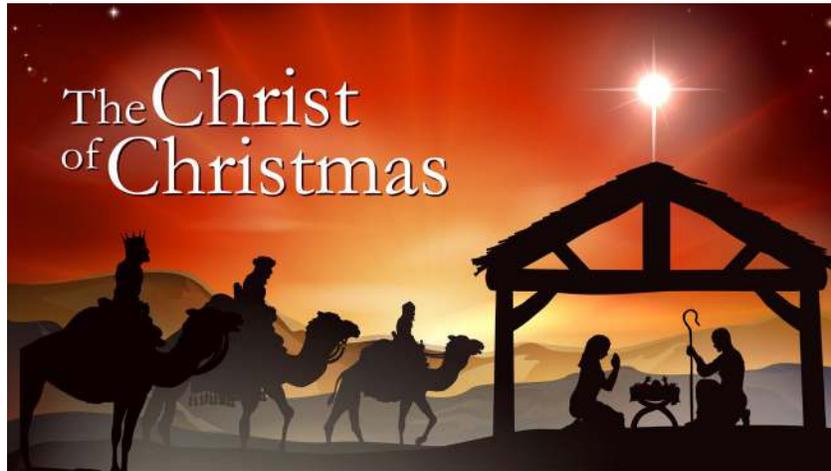


The Christ of Christmas

Expositional Study Of John 14:6

Written By
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Good Christian Men, Rejoice is one of those old Christmas carols which tells you just what to do at this time of year: Rejoice! You know the lyrics.

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice!
Give ye heed to what we say: News! News! Jesus Christ is born today!

Why should we be all excited about the birth of a man 2,000 years ago named Jesus Christ? We rejoice because of who He was and is. And who was and is He? Jesus was, and is, the great *I Am* who appeared to Moses at the burning bush, or the God beyond all time and space. We know He was, and is, this living God because, for one, Micah prophesied His birth:

² But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from
long ago, From the days of eternity (Mic. 5).

Bethlehem in Hebrew means “house of bread,” and *Ephrathah* means “fruitful.” Micah added this latter word to differentiate this Bethlehem from the other Bethlehem existing in Israel. The prophet was quite exact regarding the fact the Messiah, from the line of David (Isa. 9:6), would be born in the hometown of Israel’s greatest king, David. The word fruitful is added to denote how amazing His coming rule and reign would be. The last clause, viz., *His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity*, are, as Dr. Charles Feinberg observes, “. . . the strongest possible

statement of infinite duration in the Hebrew language (Ps 90:2; Pr 8:22-23).”¹ In other words, the Messiah would truly be, as Isaiah prophesied, “God with us” (Isa. 7:14).

Another reason we know Jesus, the Christ, was the eternal God is because He not only performed miracles only God could pull off (miracles dealing with land: Matt. 14:15-21; 15:15:32-38; 21:18-22; with the Galilean sea: Matt. 8:18; Mark6:47-52, 14:24-33, 17:24-27; and with bodies: Matt. 9:1-8; 12:9-14; 8:5-13; 9:27-31; Mark 7:31-37; 8:22-26; John 9:1-41; Luke 13:10-17; Matt. 20:29-34; Luke 22:49-51; Joh 4:46-54; Matt. 8:2-4, 14-15; 9:2 to mention a few) but He assumed the divine title of the great *I Am*. The same verbal formula the God of the Old Testament took for Himself, *ego eimi* (ἐγώ εἰμι; Deut. 32:39; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 46:4)², Jesus wedded to Himself when He added seven predicates to indicate most precisely what He, the eternal God in the flesh, was all about on His earthly mission. So far, we have studied five of them:

- I am the bread of life (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51)
- I am the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5)
- I am the door (John 10:7, 9, 11, 14)
- I am the vine (John 15)
- I am the way (John 14:6)

In this last usage, Jesus emphatically underscored to Thomas, and to us, that He is the only way, or the only access, to the heavenly Father’s presence and His abode called heaven. That is a truth worth rejoicing about. The question, however, still bears asking: Have you switched roads yet by placing your faith this Christmas in Jesus as your way into God’s eternal presence and family?

