**“The Divinity of Christ. No. 2” The Present Truth 6, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

**THE WORKS OF CHRIST PROVE HIS DIVINE NATURE**

We come to notice some of the works which Christ does as God, and in this we shall find additional proof of his divinity. In one talk with the Jews, He used the following language, which shows His position of equality with the Father: “For neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent Him.” John 5:22, 23, Revised Version. {PTUK December 4, 1890, p. 393.1}

The first way in which God is revealed to us as demanding honour, is as Creator. Paul says that the heathen who know not God are without excuse, because God has revealed unto them that which may be known of Him; for ever since the creation of the world, the invisible things of God, that is, His eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made. Romans 1:19, 20. Now since Christ is to be honoured by all, just as they honour the Father, it follows that he is to be honoured as Creator; and so, according to Paul’s words to the Romans, the visible creation affords proof of the “eternal power and Godhead” of Christ. Let us note a few texts which speak of Christ as Creator. John 1:1, 2 has already been quoted, showing that Christ is God. Verse 3 says: “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” {PTUK December 4, 1890, p. 393.2}

In Hebrews 1:8-10 we have the record of language which the Father addressed to the Son. The first, in verses 8, 9, in which the Father addresses the Son as God, we have already quoted. But in verse 10 we are told that He said further to Him: “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands.” So whenever we look abroad upon the earth, or view the shining heavens, we may know that they show the power and love of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Without Him was not anything made. The apostle Paul makes this most emphatic, in his epistle to the Colossians, of Christ, through whose love we have redemption, He says, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” Colossians 1:15-17. {PTUK December 4, 1890, p. 393.3}

From the words, “the first-born of every creature,” some have argued that Christ Himself is a created being. But that is not only a hasty conclusion, but one directly opposed to the text itself. Note the following points: 1. The same thing could not be both creature and Creator. But this text affirms in the most emphatic terms, what other texts teach, that Christ is Creator. 2. Verse 16 shows that He was not created, for, “by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,” etc. Says John, also, “All things were made by Him; and *without Him was not anything made* that was made.” John 1:3. This excludes Christ from the list of created beings; for everything that was made was made by Him. In Revelation 5:13, also, it is stated that “every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth,” gave honour and glory to Him. 3. The term “first-born of every creature” cannot by any possibility indicate that He is a created being, standing related to other creatures simply as first, and highest in rank, because He is “the only begotten Son of God.” There is none other in the universe that stands related to God the Father as He does. The term first-born does not in this case, at least, imply that others were born after Him. It only shows His pre-eminence above all things, as stated in verse 18. 4. Verse 17 says that “He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” This again separates Him from the creation, except as creation’s Lord; and this is what the text teaches. In Him creation had its beginning, as stated in Revelation 3:14. Creation existed in Him, in embryo, as it were; “for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.” Colossians 1:19. No language could more perfectly show the pre-existence and the creative power of Christ, than does the language of Colossians 1:15-17. {PTUK December 4, 1890, p. 393.4}

“By Him all things consist.” Literally, “by Him all things hold, or stay, together.” This is equivalent to Hebrews 1:3, which speaks of Him as “upholding all things by the word of His power.” He brought all things into existence, and He preserves them in existence. His word caused them to exist, and His word upholds them. In all these things He acts, not independently, but conjointly with the Father. Said He: “I and My Father are one.” John 10:30. Not a thought does one have that is not the thought of the other. Their unity in creation is shown in the words, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Genesis 1:26. This union of the Father and the Son serves to explain why the Hebrew word which is rendered “God” is in the plural number. “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. All that we know of God, we learn through Christ. Let no one, therefore, say that in exalting Christ we are in danger of lowering our ideas of God. That is impossible, for the more exalted ideas we have of Christ, the more exalted must be our ideas of the Father. E. J. W. {PTUK December 4, 1890, p. 393.5}

