



2 Cor. 3:18

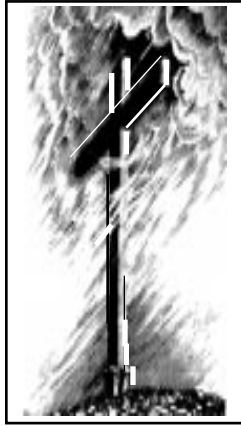
# With Open Face ...

No. 1

NOVEMBER 1996

## Was It Really God's Son Who Died On Calvary?

**A**s a Christian you may think that the title of this article asks a foolish question, or at any rate, one which is easy to answer. Every Christian, of course, would answer a hearty, "yes", to such a question. Perhaps this may be so. The vast majority of Christians (perhaps every single one in the world) would state positively: "Yes, I do believe that God's Son really did die on Calvary for me." No doubt then, it will come as something of a shock to you to discover that most Christians, perhaps even you, do not actually believe that statement. Let me demonstrate what I mean:



How would you respond to the following ideas?

- 1. Jesus was not really the actual Son of God. He was not really His offspring.**
- 2. Jesus was not actually the begotten Son of God. He was not really born from God.**
- 3. God cannot die. Jesus was God so He could not actually have died on Calvary**

Perhaps you are beginning to see the point I am making. However, let me make it a little clearer. "Orthodox" Christian doctrine, today teaches that although Jesus is called the "Son of God", over and over in the Bible, we are not to understand the word "Son" to mean the same thing as it means elsewhere in the Scriptures. When referring to Jesus, the word has some unique, mystical meaning which is left to the "theologians" to interpret for us.

The same applies to the word, "begotten". Five times in the Scriptures, Jesus is called the "Only begotten Son of God" (John 1:14, 18 ; John 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9). This term, *only begotten* is very simple and easy to understand. Any child could readily tell you its meaning. In plain English, it means that He was the only one BORN FROM .

That He came out of God.

Those who embrace the trinitarian teaching that God is made up of three persons who are co-equal and co-eternal, one in three and three in one, have problems with the Scriptures which refer to Jesus as the "only begotten Son of God." However, there need be no problem if we accept what the Scriptures say, and allow ourselves to be taught by God's word, rather than try to read into the Scriptures something which is not there.

### WHO WAS IT THAT GAVE HIS SON?

One of the best known texts in the Bible is John 3:16. Most of us learned this verse almost while we were still in infancy, and have gotten used to the idea that it is the verse in the Bible which most completely, in a single verse, expresses the essence of the whole gospel. The Bible Society, *Gideons International*, have shown high regard for this verse by placing it at the beginning of their published copy of the New Testament, in twenty-six different languages, and furnishing us with the information that it has been translated into more than eleven hundred different languages. The essential focus, the primary message of all Scripture is captured in this one verse:

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)*

It is a sobering thing, then, to reflect on the fact that the vast majority of Christians in the world do not believe the truth expressed in this verse. This is not an exaggeration, as I will demonstrate to you in a moment. Millions of persons who quote this text freely, proclaim their belief in the gospel, declare their appreciation of the truth expressed in it, yet do not accept fully, the facts of truth proclaimed by Jesus Christ in this verse.

Several vital points are made here. However, let us just focus on three of the principal truths:

1. God's love for the world.
2. The degree, or measure of that love.
3. The value of the gift which He gave.

It was Jesus Himself who spoke these words, and the first great point which He wanted to make clear, was God's love for the world. He wanted to bring home to our minds, the reality of the genuineness, and the greatness of God's love for us.

“God SO loved,” He said, and the word “so,” is used to show us the degree, the extent of that love Which our heavenly Father, God, has for us. What is the measure of that love? It is that He gave His son, and not only His son, but *His only begotten Son!* This is how great God’s love for us is. It is easier for a good father to die himself than to give his child to die. When God gave His Son to die for us, it cost Him great suffering. Jesus was the only Being in all the universe who was a part of God in the truest sense. He actually came out of God, was born; begotten (we need not ask how. See Proverbs 8:22,23). He was close to the Father in a way that no other being could be. Yet God gave Him, to be separated from Himself for thirty-three years; to suffer the scorn, persecution, hate, rejection of a diseased world; to suffer the pain and indignity of the cross; to know the agony and uncertainty of unexpected separation from His Father for three fearsome days and nights. God gave His only begotten Son to suffer all this, because of the greatness of His love for us.

