple way.



**Panel Members from
“Answers to Objections”**

An Update on Hans

By Allen Stump

Due to frequent requests, I wanted to write a short update on my son Hans' health. As some of our readers know, about 3 1/2 years ago, Hans, then age seventeen, was diagnosed with a cancerous tumor inside his spinal cord. The diagnosis was challenging, to say the least. During the time since, he has had surgery for the original cancer, surgery for another non-cancerous tumor, one spinal fusion surgery, one major spinal fusion and neck-stabilization surgery, and one surgery due to infection. During the last 3 1/2 years Hans nearly lost the ability to walk, and another time he totally lost his ability to stand or walk. Despite all the ups and downs, Hans has maintained a Christian attitude and retained a faith and trust in God that has been a witness to many.

Currently, Hans is doing very well for all he has been through. In the middle last December we went to the University of Virginia Medical Center for testing and evaluation.

X-rays showed the bone structure in his neck to be stable at this time and an MRI scan did not show any cancer. More recently, we also received a very encouraging report from Hans' neurologist. We are truly thankful for God's mercy and goodness to us and to Hans. On the 7th of January we rejoiced with



Hans Stump

Hans as he turned 21 years old. Being cancer free for five years is considered the magical number for patients to be considered totally cured of cancer. Another 1 1/2 years doesn't seem so bad when we reflect on what God has brought us through. Our family would again like to express our heart-felt appreciation for your past prayer and ask that you remember us in your future prayers as well.

Colossians 2:9 says, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Here we see that the fullness of the godhead exists in Christ. But as Colossians 1:19 explains, "...it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Here we see that it is the Father who has ordained that this fullness of the godhead should dwell in Christ. This makes it clear that the Father is greater than Jesus and is the one who has ordained the status of Christ.

This is in perfect harmony with Matthew 28:18 where Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." All power is His, but it was given unto Him by one who is evidently greater than He. The same truth is seen in 1 Corinthians 15:27-28 where it says,

"For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

To be continued next month.

New Video in "The Good News About God" Series

The above study, "Answers to Objections," is an edited portion of the latest production from the series, "The Good News About God." This study-tape is now available in NTSC and PAL video formats. There will be a version for Adventist (AV) and non-Adventist (NAV) as well. For video cassettes, request tape number GNAG-V-06. The suggested donation is \$7.00 per tape plus actual postage. For audio cassettes, request GNAG-A-06. The suggested donation is \$2.00 plus actual postage. Please specify which version (AV or NAV), when ordering. ✍

Florida Revival Retreat

The church in Orlando, Florida, will be hosting a Revival Retreat, February 26th to March 2, 2003, at the River Forest Campground. The theme of the meetings will be, "Repairers of the Breach." For more information see the January, 2003 issue of *Old Paths*, or contact Bill James. Phone: (407) 694-2156; e-mail: abj2289@gte.net. Hope to see you there! ✍

Youth's Corner - Because He First Loved Us.

"We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? and this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." The will of God is expressed in these words in a most decided manner, and the question is, Are we obeying the voice of God to the very letter? We can never attain perfection of character if we do not hear the voice of God and obey his counsel. This instruction does not apply simply to those who have had no trials to meet which would create dislike to their brethren; but it applies to those who have been injured, who have suffered from financial wrong, from reproach and criticism, from misapprehension and misjudgment. These must not allow hatred to enter the heart, or permit unkind feelings to arise when they look upon those who have injured them.

Jesus bears with the perversity of the children of men, and pities them in their wrong course. If he felt as some who claim to be his followers feel, he would be filled with continual disgust and hatred as he looks upon those who are abusing his mercy, despising his grace, refusing to obey his commandments, and trampling upon his authority. He has bought them soul and body, and though they give their allegiance to Satan, his bitterest enemy, he loves them still.

No one can hate his brother, or even his enemy, without placing himself under condemnation. We ever receive from the hand of our Maker and Judge a reward in harmony with the nature of our conduct toward him and his creatures. It is written: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Again we read: "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward."

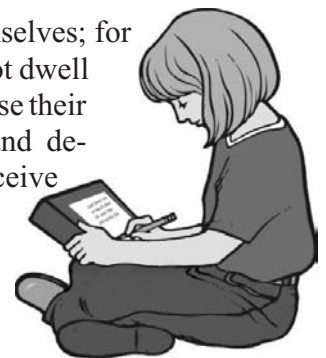
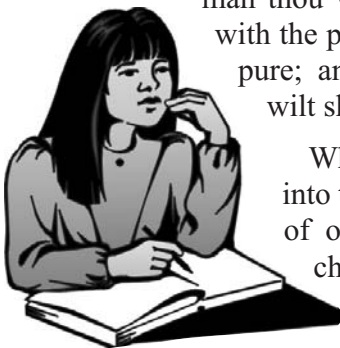
When the Bible is brought into the heart and made the rule of our conduct, we shall not cherish hatred against those who do us wrong. Like Christ we shall forgive

our enemies, and watch for opportunities to show those who have harmed us that we love their souls, and if we could, would do them good. A course of this kind will be likely to break down enmity, will humble our own proud, cold hearts, and bring us into sympathy with Christ. If those who have injured us, still continue in their course of wrong-doing, and we see that we can do them no good, still let love rule our own hearts, and overcome the enmity that urges its presence in our breast. If we were Bible-doers as well as Bible-readers, we should see an altogether different state in our churches. We must make efforts to be reconciled to our brethren, following the Bible plan, as Christ himself has directed. If our brethren refuse to be reconciled, then do not talk about them, nor injure their influence, but leave them in the hands of a just God, who judgeth all men righteously.

How many are deficient in love! O, that love might eradicate from the heart hatred, emulation, and strife, and the root of bitterness, whereby many are defiled. Never can the love of Jesus be received and shed abroad in the heart until envious feelings, hatred, jealousies, and evil surmisings are put away.

The youth may profess to have great love for the cause of God; but while they are unreconciled to their companions, they are unreconciled to God. It is these heart-burnings, these selfish feelings that are cherished, that keep the blessing of God out of our hearts and homes. Let the love of Christ flow into the heart and transform the character, or we shall not be children of God, we shall not be Bible Christians. Christ is nothing to us if we do not permit him to enlighten the understanding, purify the affections, purge the dross from us, and cleanse from our garments every spot and stain, clothing us with his own righteousness.

Many are deceiving themselves; for the principle of love does not dwell in their hearts. They may close their eyes to their own errors and defects; but they cannot deceive God. There must be a reformation. The plowshare of truth must plow deep furrows in our proud hearts, and tear up the sod of our



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unsanctified natures, that the Spirit and love of Jesus may be planted in our hearts. Time is fast hastening on, and every work will soon be brought into judgment, and either our sins or our names will be blotted out of the Book of Life.

“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” The law and the gospel declare this precept, and enforce this command: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Pure love is simple in its operations, and separate from every other principle of action. When combined with earthly motives and selfish interests, it ceases to be pure. God considers more with how much love we work, than the amount we do. Love is a heavenly attribute. The natural heart cannot originate it. This

heavenly plant only flourishes where Christ reigns supreme. Where love exists, there is power and truth in the life. Love does good, and nothing but good. Those who have love bear fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life. “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” (Mrs. Ellen G. White, *Youth’s Instructor*, January 13, 1898) 

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