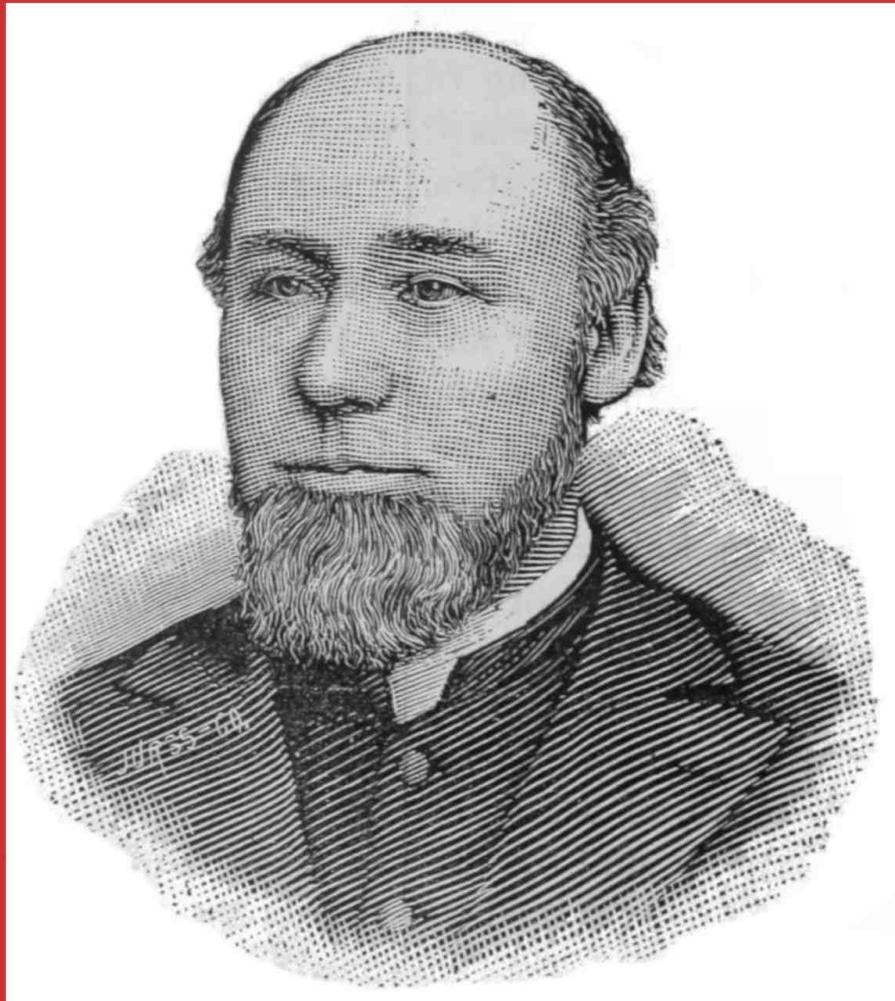


Samuel Laird

Who Is The Liar?



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By Samuel Laird

Originally Published In The *Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. 3.

Philadelphia
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“Who Is The Liar?” On 1 John 2:22, 23.

By Samuel Laird

22. Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνοῖαιεὺς ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός; οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος, ὁ ἀρνοίμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν.

23. Πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει· ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει.

Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης. WHO IS THE LIAR? Ψεύστης· refers to ψευδος in ver. 21. The abstract becomes concrete. The lie finds its embodiment in the liar. The ὁ is emphatic. As in opposition to *the truth*, which the apostle in the preceding verse declares, that all they who have received the “unction from the Holy One” know, he now sets forth that which is preeminently *the lie*, which is maintained by those who do not apprehend and hold the truth, but reject it. The truth being revealed, they deny it, i. e. the assertion of its verity being made, they assert that it is not so, and on their own part maintain the lie, contrary to the evidence which has been vouchsafed, and hence are liars.

The apostle then proceeds to state that great truth, the denial of which makes and marks the liar: *εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός.* The *ουκ*, the second negative, according to the Greek idiom, strengthens the negation. *If not he who denieth that Jesus is not the Christ.* The denial that Jesus is the Christ constitutes the lie, and he who thus denies is the liar. This denial may refer either to his true humanity or his true divinity, or to the inseparable union of the divine and human natures in the one person. Any view which asserts that Jesus was only a man, begotten after the ordinary manner of men; or that Christ had not a veritable human body; or that Jesus Christ is not the God-man, God manifest in the flesh, the

Word made flesh, is a *ψευδος*, a lie, and he who asserts it is the *φευστης*, the liar. The identity of Jesus of Nazareth and the Christ of God must be maintained. In the opening of his epistle, John had said:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.”

