



# **Christ begotten Son of God**

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By Jonathan Mukwiri

**T**hat Christ is the literal begotten Son of God, is the truth that was believed by Seventh-day Adventist leading pioneers. In our time, we must rediscover and contend for “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). As this truth is being eclipsed, “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” (CW 28.1).

Our pioneers’ words: ‘Christ is the Son of God by birth’ (Waggoner, CHR 12.1, 1890); ‘*a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person*’ (EG White, ST 30 May 1895), ‘*who was made in the express image of his [Father’s] person*’ (EG White, RH 9 July 1895); ‘God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be, – a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity, – appeared the Word. ... [Christ] proceeded forth and came from God’ (Smith, LUJ 10.1, 1898).

Few Adventists are rediscovering truth held by leading pioneers, and are being sealed: “settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved” (FLB 287.7). To ‘obscure, that

Christ was the only begotten Son of God' (TDG 128.1), Satan teaches the theory of co-eternal age of Father and Son, reducing Christ to a Symbolic Son.

Christ built His true Church upon the pillar of faith in Him as the literal Son of the living God (Matthew 16:13-18). 'Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ, are working as blind men. They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor' (760 MR 9, 1905). When the truth established by leading Pioneers is being removed, let their words be repeated (CW 28.1).

### **Solid eternal truth in Smith's 1882 book**

The pillar of faith on the personality of Christ that was held by our leading pioneers that Christ is the literal begotten Son of God, is found in Uriah Smith's book, *Daniel and the Revelation* (Review and Herald Publishing, 1882), the book containing "solid, eternal truth for this time" (1MR 61.2). We read as follows:

'The great, essential questions which God would have presented to the people are found in *Daniel and the Revelation*. There is found solid, eternal truth for this time. Everyone needs the light and

information it contains' (1MR 61.2, 1901). This was not Ellen White's personal view, for she says: "I write all that the Lord gives me to write" (3SM 49.2, 1906).

We are told: 'This book has been the means of bringing many precious souls to a knowledge of the truth. Everything that can be done should be done to circulate *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*. I know of no other book that can take the place of this one. It is God's helping hand' (21MR, 444.3, 1901).

We are also told: 'The light given was that *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*, *The Great Controversy*, and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, would make their way. They contain the very message the people must have, the special light God had given His people. The angels of God would prepare the way for these books in the hearts of the people' (CM 123.3, 1899; CEv 21.1).

We are further told: 'Instruction has been given me that the important *books containing the light that God has given regarding Satan's apostasy in heaven* should be given a wide circulation just now; for through them the truth will reach many minds. "Patriarchs and Prophets," "*Daniel and the Revelation*," and "Great Controversy" are needed now as never before. They should be widely circulated because the truths they emphasize will

open many blind eyes' (Ellen G White, RH 16 February 1905 Par. 10).

Progressive truth cannot turn into error what the prophetess confirmed to be "solid, eternal truth," else it was not truth, and such progressive concept make our prophetess a liar. 'That which was truth in the beginning is truth now. Although new and important truths appropriate for succeeding generations have been opened to the understanding, the present revealings do not contradict those of the past. Every new truth understood only makes more significant the old' (Ellen G White, RH 2 March 1886).

It should be made clear that, Ellen White, as a prophetess, was in the custom of condemning errors in books published for the benefit of the church. Of much significance here is that, in 1903, Ellen White commended the book "*Daniel and the Revelation*" by Uriah Smith, but in the same year condemned the book "*Living Temple*" by John Kellogg.

Of the book by Smith, she wrote: "In Desire of Ages, Patriarchs and Prophets, Great Controversy, and *Daniel and the Revelation*, there is precious instruction. These books must be regarded as of special importance, and every effort should be made to get them before the people" (Letter 229, 1903; Ev 366.3). Of the book by Kellogg, she wrote: "I have

been given words to speak to you that I cannot withhold. A portion of the matter that is printed in the book Living Temple is incorrect and misleading, and ought not to be placed before the people.... In regard to the book Living Temple, I have been instructed by the heavenly messenger that some of the reasoning in this book is untrue, and that this reasoning would lead astray the minds of those who are not thoroughly established on the foundation principles of present truth" (Letter 232, 1903; 5BIO 303.5).

