



# SONSHIP OF CHRIST

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**T**he truth on the Sonship of Christ in Adventism was plainly taught in 1888 when EJ Waggoner said, “Christ is the Son of God by birth” {CHR 12.1}, of which message Ellen White said, “the Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones” {TM 91.2}, and “messages bearing divine credentials have been sent to God’s people” {1888 673.6}.

This prophecy has long been fulfilled: “The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith.... The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error” {EG White, 1903, SpTB07 39.3}. Today, the literal Sonship of Christ is rejected in our Church.

We must heed this counsel: “We are to repeat the words of the pioneers in our work, who knew what it cost to search for the truth as for hidden treasure,

and who labored to lay the foundation of our work.... The word given me is, Let that which these men have written in the past be reproduced" {EG White, RH 25 May 1905 Par 21}. "And the standard bearers who have fallen in death, are to speak through the reprinting of their writings" {EG White, PH020 14.2}.

Waggoner's 1888 message was published in his book, *Christ and His Righteousness* [CHR] (R & H 1890), a portion of which is reproduced here below:

### **How Shall We Consider Christ?**

"But *how* should we consider Christ? Just as He has revealed Himself to the world, according to the witness which He bore concerning Himself. In that marvelous discourse recorded in the fifth chapter of John, Jesus said, 'For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him.'

Verses 21-23" {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 8.1}.

"To Christ is committed the highest prerogative, that of judging. He must receive the same honor that is due to God and for the reason that He is God. The

beloved disciple bears this witness, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' John 1:1. That this Divine Word is none other than Jesus Christ is shown by verse 14: '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.'" {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 8.2}.

"The Word was 'in the beginning.' The mind of man cannot grasp the ages that are spanned in this phrase. It is not given to men to know when or how the Son was begotten; but we know that he was the Divine Word, not simply before He came to this earth to die, but even before the world was created. Just before His crucifixion He prayed, '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. And more than seven hundred years before His first advent, His coming was thus foretold by the word of inspiration: '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 have been from of old, from the days of eternity.' Micah 5:2, margin. We know that Christ 'proceeded forth and came from God' (John 8:42), but it was so

far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man” {CHR 9.1}.

## **Is Christ God?**

“In many places in the Bible Christ is called God. The Psalmist says, ‘The mighty God, even the Lord [Jehovah], hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness; for God is judge Himself.’ Psalm 50:1-6” {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 9.2}.

“That this passage has reference to Christ may be known 1) by the fact already learned, that all judgment is committed to the Son, and 2) by the fact that it is at the second coming of Christ that He sends His angels to gather together His elect from the four winds. Matthew 24:31. ‘Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence.’ No. For when the Lord Himself descends from heaven, it will be ‘with a

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.’ 1 Thessalonians 4:16. This shout will be the voice of the Son of God, which will be heard by all that are in their graves and which will cause them to come forth. John 5:28, 29. With the living righteous they will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, ever more to be with Him, and this will constitute ‘our gathering together unto Him.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:1. Compare Psalm 50:5; Matthew 24:31, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16” {CHR 10.1}.

“A fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him’ for when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, it will be ‘in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ 2 Thessalonians 1:8. So we know that Psalm 50:1-6 is a vivid description of the second coming of Christ for the salvation of His people. When He comes it will be as ‘the mighty God.’ Compare Habakku 3” {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 11.1}.

“This is one of His rightful titles. Long before Christ’s first advent, the prophet Isaiah spoke these words of comfort to Israel, ‘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, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.’ Isaiah 9:6” {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 11.2}.

“These are not simply the words of Isaiah; they are the words of the Spirit of God. God has, in direct address to the Son, called Him by the same title. In Psalm 45:6 we read these words, ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of Thy kingdom is a right scepter.’ The casual reader might take this to be simply the Psalmist’s ascription of praise to God, but when we turn to the New Testament, we find that it is much more. We find that God the Father is the speaker and that He is addressing the Son, calling Him God. See Heb. 1:1-8” {CHR 11.3}.