A sixth word Jesus employs here in John 14, verse 6, further gives us the reason for rejoicing. He is “the truth.” What He is the truth about? Let’s answer this query by putting John’s thought into a sentence which is based on the teaching of the context:

Jesus Is The Only Truth About How To Gain Access To God And Heaven (John 14:6)

¹Charles Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982), 173).

²Consider the Greek and Hebrew of Isaiah 41:4. It contains the exact copula phrase Jesus used of Himself in the I Am statements in John:

^{NAS} **Isaiah 41:4** "Who has performed and accomplished it, Calling forth the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'"

^{NIV} **Isaiah 41:4** Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD-- with the first of them and with the last-- **I am he.**"

^{BGT} **Isaiah 41:4** τίς ἐνήργησεν καὶ ἐποίησεν ταῦτα ἐκάλεσεν αὐτὴν ὁ καλῶν αὐτὴν ἀπὸ γενεῶν ἀρχῆς ἐγὼ θεὸς πρῶτος καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐπερχόμενα ἐγώ εἰμι

:אֲנִי־הוּא־יְהוָה וְעַל־יְהוָה יִתְקַוּוּ וְאֶת־אֲחֵרֵי הַיָּמִים יִתְקַוּוּ וְאֶת־אֲחֵרֵי הַיָּמִים יִתְקַוּוּ ^{WTT} **Isaiah 41:4**

First, let us make the obvious conclusion about what Jesus teaches here:

Absolute Religious Truth Exists

As with the former concept, viz., *I am the way*, Jesus emphatically employs the monadic use of the article. He is the one and only way into God's presence. There are no other ways. Now, He states He is "the truth" about how to gain access into an eternal relationship with God. Again, the monadic use of the article underscores the fact that there are no religious systems which contain truth which leads to God. He is not "a truth of many truths" regarding the means of divine access. He is *the* truth, leaving no others to even consider as viable. The present tense nature of the verb, *I am*, denotes He is *perpetually the truth* about how to become part of God's family and eventually enjoy the wonder and grandeur of heaven. Jesus could not have been more absolute in His reasoning, and by so doing He definitively demonstrates that absolute religious truth exists on planet earth at all times.

In light of this breath-taking statement, a few questions are in order:

- Is this restrictive? Yes.
- Is this jaw-dropping? Yes. Especially in our truth-is-relative world.
- Is this narrow? Yes.

Yes, it is all of these things because Jesus said so. I'm merely reporting what He taught about Himself, His mission, and His gospel.

Why should this cause us any alarm? We live in a world of special restrictions and we do not think a thing about them. Take, for instance, my observations from the Dulles airport. After getting my coffee, I headed back to the gate down the long, marble-like massive walkway. At one point I passed by the Lufthansa lounge for special flyers. While it would have been nice to sit down on the cushy couches and chairs in the exclusive area, I instinctively knew I would not make it by the front check-in desk. Why? I had not paid a fortune to Lufthansa by flying their airline to qualify entrance to that unique, coveted abode. Had I stood at the counter and demand they let me in because I had taken four years of German in high school, would they have lowered the standard and let me in? No. Had I told them they were highly intolerant, narrow-minded, and quite unjustly restrictive for not letting me gain access, would that have opened the door for me? No. To gain access to that top-end location, a major price has to be paid. I can live with that absolute truth, and I can learn from it.

What do I learn? I learn that restrictions are not illogical because they respond to reality. The harsh, honest reality is I must pay a huge fee to gain access. That is the absolute, unbending, inexorable truth for this special location.

Applied to Christ the same is true. His gospel is restrictive because it corresponds to truth. He is THE way to God the Father and heaven. Additionally, He is THE truth about how to get to God the Father and to secure a place in His special abode. Everything about Christ's life corresponds to this absolute reality for He was/is the only One worthy to pay the price to enable repentant sinners the opportunity to see and be with the Holy Trinity. To deny these claims is to go against the grain of reality and embrace unreality or falsity.

We all should know that true truth always corresponds to reality. When I point at my lectern and say, “This is a lectern,” I am stating an objective, verifiable, absolute, unchanging fact and truth. To say, “This metal object is a guitar,” is to deny the facts and state an untruth. Whether we want to admit it or not, we cannot get away for the correspondent view of truth. To deny it is to use it.