“Here he declares the eternal preexistence of Christ, and then asserts the reality of his humanity.” He was seen, heard, handled both before and after His resurrection. He speaks of the Word who was with God and who is God being made flesh and dwelling among men, so that His glory could be beheld, “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” As Neander says,

“That which was before the eye of John, was the Divine incarnate Word — in the perfect union of the Divine and human, as the veritable Jesus the Christ. He who held this Jesus for a mere man, not acknowledging him as the Eternal Life manifesting itself in time, the fountain of Divine life; or he who recognized in Him the Son of God, but not the Son of man, denying the reality of His human manifestation, and changing His divine-human history into a misty phantom; he who thus with reckless self-will separated the Son of God and Son of man could not pass with John as one who truly acknowledged Jesus as the Christ, but must appear to him a denier of the truth.”

The truth is found as it is historically presented in the Scriptures; to wit: “That the Word, i. e. the Son of God, took unto Him man’s nature, in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the Divine and the human, inseparably joined together in unity of person; one Christ, true God and true man; who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, that He might be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.” *Aug. Conf., Art. III.*

Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος, ὁ ἀρκούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν. This is the antichrist who denieth the Father and the Son.

Οὗτός refers to *ψεύστης*. This liar, this deceiver, is the antichrist. The word *ἀντίχριστος* is used only by John, and only in his epistles. It admits of two senses philologically. It may mean either an opposer of Christ, or one who puts himself in the place of Christ, i. e. a false Christ. We think the word is used in the first sense, viz., as one who opposes Christ. If it had

been used in the sense of false Christ, the word John would have employed would doubtless have been *ψευδόχριστος*, with which he was familiar as it is found in Matt. 24:24 and Mark 13:22; in the latter passage it is used in connection with *ψευδοπροφῆται*, false prophets, which very word John also uses in the first verse of the fourth chapter of this epistle. Again, if the word be taken in the sense of false Christ, it would refer to one who offers himself in the place of the true Christ, in the sense our Lord speaks of in Matt. 24:5: “Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” (Compare Matt. 24: 24.) A false Christ therefore would be one who claims to be Christ, just as a false prophet is one who claims to be a true prophet. We do not think this is the force of *ἀντίχριστος* in this passage, but that it means one who stands over against Christ, i. e. adversary of Christ, his opposition being shown by the fact that he denies the truth, viz., that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God, and so becomes a deceiver, leading men away from faith in Jesus the Christ as the true Prophet, Priest and King, the only Saviour through whom we have forgiveness of sins and all the blessings of salvation.

The word *ἀντίχριστος* is also used collectively, that being predicated in the singular of one which is characteristic of many. Compare ver. 18. “Even now have there arisen many antichrists.” They are characterized as “not being of us,” ver. 19; as deniers of Jesus as the Christ, ver. 22; as denying that Jesus is come in the flesh, chap. 4:3, and having the spirit of Antichrist, chap. 4:3. These characteristics mark Antichrist, of whom it is further alleged in our verse, that he denieth the Father and the Son: *ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν*. The denial of the Son involves the denial of the Father. Such is the relation between the Father and the Son, that the denial of the latter carries with it the denial of the former. The train of thought in the apostle’s words appears to be this: The liar, who is the antichrist, has not the unction from the Holy One, and knows not the truth. He denies that Jesus is the Christ, therefore he denies the Son, and in so doing denies the Father. The conception in his mind is that the union of the Son, the second person of the Trinity, with Jesus is a personal union; not that the Son of God was one person and Jesus another person, but, as Westcott says, “there is no passage in his mind from one personality to another, from the human to the divine, nor yet from the conception of the man Christ Jesus to that of the Word; the thought of the Son includes both of these conceptions in their ideal fulness;” and as in the Son dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead

bodily, and as He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person, the denial of Jesus leads as a necessary consequence, nay, carries along with it the denial of the Father. In renouncing belief in Jesus as the Christ, belief in Christ as the Son and God as the Father is also renounced. The idea is followed up and more fully set forth in the next verse. *Πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱόν, οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει. Every one that denieth the Son hath not even the Father.*

“The denial of the Son expresses in another form that which has been more fully described before as the denial of Jesus as the Christ.”

“The denial of the Son involves the loss of the Father, not only because the ideas of sonship and fatherhood are correlative, but because the Son alone can reveal the Father, and it is, in other words, only in the Son that we have the revelation of the Father.” (*Westcott.*)

In Jesus Christ alone can God the Father be known. Jesus declares to the Jews:

“Ye neither know me, nor my Father; if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.” John 8:19.

To Thomas he saith:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him; ...he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” John 14: 6,7,9.

Again He says:

“All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” Matt. 11:27.