“This name was not given to Christ in consequence of some great achievement, but it is His by right of inheritance. Speaking of the power and greatness of Christ, the writer to the Hebrews says that He is made so much better than the angels, because ‘He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.’ Hebrews 1:4. A son always rightfully takes the name of the father; and Christ, as ‘the only begotten Son of God,’ has rightfully the same name. A son, also, is, to a greater or less degree, a reproduction of the father; he has to some extent the features and personal

characteristics of his father; not perfectly, because there is no perfect reproduction among mankind. But there is no imperfection in God, or in any of His works, and so Christ is the 'express image' of the Father's person. Hebrews 1:3. As the Son of the self-existent God, He has by nature all the attributes of Deity" {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 11.4}.

"It is true that there are many sons of God, but Christ is the 'only begotten Son of God,' and therefore the Son of God in a sense in which no other being ever was or ever can be. The angels are sons of God, as was Adam (Job 38:7; Luke 3:38), by creation; Christians are the sons of God by adoption (Romans 8:14, 15), but Christ is the Son of God by birth. The writer to the Hebrews further shows that the position of the Son of God is not one to which Christ has been elevated but that it is one which He has by right. He says that Moses was faithful in all the house of God, as a servant, 'but Christ as a Son over His own house.' Hebrews 3:6. And he also states that Christ is the Builder of the house. Verse 3. It is He that builds the temple of the Lord and bears the glory. Zechariah 6:12, 13" {CHR 12.1}.

"Christ Himself taught in the most emphatic manner that He is God. When the young man came and asked, 'Good Master, what shall I do that I may

inherit eternal life?’ Jesus, before replying to the direct question, said, ‘Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but One, that is, God.’ Mark 10:17, 18. What did Jesus mean by these words? Did He mean to disclaim the epithet as applied to Himself? Did He mean to intimate that He was not absolutely good? Was it a modest depreciation of Himself? By no means, for Christ was absolutely good. To the Jews, who were continually watching to detect in Him some failing of which they might accuse Him, He boldly said, ‘Which of you convinceth me of sin?’ John 8:46. In the whole Jewish nation not a man could be found who had ever seen Him do a thing or heard Him utter a word that had even the semblance of evil, and those who were determined to condemn Him could do it only by hiring false witnesses against Him. Peter says that He ‘did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.’ 1 Peter 2:22. Paul says that He ‘knew no sin.’ 2 Corinthians 5:21. The Psalmist says, ‘He is my Rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him.’ Psalm 92:15. And John says, ‘Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin.’ 1 John 3:5” {Ellet J Waggoner, CHR 13.1}.

“Christ cannot deny Himself, therefore He could not say that He was not good. He is and was

absolutely good, the perfection of goodness. And since there is none good but God, and Christ is good, it follows that Christ is God and that this is what He meant to teach the young man” {CHR 14.1}.

“It was this that He taught the disciples. When Philip said to Jesus, ‘Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us,’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?’ John 14:8, 9. This is as emphatic as when He said, ‘I and my Father are one.’ John 10:30. So truly was Christ God, even when here among men, that when asked to exhibit the Father He could say, Behold Me. And this brings to mind the statement that when the Father brought the First-begotten into the world, He said, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him.’ Hebrews 1:16. It was not simply when Christ was sharing the glory of the Father before the world was that He was entitled to homage, but when He came a Babe in Bethlehem, even then all the angels of God were commanded to adore Him” {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 14.2}.

“The Jews did not misunderstand Christ’s teaching concerning Himself. When He declared that He was one with the Father, the Jews took up

stones to stone Him, and when He asked them for which of His good works they sought to stone Him, they replied, 'For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.' John 10:33. If He had been what they regarded Him, a mere man, His words would indeed have been blasphemy, but He was God" {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 14.3}.

"The object of Christ in coming to earth was to reveal God to men so that they might come to Him. Thus the apostle Paul says that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself' (2 Corinthians 5:19), and in John we read that the Word, which was God, was 'made flesh.' John 1:1, 14. In the same connection it is stated, 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him' (or made Him known). John 1:18" {EJ Waggoner, CHR 15.1}.