Take, for instance, the agnosticism of Immanuel Kant. He argues, “No one knows the truth.” As Geisler points out, [to paraphrase] “How does he know his statement about “the” truth is true if no one knows truth?”³ How about the skepticism of David Hume, “Doubt everything.” Surely, the “wise man” does not want us to doubt his love of skepticism. His argument about truth clearly is self-defeating and does not correspond with facts. What about relativism, which is so pervasive in our logically rudderless culture? Alfred North Whitehead, the father of relativism states, “All truth is changing or in process.” One must stop and ask Whitehead, “Is this statement absolutely true? If it is, and it is, then, truth is not, by definition, always changing. And if truth never changes then absolute truth can be known.

Absolute truth is certainly known in mathematics. Rest your eyes on a small grid

Theorems		
THEOREM	HYPOTHESIS	CONCLUSION
<p>3-4-1 If two intersecting lines form a linear pair of congruent angles, then the lines are perpendicular. (2 intersecting lines form lin. pair of $\cong \Delta \rightarrow$ lines \perp.)</p>		$l \perp m$
<p>3-4-2 Perpendicular Transversal Theorem In a plane, if a transversal is perpendicular to one of two parallel lines, then it is perpendicular to the other line.</p>		$q \perp p$
<p>3-4-3 If two coplanar lines are perpendicular to the same line, then the two lines are parallel to each other. (2 lines \perp to same line \rightarrow 2 lines \parallel.)</p>		$r \parallel s$

describing geometric theorems. These three theorems are absolutely true at all times and in all cultures. No exceptions. They cannot be changed or modified for they are true truth. Only a foolish student would sit in class and say, “Hey, Prof, I feel these theorems are just racist statements.” I am sure that would bring a smile to the Prof’s face. No student would ever say, “Hey, Prof, two coplanar lines which are perpendicular to the same line do not necessarily have to be parallel to each other if you do not feel they are because the statement is just too restrictive.” Right.

Here’s the point. Since absolute truth can, and is, known in so many disciplines by means of a correspondence view of truth, why should this same

logical reasoning not be applied, without hesitation and critical comment, to how Christ identified Himself? Since His fulfillment of prophecies, coupled with His miraculous works demonstrate He was, and is, the long-awaited divine Messiah, why, then, should we not conclude that He is was, and is, the essence of all spiritual truth which leads to God and God’s heaven? Note well, as I have taught before: Christ fulfilled 60 *exact* prophecies. Just nine prophecies coming true of Christ is 1 in 10^{76} . Consider this: just 1 in 10^{17} is akin to discovering one small, infinitesimal grain of brown sand in a football stadium *filled* with sand. To reach in and find this grain of sand four times in a row is equivalent to 1 in 10^{76} .⁴ Shocking, isn’t it? Informative too. Since Christ’s life corresponds to these prophetic fulfillments, which is undeniably mathematically impossible, it is logical to embrace His absolutist statement that He was, and is, and always will be THE truth which leads to an eternal relationship with the Father.

Tapping into the first principles of Aristotelian logic also verifies the consistency of Christ’s statement that He is “the truth.” Since He is “the spiritual/religious truth,” it is illogical to say other religions contain “the spiritual/religious truth.” It does not mean they cannot have

³Norman Geisler, *Study Graph: Twelve Points That Show Christianity Is True*, unpublished class notes, Southern Evangelical Seminary, 201.

⁴Ibid., 202-203.

some components of truth, such as a call for justice, a love for a Golden Rule, or a need for prayer to a divine being, or a need to treat people with respect. However, since Christ claims to be “the truth,” it means all other religious systems are, by definition, watered down, and ultimately, false versions of spiritual/ religious truth. This conclusion is well-founded in the first principle of all logic: the law of non-contradiction. What does it teach? We mentioned this in our last study, but it warrants our analysis again for it is the basis of all truth and truth statement.

What does the law of non-contradiction state? Here is the definition: “This law says that opposite statements cannot both be true at the same time in the same sense” or “A is not non-A.”⁵ To affirm that “A can also be non-A” is to embrace a statement which is completely contradictory and untrue. Hence, I can say that Bible is black, which is an “A” statement. To, then, state that it is equally true that my Bible is non-black or purple or red, or non-A, is to make an illogical statement which does not correspond to the absolute, unchanging facts of color . . . unless, of course, you are color blind (all analogies do break down at some point).