But consider this: If Jesus was not actually God’s Son, then what sacrifice did the Father make? Whom did He give? Another God? A friend? A colleague? This does not demonstrate love on the Father’s part, but rather selfishness, in sending another, rather than coming Himself! Yet the whole point of John 3:16 is the love of God (the Father).

“God so loved the world ...” If we embrace the idea of three Gods in one, or one God in three (the trinity), then which one are we talking about here? All three? Or only the Father?

“God so loved ... that He gave His ... Son...” Did the Father give His Son? Did the Holy Spirit give His Son? Did the Son give His Son? These questions are ridiculous, and yet, they need to be asked in order that we may clearly see what the text is saying. God is **THE FATHER**. It is He who gave His Son. It is He who had a Son to give. The Son is not the God who gave His Son, neither is the Holy Spirit that God. The focus of this text is the love of God; but we must understand that this refers **specifically to the Father**. It is His love which is being emphasized here. It is He who is God. (1 Cor. 8:6)

#### CAN GOD DIE?

The doctrine of the Trinity presents another dilemma if we believe that God is a person of honesty and truth. The Scriptures teach that God is immortal. (1 Tim.6:16) This means that He cannot die. This immortality of God, is not a quality which He can put on and take off. It is an essential aspect of His being. His immortality is not like that of unfallen angels, a conditional thing. In referring to the immortality of God we are speaking of an absolute thing. He absolutely cannot, under any circumstances, die.

“Who ONLY hath immortality ...” (1 Tim.6:16) Other beings are immortal, but He alone has immortality in the absolute sense. He can never ever be mortal, or be made to die.

Yet the Scriptures teach that Jesus died for us! (Romans 5:6-8). Here is a dilemma indeed. God cannot die, yet Jesus did die. The Scriptures clearly teach both things. Let us look at the alternatives open to us in viewing this seeming contradiction. Either:

1. Jesus did not really die.

Or:

2. Jesus is not God (the one who only hath immortality).

Those who say that Jesus is God (the God), have no alternative but to say that Jesus did not really die. In other words, what happened at Calvary was only a play; just an acted drama (what blasphemy!). Others seek to find some compromise in saying that the “divine part” of Christ did not die, but only the human part. However, this presents us with an even greater abomination, because what we are left with is nothing but a human sacrifice! Something which could never atone for the sins of the world.

Jesus was not a human being before He came to this earth. But when He came here, He became fully a human being in every sense. All that He retained of His God-nature, was His character of infinite love and compassion. His power, His knowledge, He laid aside completely and lived in total dependence on His Father. However, the trinitarians say that He only took a HUMAN SIDE when He came to earth. In other words, He had two personalities. One, His personality as God and the other, His personality as a human being. Many claim that when Jesus died, His human side died, but that He still continued to live as God even though He was supposed to be dead. This of course would have to be true if Jesus is truly the supreme God, for the supreme God is immortal, and cannot die.

Yet, if this is true; if all that died on Calvary was the “human side” of Jesus, then we must ask the question, what did God really sacrifice at Calvary? According to this doctrine, the “human side” of Jesus was really something created when He was conceived in Mary’s womb. Something which came into being two thousand years ago. The divine side of Jesus, the immortal God-part did not really die. What we have then, is a situation in which God did not really make a sacrifice at Calvary, but rather created a being who paid the price on His behalf. A most abominable and glaringly false idea.

The truth is that Jesus, the Son of God, did truly die. Did pass into the unconscious, senseless, unknowing sleep of death. He did feel the

darkness of death, black and unfathomable stealing upon His soul when He prayed that the cup might pass from Him. He did experience, truly, the agony and uncertainty of genuine separation from God. He died, because He could die. He was mortal. He could die, because He is not the one and only God who "hath immortality". This immortal one, "no man hath seen, not can see," He dwelleth "in the light which no man can approach unto." (1 Tim.6:16).

Jesus is a divine Being. There is no question of that. It is obvious that every Son takes the nature of His Father, so if the nature of the father is divine (having the qualities of God) then it is evident that the Son also is divine. This is why John 1:1 says:

"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God (the God. gr.) and the word was God (divine)."