"Note the expression, 'the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father.' He has His abode there, and He is there as a part of the Godhead, as surely when on earth as when in heaven. The use of the present tense implies continued existence. It presents the same idea that is contained in the statement of Jesus to the Jews (John 8:58), 'Before Abraham was, I am.' And this

again shows His identity with the One who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, who declared His name to be 'I AM THAT I AM'" {CHR 15.2}.

"And, finally, we have the inspired words of the apostle Paul concerning Jesus Christ, that 'it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.' Colossians 1:19. What this fullness is which dwells in Christ, we learn from the next chapter, where we are told that 'in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.' Colossians 2:9. This is most absolute and unequivocal testimony to the fact that Christ possesses by nature all the attributes of Divinity. The fact of the Divinity of Christ will also appear very distinctly as we proceed to consider:" {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 15.3}.

### **Christ As Creator**

"Immediately following the oft-quoted text which says that Christ, the Word, is God, we read that 'all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.' John 1:3. Comment cannot make this statement any clearer than it is, therefore we pass to the words of Hebrews 1:1-4, 'God...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; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 16.1}.

“Still more emphatic than this are the words of the apostle Paul to the Colossians. Speaking of Christ as the One through whom we have redemption, he describes Him as the One ‘who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born 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.’ Colossians 1:15-17” {CHR 16.2}.

“This wonderful text should be carefully studied and often contemplated. It leaves not a thing in the universe that Christ did not create. He made everything in heaven, and everything on earth; He made everything that can be seen, and everything that cannot be seen; the thrones and dominions, and the principalities and the powers in heaven, all depend upon Him for existence. And as He is before

all things and their Creator, so by him do all things consist or hold together. This is equivalent to what is said in Hebrews 1:3, that He upholds all things by the word of His power. It was by a word that the heavens were made, and that same word holds them in their place, and preserves them from destruction" {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 17.1}.

"We cannot possibly omit in this connection Isaiah 40:25, 26: 'To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.' Or, as the Jewish translation more forcibly renders it, 'from him, who is great in might, and strong in power, not one escapeth.' That Christ is the Holy One who thus calls the host of heaven by name and holds them in their place is evident from other portions of the same chapter. He is the One before whom it was said, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.' He is the One who comes with a strong hand, having His reward with Him; the One who, like a shepherd, feeds His flock, carrying the lambs in His bosom" {CHR 17.2}.

“One more statement concerning Christ as Creator must suffice. It is the testimony of the Father Himself. In the first chapter of Hebrews, we read that God has spoken to us by His Son; that He said of Him, ‘Let all the angels of God worship him’ that of the angels He saith, ‘Who maketh his angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire,’ but that He says to the Son, ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom.’ And God says further, ‘Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands.’ Hebrews 1:8-10. Here we find the Father addressing the Son as God, and saying to Him, Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. When the Father Himself gives this honor to the Son, what is man, that he should withhold it? With this we may well leave the direct testimony concerning the Divinity of Christ and the fact that He is the Creator of all things” {CHR 18.1}.

“A word of caution may be necessary here. Let no one imagine that we would exalt Christ at the expense of the Father or would ignore the Father. That cannot be, for their interests are one. We honor the Father in honoring the Son. We are mindful of Paul’s words, that ‘to us there is but one God, the

Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him' (1 Corinthians 8:6); just as we have already quoted, that it was by Him that God made the worlds. All things proceed ultimately from God, the Father; even Christ Himself proceeded and came forth from the Father, but it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and that He should be the direct, immediate Agent in every act of creation. Our object in this investigation is to set forth Christ's rightful position of equality with the Father, in order that His power to redeem may be the better appreciated" {Waggoner, CHR 19.1}.

### **Is Christ a Created Being?**

"Before passing to some of the practical lessons that are to be learned from these truths, we must dwell for a few moments upon an opinion that is honestly held by many who would not for any consideration willingly dishonor Christ, but who, through that opinion, do actually deny His Divinity. It is the idea that Christ is a created being, who, through the good pleasure of God, was elevated to His present lofty position. No one who holds this view can possibly have any just

conception of the exalted position which Christ really occupies” {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 19.2}.