Applied to Christ’s self-identification, the logical conclusion cannot be missed. His definitive claim is that He is, in His person, the essence of all spiritual/religious truth. Let’s call this “A.” Ostensibly, this means you cannot then assert at the same time that all other religions, which claim they are the essence of all spiritual/religious truth, or non-A, are equally true. One side of the equation is true and the other false. How do you know the difference? Which one corresponds to the facts? The short answer to this question is “Christ” by means of some of the reasons just stated. No other religion on the planet has a leader who not only claimed to be God but who buttressed His claim with divine miracles (which are verified in ancient documents written close to the time of His eventful life), and who fulfilled numerous exact prophecies beyond His control. Had Christ said He was “a truth,” then the door would have been left open for other belief systems to be true. Once, however, He strategically added the article “the” to the predicate “way,” He left no wiggle room for thinking any other approach to God is true and viable. This is not racist. It’s just true truth, like geometric theorems are true, unchanging, truth.

The absolute nature and meaning of Christ’s statement as “the truth,” is born out in the New Testament:

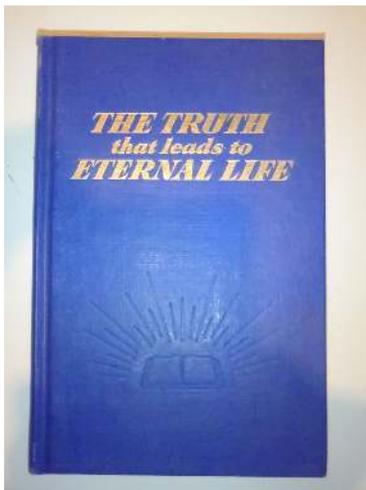
- He is THE mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). This means there are no other mediators.
- He is THE reconciler between and holy God and unholy man (2 Cor. 5:19). This means there are no other reconcilers.
- He is THE spiritual light that leads to saving belief (John 1:6-8). This means there are no other spiritual lights.
- He is THE One who, alone, grants eternal life (John 6:26-29).
- He is, as John the Baptist stated, THE Lamb of God who takes away sin (John 1:29).
- He is THE object of saving belief (John 3:13-20). A non-Christian must place their faith in Jesus to be saved. According to Erwin Lutzer, “Clark Pinnock in his book *A Wideness in God’s Mercy* and John Sanders in *No Other Name* insist that Christ is the only way of salvation, but it is not necessary to place direct faith in Him in order to benefit from His work on the cross and resurrection. God, their argument goes, knows that Christ is the only way of salvation, but those

⁵Norman Geisler, *When Skeptics Ask* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 282.

who have not heard the gospel are ignorant of this. Their own religion might function as a ‘schoolmaster’ that unwittingly leads them to Christ.”⁶ Good try. The law of non-contradiction blows this nice, flexible thinking out of the proverbial water. Jesus tells Nicodemus in John 3 that He, a Pharisee leader steeped in Judaism and obedience to the Law, must believe in Him to find eternal life and by-pass eternal judgment. Had Judaism been able to save him, Jesus would not have made the absolutist statement in John 3, verse 16, “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*” (John 3).

Absolute religious truth exists and it is only found in the person and work of Jesus, the prophesied Christ. Do you believe this truth this Christmas? If so, you have secured divine forgiveness and eternal life. You, therefore, can sing *Good Christian Men, Rejoice* with great gusto, because you know exactly why you are so happy. The One who is the essence of all spiritual truth has revealed Himself to you (John 6:44), you have embraced Him by faith, and He has put you on the path to Paradise. If you have yet to embrace, by faith, Jesus Christ as THE spiritual truth, then I would say the ball is in your court.

While you are thinking about this decision of all decisions, let us consider the opposite of Christ’s statement about Himself. Sine He is the epitome and essence of all spiritual/religious truth which leads to God and the heavenly abode, then it is equally truth that . . .