The Father hath revealed Himself in Christ. He gave His only begotten Son to a life on earth, to suffering and death, that the alienated sons of men might be redeemed, and reconciled to Him, and brought back again into filial relationship with Himself, that in the true spirit of adoption they might look up to Him and call Him, Abba, Father. Doubtless in the passage there

is the underlying thought that “the whole life of Christ is a revelation of divine Father-love, toward the race estranged from God by sin. In Him is first presented that endearing relation, into which, by sending His Son to appear on earth, He has entered with man. It is in the Son that the Father first reveals Himself. In the contemplation of His life we first perceive what God is as Father, first learn to understand His paternal love.” But this is not the main thought, which is that in denying the Son antichrist denies the Father also, which, while it involves in it a renouncing of the paternal relation in which the Father stands to believers in Christ, goes further and renounces the paternal and filial relationship in the Godhead. The argument is thus stated by Düsterdieck, quoted by Alford:

“The antichrists denied that Jesus, the definite person whom the apostles had seen, heard and handled, is the Christ. In whatever sense this denial is to be taken, at all events there is involved in it a denial of the Son of God; because it is only as the incarnate Son of God that Jesus is the Christ. And in the denial of the Son is involved necessarily the denial of the Father, since the Father cannot be known without the Son, and the Father cannot be perceived, believed on, loved, by any man without the Son, or otherwise than through the Son, i. e. the Son manifested in the flesh, the Christ which is Jesus. So that in John’s development of the argument there are three essentially connected points: denial of the Christ, of the Son, of the Father. The middle link of the chain, the denial of the Son of God, shows how the denial of the Father is of necessity involved in the denial of Christ. In the sense of St. John we may say, taking the first and last steps of his argument, and leaving the intervening one: He who denieth that Jesus is the Christ, hath not the Father.”

Nor must we be understood as saying that to deny the Son is necessarily only to deny the Father as such, We think the expression involves the “knowledge of God as God in its most general and unlimited sense. The knowledge of God is in every view based upon the knowledge of Christ. In proportion as Christ is known, is known the God who reveals Himself in him.”

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” John 1:18.

We must not lose the force of the words *οὐδε εχει*. In the preceding verse it is said: “This is the antichrist who denieth the Father and the Son;” but in the twenty-fourth verse it is not every one that denieth the Son *denieth* the Father also, but he *hath not* even the Father. Some might deny Jesus to be

the Christ, who yet would profess faith in and fellowship with God the Father. But the apostle declares this cannot be. The rejection of the Son carries with it the loss of God in all true knowledge and every true relationship. Such persons may think they have God; but in reality they form to themselves merely an εἰδωλον, an image of the true God which is only a fancy of their own creation.

The following words of this verse are printed in Italics in the authorized English version; but they are found in a number of the ancient Greek MSS., all the best versions, very many of the Fathers, and are received by the ablest modern collators and critics. The translators of the new English version also accept them as a part of the text. *Ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει.* *He who confesseth the Son hath the Father also.* Here ὁμολογῶν, confessing, is in opposition to ἀρνούμενος, denying, and ἔχει, having, to *ὐδὲ ἔχει*, not having. The confession must of course be an open confession. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Rom. 10:10. But this open confession is necessarily preceded by an inner belief, which belief in the Christ secures the having of Him, and in having Him thereby also having the Father. Where this belief is, confession will be made. This inner belief and reception of Christ in his true character is wrought by the Holy Ghost.

“When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” John 15: 26.

And the true confession is also made by the enabling power of the Holy Ghost.

“No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.” 1 Cor. 12:3.

The sincere believer therefore is guarded and guided in the right reception of the truth by the Holy Ghost, who thus brings him into intimate fellowship with the Son, and through Him into fellowship with the Father. He knows in whom he believes, and from the heart he speaks out his faith and bears witness.

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is. with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” 1 John 1:3.

We must not forget what is the object of the confession made. *’Ο ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν* is the expression used in the twenty-third verse; but we must bear in mind what has already been said in the twenty-second verse. The liar is he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ. The liar is the same with the antichrist who denieth the Father and the Son. In John’s conception, the Son is Jesus the Christ; they are identical, and cannot be separated. The denial of the Son is the denial that Jesus is the Christ; he who so denies hath not the Father. Conversely, the confession of the Son is the confession that Jesus is the Christ, and he who so confesses hath the Father also.

Christ, who is the Word made flesh, is the center around which everything turns. All true spiritual life, all blessings of salvation in the present, and all hopes for eternity are dependent upon the answer given to this question: “What think ye of Christ?” “We have all or lose all with Him.” Having Him, we have God, and all that that imports; having Him not, we have not God. we lose all, and are lost.

“This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3.

It may be asked, Why is the denial that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, so great a sin, that he who makes it is called preeminently *the liar*? It may be answered:

[1] It makes God a liar. On two occasions God spoke from the heavens, saying of Jesus: “This is my beloved Son;” at his baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration. He, therefore, who rejects this testimony, and asserts the contrary, flaunts the lie in God’s face.

“He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.” 1 John 5:10.

[2] It is the denial of all the truth of Scripture, whereby the object for which the Bible is given is defeated.

“These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name.” John 20:31.

[3] It deprives the world of salvation. With the rejection of Christ, all hope departs.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.

S. LAIRD.

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Originally published 1884 in *The Lutheran Church Review*, Volume 3.

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ISBN: TBD

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