“The view in question is built upon a misconception of a single text, Revelation 3:14: ‘And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.’ This is wrongly interpreted to mean that Christ is the first being that God created — that God’s work of creation began with Him. But this view antagonizes the scripture which declares that Christ Himself created all things. To say that God began His work of creation by creating Christ is to leave Christ entirely out of the work of creation” {CHR 20.1}.

“The word rendered ‘beginning’ is *arche*, meaning, as well, ‘head’ or ‘chief.’ It occurs in the name of the Greek ruler, *Archon*, in *archbishop* and the word *archangel*. Take this last word. Christ is the archangel. See Jude 9; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 5:28, 29; Daniel 10:21. This does not mean that He is the first of the angels, for He is not an angel but is above them. Hebrews 1:4. It means that He is the chief or prince of the angels, just as an archbishop is the head of the bishops. Christ is the commander of the angels. See Revelation 19:11-14. He created the angels. Colossians 1:16. And so the statement that

He is the beginning or head of the creation of God means that in Him creation had its beginning; that, as He Himself says, He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Revelation 21:6; 22:13. He is the source whence all things have their origin" {Waggoner, CHR 20.2}.

"Neither should we imagine that Christ is a creature, because Paul calls Him (Colossians 1:15) 'The First-born of every creature' for the very next verses show Him to be Creator and not a 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.' Now if He created everything that was ever created and existed before all created things, it is evident that He Himself is not among created things. He is above all creation and not a part of it" {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 21.1}.

"The Scriptures declare that Christ is 'the only begotten son of God.' He is begotten, not created. As to when He was begotten, it is not for us to inquire, nor could our minds grasp it if we were told. The prophet Micah tells us all that we can know about it in these words, '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 have been from of old, from the days of eternity.’ Micah 5:2, margin. There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father (John 8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning” (Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 21.2}.

“But the point is that Christ is a begotten Son and not a created subject. He has by inheritance a more excellent name than the angels; He is ‘a Son over His own house.’ Hebrews 1:4; 3:6. And since He is the only-begotten son of God, He is of the very substance and nature of God and possesses by birth all the attributes of God, for the Father was pleased that His Son should be the express image of His Person, the brightness of His glory, and filled with all the fullness of the Godhead. So He has ‘life in Himself.’ He possesses immortality in His own right and can confer immortality upon others. Life inheres in Him, so that it cannot be taken from Him, but having voluntarily laid it down, He can take it again. His words are these: ‘Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it

again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.’ John 10:17,18” {CHR 22.1}.

“If anyone springs the old cavil, how Christ could be immortal and yet die, we have only to say that we do not know. We make no pretensions of fathoming infinity. We cannot understand how Christ could be God in the beginning, sharing equal glory with the Father before the world was and still be born a babe in Bethlehem. The mystery of the crucifixion and resurrection is but the mystery of the incarnation. We cannot understand how Christ could be God and still become man for our sake. We cannot understand how He could create the world from nothing, nor how He can raise the dead nor yet how it is that He works by His Spirit in our own hearts; yet we believe and know these things. It should be sufficient for us to accept as true those things which God has revealed without stumbling over things that the mind of an angel cannot fathom. So we delight in the infinite power and glory which the Scriptures declare belong to Christ, without worrying our finite minds in a vain attempt to explain the infinite” {CHR 22.2}.

“Finally, we know the Divine unity of the Father and the Son from the fact that both have the same

Spirit. Paul, after saying that they that are in the flesh cannot please God, continues: 'But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' Romans 8:9. Here we find that the Holy Spirit is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. Christ 'is in the bosom of the Father' being by nature of the very substance of God and having life in Himself. He is properly called Jehovah, the self-existent One and is thus styled in Jeremiah 23:5, 6, where it is said that the righteous Branch, who shall execute judgment and justice in the earth, shall be known by the name of *Jehovah-tsidekenu* — THE LORD, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" {Waggoner, CHR 23.1}.