False Religious Truth Exists

How to you identify erroneous religious truth? Good question. It will, typically, do several things. One, it will have a founder or founders who eclipse Christ. Two, it will have a holy book or books which replace or eclipse the Bible. Three, it will call for some form of belief in God (whoever he, she, it may be), coupled with perpetual moral/religious works to gain possible access to God. Four, it will either reject Christianity outright, or say that it is the fuller form of revelation beyond that contained in the Bible. All false systems contain these components.

For the sake of analysis, I invite you to look at the claims of one in particular, especially where the doctrine of salvation is concerned. Remember, Jesus said that He was, and is, and always will be “the truth” which guides the repentant sinner to God. To believe He is the truth is to be saved, according to Him. This, of course, is not what a religious group like Jehovah’s Witnesses think and teach. Not only do they deny that Jesus is the great “I AM” of history, or God in the flesh,⁷ they teach that the truth which leads to God is based on faith (in a strict monotheistic being), wedded to perpetual religious/moral works.

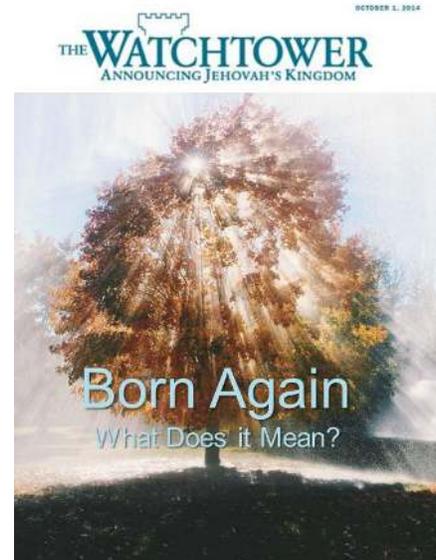
⁶Erwin Lutzer, *Ten Lies About God And How You Might Already Be Deceived* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000), 820.

⁷Statements from their writings easily verify this observation:

- Quoting from *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* in *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, they assert, “Neither the word Trinity, nor the explicit doctrine as such, appears in the New Testament.” Because of this exclusion the doctrine is considered to be false. (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, s.v. “Apostolic Succession,” 42.

Jehovah's Witness writings mince no words when it comes to wedding faith in God to a life of good, religious works to be saved.

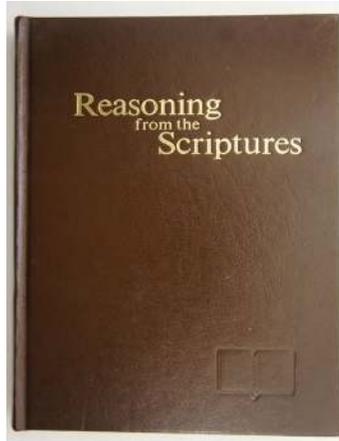
- First, faith in Jesus is needed to be saved, however, this cannot be divorced from all the other requirements. They articulate this notion in a *Watchtower* magazine article addressing the question *What Must We Do to Be Saved?* when they claim, "Yes, believing in Jesus is crucial to our salvation, but more is needed."⁸ More, according to the organization, consists of works their teachers have helpfully identified for would-be converts.
- Second, it must be remembered their view of being born again is something altogether different from that of biblical Christianity. They make a bifurcation between "the faithful servant" of Matthew 24:45 and the crowd of believers, also known as the "other sheep," who populate the millennial kingdom (Matt. 25:31-46).⁹ For them, heaven is reserved for a select 144,000 faithful servants chosen by God from all time, while the earth is the destination of resurrected believers