**“The Divinity of Christ. No. 3” The Present Truth 6, 26.**

E. J. Waggoner

**HIS PRE-EXISTENCE, AND EQUALITY WITH THE FATHER**

The fact that Jesus is spoken of as the only-begotten Son of God should be sufficient to establish a belief in His divinity. As Son of God, He must partake of the nature of God. “As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself.” John 5:26. Life and immortality are imparted to the faithful people of God, but Christ alone shares with the Father of the power to impart life. He has “life in Himself;” that is, He is able to perpetuate His own existence. This is shown by His own words, when, showing the voluntary nature of His sacrifice for man, He said: “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.” John 10:17, 18. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 409.1}

That Christ is Divine is shown by the fact that He receives worship. Angels have always refused to receive worship and adoration. But we read of the Father, that “when He bringeth in the first be gotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him.” Hebrews 1:6. If He is to receive worship from angels, it follows as a matter of course that He should receive worship from men; and we find that even while here on earth, in the likeness of man, He received worship as God. The prophet John thus records the adoration which Christ will finally receive equally with the Father: “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” Revelation 5:13. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 409.2}

If Christ were not God, this would be idolatry. The great indictment against the heathen is that they “changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.” Romans 1:25. It matters not what the position of a creature may be, whether a beast, a man, or an angel, worship of it is strictly forbidden. Only God may be worshipped, and since Christ may be worshipped, Christ is God. So say the Scriptures of truth. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 409.3}

It is hardly necessary, with all this array of testimony, to speak of the pre-existence of Christ. One of the strangest things in the world is that men professing to believe and reverence the Bible, will claim that Christ had no existence prior to His birth of the Virgin Mary. Three texts only will be quoted here to disprove this theory; but texts which will be quoted later, on another point, will just as fully prove the pre-existence of Christ. The first text is in the prayer of Jesus on the night of His betrayal. He said, “And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” John 17:5. We do not know what could be plainer, unless it is the statement that He made the world. John says that “all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” John 1:3. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 409.4}

But stronger still are the words of the prophet, who foretold the place of the birth of the Messiah in these words: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, no doubt 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. He who would dispute the pre-existence of Christ in the face of these texts, would deny that the sun shines at midday, if it suited his notion to do so. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 409.5}

In arguing the perfect equality of the Father and the Son, and the fact that Christ is in very nature God, we do not design to be understood as teaching that the Father was not before the Son. It should not be necessary to guard this point, lest some should think that the Son existed as soon as the Father; yet some go to that extreme, which adds nothing to the dignity of Christ, but rather detracts from the honour due Him, since many throw the whole truth away rather than accept a theory so obviously out of harmony with the language of Scripture, that Jesus is the *only begotten Son* of God. He was begotten, not created. He is of the substance of the Father, so that in His very nature He is God; and since this is so, “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.” Colossians 1:19. Or, as the apostle states in Colossians 2:9, “For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” It would be difficult to frame language more expressive of the Divine nature. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 409.6}

Some have difficulty in reconciling Christ’s statement in John 14:28, “My Father is greater than I,” with the idea that He is God, and is entitled to worship. Some, indeed, dwell upon that text alone as sufficient to overthrow the idea of Christ’s divinity; but if that were allowed, it would only prove a contradiction in the Bible, and even in Christ’s own speech; for it is most positively declared, as we seen, that He is Divine. There are two facts which are amply sufficient to account for Christ’s statement recorded in John 14:20. One is that Christ is the Son of God. 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. Then, too, the statement is emphatically true in view of the position which Christ had assumed. He “emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man.” Philippians 2:7, Revised Version. He was “made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.” Hebrews 2:9. In order to redeem man, He had to become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, He must come into active sympathy with us through the same experiences of suffering that His people are called upon to endure. “It behoved him to be made in all points like unto His brethren.” Through his humanity he felt the fulness of human woe. He did not lay aside His divinity, but He laid aside His glory, and veiled His divinity with humanity. So His statement, “My father is greater than I,” is perfectly consistent with the claim, made by Himself as well as by all who wrote of Him, that He was and is God. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 409.7}