"Let no one, therefore, who honors Christ at all, give Him less honor than He gives the Father, for this would be to dishonor the Father by just so much, but let all, with the angels in heaven, worship the Son, having no fear that they are worshiping and serving the creature instead of the Creator" {Ellet Joseph Waggoner, CHR 24.1}.

### **White's approval of Waggoner's message**

"I have had the question asked, 'What do you think of this light that these men are presenting?'

Why, I have been presenting it to you for the last 45 years — the matchless charms of Christ. This is what I have been trying to present before your minds. When Brother Waggoner brought out these ideas in Minneapolis, it was the first clear teaching on this subject from any human lips I had heard, excepting the conversations between myself and my husband. I have said to myself, It is because God has presented it to me in vision that I see it so clearly, and they cannot see it because they have never had it presented to them as I have. And when another presented it, every fiber of my heart said, Amen” {Ellen White, *The 1888 Material*, 1888 348.4}.

“The Lord desires us all to be learners in the school of Christ. Young and old have precious lessons to learn from the divine Teacher, and when these lessons are learned they are to impart them to others. God is presenting to the minds of men divinely appointed precious gems of truth, appropriate for our time. God has rescued these truths from the companionship of error, and has placed them in their proper framework. When these truths are given their rightful position in God's great plan, when they are presented intelligently and earnestly, and with reverential awe, by the Lord's servants, many will conscientiously believe because

of the weight of evidence, without waiting for every supposed difficulty which may suggest itself to their minds to be removed. Others, not discerning spiritual things, will keep themselves in a combative frame of mind, opposing every argument that does not meet their ideas" {Ellen White, 1888 139.2}.

"Those who have not been sinking the shaft deeper and still deeper into the mine of truth will see no beauty in the precious things presented at this conference. When the will is once set in stubborn opposition to the light given, it is difficult to yield, even under the convincing evidence which has been in this conference. To controvert, to question, to criticize, to ridicule, is the education many have received and the fruit they bear. They refuse to admit evidence. The natural heart is in warfare against light, truth, and knowledge. Jesus Christ has been in every sleeping room where you have been entertained. How many prayers went up to heaven from these rooms?" {Ellen White, 1888 140.1}.

"Messages bearing the divine credentials have been sent to God's people; the glory, the majesty, the righteousness of Christ, full of goodness and truth, have been presented; the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ has been set forth among us with beauty and loveliness, to charm all whose

hearts were not closed with prejudice. We know that God has wrought among us” {White, 1888 673.6}.

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. ... Many had lost sight of Jesus. ... This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world” {Ellen White, TM 91.2}.

“God has given Brother Jones and Brother Waggoner a message for the people. You do not believe that God has upheld them, but He has given them precious light, and their message has fed the people of God. When you reject the message borne by these men, you reject Christ, the Giver of the message. Why will you encourage the attributes of Satan? .... ‘Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?’” {Ellen White, The 1888 Material, 1888 1353.3}.

“It is quite possible that Elder Jones or Waggoner may be overthrown by the temptations of the enemy; but if they should be, this would not prove that they had had no message from God, or that the work that they had done was all a mistake. But should this happen, how many would take this position, and enter into a fatal delusion because they are not under the control of the Spirit of God. They walk in the sparks of their own kindling, and cannot distinguish between the fire they have kindled and

the light which God has given, and they walk in blindness as did the Jews” {White, 1888 1044.3}.

“I call upon the young men who are entering the work as ministers to take heed how they hear. Be careful how you oppose the precious truths of which you now have so little knowledge. Search the Scriptures for yourselves” {Ellen White, 1888 141.1}.

### **Comparing what Waggoner and White said**

When Waggoner said: “Christ is the ‘express image’ of the Father’s person.... Christ is the ‘only begotten Son of God,’ .... angels are sons of God, as was Adam.... by creation; Christians are the sons of God by adoption....., but Christ is the Son of God by birth” {Waggoner, CHR 11.4; 12.1}; White said: “for ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,’ — not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person” {ST May 30, 1895, par. 3}; “The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave his only begotten Son, tore from his bosom Him who was made in the express image of his person, and sent him down to earth to reveal how greatly he loved mankind” {Ellen White, RH July 9, 1895, par. 13}.