For Smith's book, "every effort should be made to get [it] before the people", and for Kellogg's book, "[it] ought not to be placed before the people." We can trust Smith's book to have "solid, eternal truth".

Beware of the 1944 edition! When the first time in 1910 AG Daniells wanted to change Smith's book, EG White objected: 'I have been instructed that the Lord is not the author of the proposal to make many changes in books already published ... Satan would be busy at work implanting seeds of distrust and unbelief, and it would require much labor to remedy the evil that would be wrought' (Letter 70, 1910). Be sure to read the 1882 edition that was published in Smith's lifetime, for neither Uriah Smith (1832-1903) nor Ellen White (1827-1915) approved or endorsed, respectively, the changes made in the 1944 edition.

## **Christ uncreated but not of complete eternity**

It is very clear that the book by Uriah Smith (1882 edition) that the prophetess said contains "solid, eternal truth", teaches that Christ is the literal Son of the living God.

Commenting on Revelation 1:4, Uriah Smith said: 'The Source of Blessing. "From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come," or is to be, an expression which signifies complete eternity, past and future, and can be applicable to God the Father only. This language, we believe, is never applied to Christ. He is spoken of as another person, in distinction from the being thus described' (Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, Review and Herald, 1882, p. 430).

Commenting on Revelation 3:14, Uriah Smith said: 'Moreover he is "the beginning of the creation of God." Some understand by this language that Christ was the first created being, dating his existence far back before any other created being or thing, next to the self-existent and eternal God. But the language does not necessarily imply this; for the words, "the beginning of the creation," may simply signify that the work of creation, strictly speaking,



was begun by him. And it is expressly declared that "without him was not anything made that was made." Others, however, take the word [Greek word] to mean the agent or efficient cause, which is one of the definitions of the word, understanding that Christ is the agent through whom God has created all things, but that he himself came into existence in a different manner, as he is called "the only begotten" of the Father. It would seem utterly inappropriate to apply this expression to any being created in the ordinary sense of that term' (Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, Review and Herald, 1882, p. 487-489).

Commenting on Revelation 22:13, Uriah Smith said: 'Christ here applies to himself the appellation of Alpha and Omega. As applied to him, the expression must be taken in a more limited sense than when applied to the Father, as in chap. 1:8. Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, of the great plan of salvation' (Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, Review and Herald, 1882, p. 817).

In summary, we have rediscovered solid eternal truth, that: (1) only God the Father has complete eternity, past and future; (2) Christ was not created, Christ came into existence in a different manner, as the only begotten Son of God the Father; and (3) the

expression Alpha and Omega has limited application when applied to Christ than when applied to God the Father. The prophetess said Smith's book contained "solid, eternal truth" (1MR 61.2); and that which was truth then is truth now, that new truth does not contradict old truth (RH 2 March 1886). But only few Adventists are rediscovering this solid eternal truth.

### **Christ uncreated had a beginning in eternity**

If you go online at the Adventist Pioneer Library, you will find another book by Uriah Smith, *Looking Unto Jesus* (Battle Creek: Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1898) [LUJ]; the teaching therein is consistent with that in Smith's book that the prophetess said contains "solid, eternal truth" as already quoted – we quote from LUJ as follows:

'God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be, – a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity, – appeared the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1. This uncreated Word was the Being, who, in the fulness of time, was made flesh, and dwelt among us. His beginning was not like that of any other being in the universe. It is set forth in the

mysterious expressions, "his [God's] only begotten Son" (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9), "the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14), and, "I proceeded forth and came from God." John 8:42. Thus it appears that by some divine impulse or process, not creation, known only to Omniscience, and possible only to Omnipotence, the Son of God appeared. And then the Holy Spirit (by an infirmity of translation called .. the Holy Ghost"), the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the divine afflatus and medium of their power, representative of them both (Psalm 139:7), was in existence also' (LUJ 10.1).