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- The Christian church has merely borrowed the Trinitarian concept from a Platonic tri-theistic concept of deity systems, which, in turn, was founded upon the ancient Babylonian triad of gods belief.
 - Jesus specifically called his father "the only true God" (John 17:3), and since Jehovah said "Besides me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6); therefore, Jesus could not possibly be the second member of a Trinity.
 - Jesus is presented in Scripture as "a god" (John 1:1), but never as the Almighty as Jehovah is (Gen. 17:1).⁷
 - Jesus is "the reflection of [God's] glory, but the Father is the Source of that glory. (Heb. 1:3)."
 - Jesus is according to Paul only a form of Jehovah God (Phil. 2:6), which means he is not the essence of deity.
 - Nowhere does the Bible indicate that the holy spirit has personality. Texts which seem to teach this do not because there are verses which indicate the holy spirit fills people (Acts 2:2, 4; 4:8, 31; 9:17). Since it is impossible for a person to fill another person, it is logically impossible to see the holy spirit as possessing personality.
 - Some verses like Revelation 3:14 teach that Jesus is not eternal because he experienced a creative event at the hands of Jehovah.
 - In Mark 13:32, Jesus specifically said he did not know the timing of Jehovah's coming. If he were divine, he would have known this information.
 - In John 14:28, Jesus specifically said Jehovah was greater than him. He could not say this if he, too, enjoyed divine status.
 - Jehovah, not Jesus, is presented as man's Savior.
 - The Trinitarian doctrine is highly confusing to anyone who attempts to understand it. Since this is true and God is clearly not a God of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), the doctrine is without foundation. (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, 51, 150, 407, 409, 410, 413; "Should You Believe in the Trinity?" *Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society*, 1989, 4-5).

⁸"What Must We Do to Be Saved?" *The Watchtower* (September 15, 1989), 6.

⁹Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, *Worship the Only True God*, 120-121.



and those who show promise for belief prior to their earthly deaths.¹⁰ Only the former group is classified as truly being “born again.”¹¹ The latter group must perform well during this 1,000 period, which is called Judgement Day, and if they do they will be eventually granted eternal salvation.¹² Hence during the kingdom age God’s new people are composed of a ruling class and a servant class. The former does not have to perform works to be saved, while the latter certainly does.

- Third, those who live faithfully during the 1,000-year reign of the Messiah will have their names placed in the Lamb’s Book of Life. As they state, “At the end of the period of judgment the names in the scroll evidently

become permanent, for the description of the judgment indicates it is final. The ones not found written in the book are annihilated in the lake of fire, the second death.”¹³ When a person’s name is not found in the book on the final day it is because they failed to follow God closely enough.

- Fourth, in addition to having faith coupled with religious works in order to hopefully gain salvation, Jehovah’s Witness teach one must also be baptized by immersion in water. Their salvific viewpoint is clear in their book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* Chapter eighteen, which is called *Baptism and Your Relationship with God*, could not be clearer. At the outset it inexorably states, “Water baptism is a requirement for all who want to have a relationship with Jehovah God. Baptism publicly indicates your desire to serve God.”¹⁴ There are, however, several conditions a person must meet prior to enjoying baptism: possess biblical knowledge and faith (which includes the all-important attendance of Kingdom Hall Bible study meetings), share Bible truth with others when the elders approve you are worthy, to offer repentance to God followed by a life of living contrary to your old sinful life, and make a personal promise of absolute dedication to Jehovah. When, and only when these prerequisites are met can a person apply for baptism. Once the candidate is baptized, they are placed on a trajectory to live an obedient life so they can obtain eternal life in the kingdom.¹⁵

See how they drift willingly away from Jesus’s claims that He is THE way and THE truth when it comes to salvation? They have devised a way and truths Jesus never spoke nor approved of. Their way and truth, therefore, is false and leads not to life but to judgment before God.

¹⁰*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, s.v. “Resurrection,” 339-340; *Worship the Only True God*, 87.

¹¹*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, s.v. “Born Again,” 76-77.

¹²*Aid to Bible Understanding*, s.v. “Judgment Day,” 981-982.

¹³*Ibid.*, s.v. “Life,” 1065.

¹⁴*What Does the Bible Really Teach?*, 175.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 182-183.

How many other religious systems are there in the world which promise to be THE way and THE truth, only to be a counterfeit, watered-down, a deficient copy of true way which is composed of the true truth of the person and work of Jesus, the Christ? There are many and they are composed of many nice, well-meaning, and religiously sensitive, and highly moral people. None of these traits, however, are a substitution for truth.

No. Jesus is THE truth which leads to spiritual life both now and in eternity. Do you believe this this Christmas? If you are embracing a religious system which is not focused on person and work of God's divine son, Jesus, you have erred greatly. Make this day the day you trade error for truth. What happens the moment you do this? What happens when you drop your works at the foot of His cross and tell Jesus you believe He is THE way and THE truth which leads to God? The answer is simple: You become His heaven-bound child.

There is no greater gift a person could receive this Christmas than this. Will you take it, by faith?

Or will you cling to your works?