When Waggoner said: "The Word was 'in the beginning.' The mind of man cannot grasp the ages that are spanned in this phrase. It is not given to men to know when or how the Son was begotten.... We know that Christ 'proceeded forth and came from God' (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man" {CHR 9.1}; White said: "And although we may try to reason in regard to our Creator how long He has had existence, where evil first entered into our world, and all these things, we may begin to reason about them until we fall down faint and exhausted with the research when there is yet an infinity beyond. We cannot grasp it...." {5LtMs, Ms 13, 1888, par. 16}; "His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures" {Ellen White, ST May 3, 1899, par. 4}.

When Waggoner said: "While both are of the same nature, the Father is first in point of time. He is also greater in that he had no beginning, while Christ's personality had a beginning" {SITI April 8, 1889, page 201.42}; White said: "The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality" {UL 367.4}.

## **Satan's warfare against Christ's Sonship**

We do well to recount how the Sonship of Christ is at the centre of the great controversy: First, the fallen angels would obscure the fact that Christ is the Son of God: "Angels were expelled from heaven ... This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God..." {Ellen White, TDG 128.2}. Second, the chief fallen angel tempted Jesus to doubt He was the Son of God: "If thou be the son of God..."; "If thou be the son of God..." (Matthew 4:3, 6). Third, the Jewish church leaders rejected Jesus' claim that He was indeed the Son of God: Jesus referred to God as His Father, and the Jews took stones to stone Him, saying that He being a mere man call Himself the Son of God and in that sense made Himself equal with God (John 10:29-36) – "The whole nation of the Jews called God their Father, therefore they would not have been so enraged if Christ had represented Himself as standing in the same relation to God. But they accused Him of blasphemy, showing that they understood Him as making this claim in the highest sense" {Ellen White, DA 207.4}. Fourth, the church in Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, rejected that He was the Son of God: they regarded Him merely as the son of Joseph, and after He read from Isaiah and

said the prophecy referred to Him, they thrust Him out of the church and would have thrown Him over the cliff headlong had He not escaped (Luke 4:16-30). Today, our Seventh-day Adventist theologians say that the Sonship of Christ is a mere metaphor.

Note what the Biblical Research Institute – the official body that is responsible for enhancing the understanding of our Seventh-day Adventist church doctrines and beliefs – says. In an article entitled “A Question of Sonship” published in 2015, the Bible Research Institute says, “Christ is the eternal Son of God. ... We are dealing with metaphorical use of the word ‘son.’ Metaphorical significance: The Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father” (website; re-printed in *Adventist World*, November 2015, p 42).

What does the Bible say about theologians who reduce the Sonship of Christ to a mere metaphor, thereby denying the relationship between the Father and Son to be real? The Bible says, “He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son” (1 John 2:22).

Christ’s Sonship is not a metaphor, it is a fact. If Christ’s Sonship is a mere metaphor, then explain how fallen angels wanted to obscure what was simply a metaphor! “Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and Lucifer, that glorious angel, got upon a warfare over the matter, until he had to be

thrust down to the earth” {25LtMs, Ms 86, 1910, par. 29}. And this warfare was over the fact that Christ was a literal Son of God. Lucifer’s warfare in heaven was, and Satan’s warfare today is still on the same grounds, over a reality and not over a metaphor.

### **Concluding Remarks**

“Christ is the Son of God by birth” {CHR 12.1}; “And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: ‘The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting.... 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.’ Proverbs 8:22-30” {PP 34.1}. “God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God” {8T 268.3}. “All the children of God are embraced in the Sonship of Christ” {Ms 67, 1907}. “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12) – a metaphorical son will give a metaphorical eternal life. To deny Christ’s Sonship is to deny God’s Fatherhood and to charge Him with lying He who said to Christ, “Thou art My beloved Son” (Mark 1:11). And “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” (1 John 2:22).

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