'John says: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Paul to the Hebrews corroborates the words of John. He says that God hath appointed his Son "heir of all things:" that he is "the express image of his person," the "brightness of his glory," and that by him "he made the world." Hebrews 1:2, 3. But to the Colossians he bears a still more definite testimony. In chapter 1:15-17, he says of Christ: "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.” (LUJ 12.1).

‘As related to all else, animate and inanimate, all shining worlds that people space, all orders of intelligences, above and below, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, visible and invisible, he antedated them all, as in uncreated being, derived from God, he took his place, as “the only begotten Son” “of the Father.” “In the beginning was the Word.” In point of existence he was thus before them all. And then began creation, of which he was the “beginner.” To all below him he was the Creator. And as to him they owe existence, upon him they lean for constant preservation; for he upholds “all things by the word of his power.” Hebrews 1:3. On the basis of this relationship, it need not be stated that all worlds and dominions, all ranks and orders of beings, are therefore under his authority and subject to his will. Standing thus at the head of the universe, and all things therein, creator, upholder, and ruler of all, what flight of imagination could span the measure of his glory and power?’ (LUJ 17.2).

Do not think that the eternity of Christ can only mean co-eternal existence with God His Father. The Jews made a similar human mistake. ‘Christ shows them that, although they might reckon His life to be

less than fifty years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures' (ST 3 May 1899). Human computation of time is limited to the beginning of creation; before that there is no computation of time, no figures by which it can be measured. Do not ally with Satan to 'obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God' (TDG 128.1) based on human view of eternity.

### **In Christ is Life original un-borrowed un-derived**

When Christ proceeded and came forth out of His Father, the Father ordained that Christ should have the same life original that is in God His Father; and hence: 'In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. "He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life' (DA 530.3, 1898). Does proceeding and coming forth from the Father reduce the life in Christ to borrowed life? Absolutely Not!

Ellen White also said: 'In Jesus is our life derived. In Him is life, that is original, unborrowed, underived life. In us there is a streamlet from the fountain of life. In Him is the fountain of life. Our life is something that we receive, something that the Giver

takes back again to Himself. If our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall, when Christ shall appear, also appear with Him in glory. And while in this world we will give to God, in sanctified service, all the capabilities He has given us' (Letter 309, 1905; MM 7.3). Ellen White should be understood as: contrasting the life which the Son of God inherits naturally from His Father with the life that is bestowed on the adopted sons of men. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). It is not physical life that is here specified, but *immortality*, the life which is exclusively the property of God.' (1SM 296.2).

The Bible is clear about the "life, original, unborrowed, underived" that is in Christ: "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). In other words, the Father has *immortality* (that is, "life, original, unborrowed, underived") in Himself; and the Father in turn has given that same life to His Son. This life, '*immortality*, the life which is exclusively the property of God', Christ has in Himself by inheritance (Heb 1:4) from His Father who possessed and brought Him forth (Proverb 8:22-25; John 8:42).

This is all consistent with what Jesus Himself said in John 10:17-18: "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.” Christ is saying the power and authority of laying down and taking life back is given Him by His Father, who has ordained that “as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself” (John 5:26) and Christ clearly says the “commandment” to lay down and take that life again He “received of [His] Father.”

It is clear that the life that is “in Christ” is the same life that is in God the Father. “For as the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in himself” (John 5:26). The Father is “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God” (1Tim 1:17), “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see” (1Tim 6:15-16), because “no man has seen God at any time” (John 1:18), “The Father Himself which has sent me...you have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape” (John 5:37), “not that any man has seen the Father save he which is of God” (John 6:46). Because the Son of God is “of” or

“from” God, he has “by inheritance” (Heb 1:4) “Jesus knowing that the father had given all things into his hands” (John 13:3), All things: His life (John 5:26; 6:57), His name (Heb 1:4; Phil 2:9; Exodus 23:21-23), His glory (John 17:22), His throne (Rev 3:21), and His power of authority (John 10:18; Matt 28:18). All things, Christ has received from the original life, God the Father “the great Source of all” (DA 21.2).