Yet, the word "God" also carries with it the idea of the one absolute, supreme Being in the universe. In this sense, there is only One who is

God. Not three. This one God is the Father. The One who gave His Son to die. This is the testimony of the Scriptures over and over again (1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Cor. 15:24-28).

All the authority and power which belong to God have been given to His Son (Col.2:9; Matt. 28:18). Yet, these do not belong to Jesus inherently. They have been given to Him by God, (1 John 5:26; Col. 1:19) and the day will come when the controversy is finally over and then the Son will be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

In closing, I would like to ask the question again: "Did God's Son really die for me?" How do you answer this question? This is the central point of the whole gospel. Undoubtedly, this point, above all others, is the focus of Satan's attack. When we see how these truths have been subtly, but effectively nullified over the ages, it becomes clear that Satan's efforts have been highly successful.

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## IS JESUS GOD'S ONLY BEGOTTEN SON?

The term, *Only begotten* is a translation of the Greek word "MONOGENES". What does this word really mean? This word is used a total of nine (9) times in the Bible. Five times, it applies to Jesus and is translated as "only begotten." Below, we see how it is used in the other four instances:

Luke 7:12 - "Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried **at the only son** (*monogenes*) of his mother and she was a widow."

Luke 8:42 - "For he had **one only** (*monogenes*) daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.

Luke 9:38 - "And behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech Thee, look upon my son: for he is **mine only child** (*monogenes*).

We will come to the other reference in a moment. But first of all we must ask in the name of reason and good sense, what is the meaning of the word, *monogenes* in the scriptures quoted above? What are we expected to understand from the use of the word? Obviously, in each instance we are being told that this was the **ONLY** child **BORN** to that particular parent. There is really very little room for misunderstanding what the word means as it is used in the scriptures. It means, *The only one born of*

However, there is one other place in which the word is used and this is with reference to Abraham's son Isaac.

Heb.11:17 - "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his **only begotten son** (*monogenes*)."

We deal with this reference separately, because in this case, Isaac was not actually the only son born to Abraham. Abraham had another son, Ishmael, who had been born before Isaac.

Why then, is Isaac called the only begotten son of Abraham? It is not difficult to see why. Ishmael was not the son of Sarah, Abraham's legitimate wife. The scriptures make it

plain that God's plan was for the son of Abraham to be the offspring of both Abraham and Sarah, therefore God did not accept Ishmael as Abraham's son. His word to Abraham was, "cast out the bondwoman and her son (Gal.4:30)." When God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice on mount Moriah, He stated in carefully chosen words, "take now thy son, THINE **ONLY SON** whom thou lovest..." (Gen.22:2)

In spite of this, some have pounced triumphantly on this verse in Hebrews

11:17 and tried to use it as a key for interpreting *monogenes* to mean something other than *to be born of*. They state that in the case of Isaac, it simply meant that he had a special unique place in the affections of Abraham, and therefore, that is what it means when referring to the relationship between God and Jesus.

What this would mean of course, is that Jesus is not actually the Son of God. He was not begotten of the Father. In other words, the Scriptures do not mean what they teach and we cannot accept the plain, obvious meaning of the word of God.

Even if it were true that this is the way the word is used in the single case of the relationship between Isaac and Abraham, it is nevertheless clear that in the majority of instances, this is not its meaning. In seeking to decide on the meaning of any word, we must look at the way the word is normally used and let this decide the intent of the writer, bearing in mind the context in which it is used. When we apply these rules to *monogenes*, its meaning is plain.

The Greek word **MONOGENES** means: "**only born, ie. sole - only (begotten child).**" This word comes from two greek words, **Monos** and **Genos**.

**Monos** means: **sole, or single; alone, only.**  
**Genos** means: **kin, offspring, stock, generation**

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# Thou Hast Multiplied Thy Fornication ... (Ezek.16:29)

The following article is from the  
Campus Chronicle, The student forum  
of Pacific Union College

## A remarkable week of prayer

While the rest of the world was distracted by the pope's travels, rumors about the future of an acquitted killer, and assorted earthquakes, hurricanes, and cease-fires, something extraordinary was happening here in Angwin. A Catholic was speaking for the week of prayer.