E. J. W.

**“The Gathering of Israel” The Present Truth 6, 12.**

E. J. Waggoner

Returning to the prophecy of Ezekiel, we find out what will follow this gathering of Israel:- {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 1851.1}

“And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.... And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever; and My servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Ezekiel 37:22-27. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 1851.2}

With the statement that they shall be placed in their own land, in peace for ever, compare the promise to David, in 2 Samuel 7:10. And with Ezekiel 37:27: “My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people;” and compare what John says in his prophetic description of the new heavens and the new earth: “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” Revelation 21:3-5. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 1851.3}

Again, the statement that God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, *neither sorrow* nor crying, which is expressly declared to be when the earth is made new, read the following, and there cannot remain a doubt but that the gathering which the prophets of old spoke concerning Israel, was the gathering to the new Jerusalem in the new earth:- {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 1851.4}

“Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel *will gather* him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For *the Lord hath redeemed Jacob*, and *ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he* [compare Hosea 13:14]. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and *they shall not sorrow any more at all*.” Jeremiah 31:10-12. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 1851.5}

Before this has been consummated, however, the wicked must be destroyed from the earth. When Christ,-“the Seed to whom the promise was made,”-the One whose the kingdom is by right,-shall come, He will say to the true Israel, who are gathered from all the earth, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:34. This resurrection of the righteous at the coming of Christ, is called the first resurrection, and takes place one thousand years before the resurrection of the wicked (Revelation 20:1-5), of whom those not previously dead are destroyed “by the brightness of His coming.” During this thousand years the earth will be desolate, reduced to its primitive, chaotic state, as is described in Jeremiah 4:23-27: “I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.” See also Isaiah 34:2-15, and which is stated of the earth that “from generation to generation it shall lie waste;” and that the Lord “shall stretch out upon at the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.” {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 1851.6}

It is called a “bottomless pit,” because that word is the same as “the deep” of Genesis 1:2, which, as the earth will be during the one thousand years, “was without form, and void.” In this desolate place Satan will be obliged to stay, and is therefore “bound,” unable to deceive the nations until the thousand years are expired, when the wicked will be raised, and he can exercise his power again for a little season. Then the holy city, the New Jerusalem, will come down from God out of heaven (Revelation 21:1), the hosts of the wicked, under the leadership of Satan, will go up on the breath of the earth, and compass the beloved city, when fire shall come down from God out of heaven and devour them. Revelation 20:7-9. This fire shall burn as an oven, until the wicked are burned up root and branch (Malachi 4:1), and shall also dissolve the earth and purify it from all its corruption. 2 Peter 3:7, 10, 11. From their place of safety in the city of God, the saints will behold the destruction of the wicked (Isaiah 33:14-16; Psalm 37:34), and shall afterward go out from the purified earth, which will then be their home throughout eternity. {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 1851.7}

But if the earth is the kingdom, and the saints do not dwell upon it for more than a thousand years after the coming of the Lord, how can it be said that they inherit the kingdom at His coming? This is easily answered. At the first resurrection the saints are taken at once to the capital of the kingdom, the New Jerusalem, where, during the thousand years, they are associated with Jesus in judging the wicked, and determining the punishment due each one. Revelation 20:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3. During this time the entire history of the world will pass under the eyes of the saints, and they will understand the secret workings that had been hidden from all but the eyes of God. Then the things which have seemed obscure, in God’s dealings with men, will be understood. So Christ and His saints will be *in possession* of the earth during all the thousand years, although they do not dwell in it during that time. It will be in their hands, and they will be engaged in making it fit for habitation, by removing from it those things which offend. The kingdom is given to Christ as soon as He leaves the throne of grace, and ceases to plead for sinners. From that time “the uttermost parts of the earth” are His possession, and He at once proceeds to dash nations in pieces, so that when His people Israel are planted in the land, the children of wickedness shall not affect them any more. (See 2 Samuel 7:10.) {PTUK December 18, 1890, p. 1851.8}

E. J. W.