### **Christ proceeded and came forth from God**

The Bible says our God is one: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4) (see also Mark 12:29, 32). Christ confirms that life eternal is to know “the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom” the one true God and Father “hast sent” (John 17:3). Christ said, “the Father is greater than I” (John 14:28); and one of our leading pioneers, explains: ‘The Father was greater than the Son in that he was first. The Son was equal with the Father in that he had received all things from the Father’ (James White, RH 4 January 1881 Par. 2).

The Bible says: "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). To obscure that Christ is the literal begotten Son of God, and maintain the theory of co-eternal age of Father and Son, many say that Proverbs 8 refers to mere Wisdom, not Christ. But the prophetess confirms Christ is that Wisdom:

'The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate – a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. [quotes John 1:1, 2]. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father – one in nature, in character, in purpose – the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. [quotes Micah 5:2]. 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' (Ellen White, PP 34.1, 1890).

"The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old," Christ says. "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.” But the only-begotten Son of God humbled Himself to come to this earth. He took the sinner’s place; the guiltless suffered for the guilty. This was the hiding of His glory. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death.” (ST 22 Feb 1899).

‘Through Solomon Christ declared: “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.... 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.” (ST August 29, 1900 Par. 14).

The Bible says: "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me" (John 8:42). Most of our ministers, like the Pharisees, deny the meaning of "proceeded forth" and refuse to recognise the Son of God. To them, the prophetess says as to the Pharisees:

'Jesus, with startling emphasis, denied that the Jews were following the example of Abraham. Said he, "Ye do the deeds of your father." The Pharisees, partly comprehending his meaning, said, "We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." But Jesus answered them: "If God were your Father, ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." The Pharisees had turned from God, and refused to recognize his Son. If their minds had been open to the love of God, they would have acknowledged the Saviour who was sent to the world by him. Jesus boldly revealed their desperate condition' (Ellen G White, ST 23 October 1879 Par. 17).

The Bible says: "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18). Those who ally with Satan to obscure that Christ is the

literal begotten Son of God, and maintain that Christ is of co-eternal age with His Father, think that Christ was referring to God as His symbolic Father, not a literal Father. The prophetess Ellen White confirms that Christ was here claiming God was His Father in the highest sense and the Jews fully understood Him and that is why the Jews wanted to stone Him:

‘Jesus claimed equal rights with God in doing a work equally sacred, and of the same character with that which engaged the Father in heaven. But the Pharisees were still more incensed. He had not only broken the law, according to their understanding, but in calling God “His own Father” had declared Himself equal with God. John 5:18’ (DA 207.3).

‘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’ (DA 207.4). ‘Christ claimed God as His Father in the very highest sense’ (Review and Herald, March 5, 1901).

‘A complete offering has been made; 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*, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. *In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*" (Ellen G White, ST 30 May 1895) – here, White echoes and endorses what Waggoner said in 1890 (CHR 12.1), quoted in the next section. '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 G White, RH 9 July 1895).

### **Christ begotten Son of God by birth**

In 1888, 'the Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones' (TM 91.2). Of this message by Ellet J Waggoner, we are told: 'Messages bearing 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 to prejudice. We

know that God has wrought among us' (1888 673.6). Ellet Joseph Waggoner put the 1888 message in his book, *Christ and His Righteousness* [CHR] (Review & Herald Pub, 1890), in which we read the following:

'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, [quotes "John 17:5]. And more than seven hundred years before His first advent, His coming was thus foretold by the word of inspiration: [quotes 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).

'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) – this sonship distinction was echoed and endorsed by White (ST 30 May 1895), quoted in above section.

‘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' (CHR 19.1).

'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, [quotes 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' (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).

'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-sidekenu* – THE LORD, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS' (CHR 23.1).

## God is Love

The word 'love' in Greek can be rendered as *Eros* (romantic love) or *Storge* (familial love) or *Philia* (friendship love) or *Agape* (selfless love). *Eros* love is not used in the New Testament. Misapplying 1 John 4:7-12, those who ally with Satan to obscure that Christ is the literal begotten Son of God, use *Eros* mindset to teach that God did not at any point in eternity exist alone before Christ came forth because in order for God to be God and to be love He had to have at least one co-equal, one co-eternal person with whom He bestows love and from whom He receives love. *Eros* mindset describes God in the context of a love that needs someone else in order to be love, and avers that perfect love is possible only between equals. *Eros* mindset reduces God to a selfish God, distorting 1 John 4:8 by mixing *Eros* and *Agape*! Read 1 John 4:7-12.