Brennan Manning is more than simply a Roman Catholic. He is also an ex-priest and a recovering alcoholic. As far as anyone remembers, he is the first 'non-Adventist' to be invited to take the pulpit for this special week. It may be a sign of PUC's spiritual maturity that we recognize him as a deeply committed brother in Christ.

*"As far as anyone remembers, he is the first 'non-Adventist' to be invited to take pulpit for this special week."*

Manning likes to say - in the idiom of old-time Southern Christians - "I was seized by the power of a great affection."

His message here at PUC is the one he preaches everywhere: "The love of Christ, is beyond all knowledge, beyond anything that we can intellectualize or imagine. It is not a mild benevolence but a consuming fire. Jesus is so unbearably forgiving, so infinitely patient and so unendingly loving that he provides us with the resources we need to live lives of gracious response."

Some Seventh-day Adventists students will be stunned by this message, we predict. But Manning expects everyone, even believers, to be staggered by the gift of God's unconditional love.

**"It is a backsliding church that lessens the distance between itself and the Papacy"**

ST, Feb. 19, 1894

**"Quite often when a man thinks his mind is getting broader, it's only his conscience stretching."**

selected

Lincoln Journal Star  
Saturday, October 21, 1995 **3C**

## Convocation will focus on baptism

Baptism will be the theme at the Roots and Branches Convocation, Thursday through Sunday at Union College, sponsored by Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska.

Speakers include William Cardinal Keeler, archbishop of Baltimore and president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops; the Rev. Michael Kinnamon, dean of Lexington Theological Seminary in Kentucky; the Rev. Gayle Felton of Duke University Divinity School, and Brigalia Barn, general secretary of the South Africa Council of Churches.

The event is the first in a three-year series of annual convocations for laypersons and clergy, said Daniel Davis, executive secretary of Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska.

More than 200 people from across Nebraska and around the country are expected to attend. Convocations in 1996 and 1997 will focus on communion and ministry. Together with baptism, they represent the three key ecumenical issues facing efforts at church cooperation and unity worldwide, Davis said.

The convocation is an opportunity for

people "to come together and celebrate together, worship together, talk together, enjoy together," he said. "So far as we know, this is the first time anywhere this kind of thing has been done."

Cost of the entire convocation is \$95, but people wishing to attend only a portion of the conference could negotiate a lower fee, Davis said.

Edward Cardinal Cassidy, president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, was scheduled to attend, but at the last minute was sent by the pope to Rumania. Monsignor John Radano, a staff member of the Pontifical Council, will attend as his representative.

A worship service at 7 p.m. at College View Seventh-day Adventist Church, 4015 S. 49th St., with Keeler speaking on "Baptism and the Community," is open to the public. An offering will be taken.

Music at that event and a concert Friday evening will be provided by Bread for the Journey, a Lutheran touring company from Minneapolis. A special concert by the Plymouth Brass will be held at 8 p.m. Saturday at First-Plymouth Congregational Church, 2000 D St. Admission to the concert is \$7.50 in advance, \$9 at the door.

For information, convocation registration or concert tickets, contact the Interchurch Ministries office by calling 476-3391. The deadline for convocation registration is Tuesday.

# Our Sunday Visitor

THE COMPLETE CATHOLIC NEWSPAPER • VOLUME 84, NO. 36

JANUARY 7, 1996 • \$ 1.25

## HEALTH VS. WEALTH

### Adventist-Catholic hospitals align

Two Colorado health care providers, one Catholic and one Adventist, have joined forces to become one of the states largest health care systems and employers.

Together, the PorterCare Adventist Health System and Sisters of Charity Health Services Colorado will have \$1.3 billion in combined gross revenues and approximately 12,000 employees.

The new organization, expected to be finalized in early 1996, will be unique in the United States because it combines finances of two separate Christian health care systems.

The companies say that their combina-

tion will allow them to continue their Christian mission in the face of health systems motivated mainly by profit.

Gary Susnara, president of the Sisters of Charity organization, said, "these for-profit organizations are committed to enhancing stockholder profits, whereas we are committed to our mission of community service."

The Sisters of Charity facilities include six hospitals or nursing homes in Denver, six in Colorado Springs, two in Pueblo and one each in Canon City and Florence. PorterCare Adventist facilities include three hospitals in Denver.