In the text, John defines the love of God in the giving of His Son to die for us. So at the end of verse 8 John defines God as love and then expands this definition into the manifestation of God sending His Son. Consistency of usage in this text point to the fact that the God mentioned in verse 8 is the same God in verses 9-12. This suggests that the God in verse 8 is the Father and that His love is revealed in

the giving of His Son to save humanity. *Agape* love is a love that invests value rather than seeks it. God giving His Son to us invests value in us and is indeed *agape*. *Eros* mindset misapplies 1 John 4:8-12 to giving and receiving of love between co-equals and co-eternals, which is not what the text teaches.

*Eros* mindset explains God by mixing *Eros* and *Agape* love. *Eros* is the need to serve one another, but *agape* is the willingness to serve others without reciprocity. *Eros* is the need for equal status or co-equality, but *agape* is willingness to serve the least worthy. *Eros* seeks equal, but *agape* makes equal. *Eros* mindset asks: if Jesus were begotten in eternity then there would be a time He did not exist and therefore how could He be God? This question only occurs in the domain of *Eros* love that seeks value rather than invests value. *Eros* demands equality of status in all areas yet *agape* does not. *Agape* accepts that in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwells (Col 2:9), "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell" (Col 1:19), *Eros* thinks to be 'heir of all things' (Heb 1:2) and thus equal with God 'by inheritance' (Heb 1:4) is robbery on Christ's part, but *agape* thinks 'it not robbery to be equal with God' by 'being in the form of God' (Philippians 2:6).

The mixture of *Eros* and *Agape* that teaches that God cannot be love unless Christ is of co-eternal age with God, is contrary to the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy that clearly teach that Jesus proceeded out of the Father at a distant past time in our human computation we call eternity. "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 everlasting" (Micah 5:2). "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." (Proverbs 8:22-23). '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' (PP 34.1).

Christ inherited all that the Father has and is fully divine by inheritance and in that inheritance we are able to hear the loving words of the Father who spoke to His Son (Mat 3:17). The words Father and Son only find meaning through inheritance that *agape* accepts and *Eros* denies. Through the *agape* of 1 John 4:8 we can take hold of the words: "... but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and

your God" (John 20:17). The Father of Jesus is our Father and the God of Jesus is our God, and all this we possess through Christ the literal Son of God who is the greatest demonstration of *agape* the universe can ever behold. It remains the fact that: 'God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son' (8T 268.3).

The *Eros* mindset that teaches that for God to be love Christ must have been of co-eternal existence with God for both to bestow and receive love from each other, is a satanic mindset, for Satan thought perfect love was only possible between equals, and he demanded equality with his Creator, Christ, in order for him to accept that God is love. 'The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself; so that wherever was the presence of His Son, it was as His own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son He had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was His Son to work in union with Himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out His will and His

purposes but would do nothing of Himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in Him' (LHU 18.3). 'When God said to His Son, "Let us make man in our image" [Gen 1:26], Satan was jealous of Jesus' (EW 145.1). In this controversy, Satan seeks to distort the *agape* love of God, but when this controversy is ended, all will 'declare that God is love' (GC 678.3).

### **Concluding remarks**

Christ built His true Church upon the pillar of faith in Him as the literal Son of the living God (Matthew 16:13-18). Our leading pioneers taught that: 'Christ is the Son of God by birth' (Ellet Waggoner, CHR 12.1, 1890); Christ is '*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*' (Ellen White, ST 30 May 1895); Christ is God's Son '*who was made in the express image of his [the Father's] person*' (Ellen White, RH 9 July 1895); 'God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be, – a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity, – appeared the Word' (Uriah Smith, LUJ 10.1, 1898). Antichrist and those with the spirit of antichrist deny that Christ is the literal Son of God (1 John 2:22-23).

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