



2 Cor. 3:18

# Open Face

*One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness*

No. 59

MARCH 2008

## The Everlasting Gospel

David Clayton



**T**he phrase, “the everlasting gospel,” is one that every Adventist is very familiar with. We all know the three angels’ messages inside out. They have been the central focus, the key teaching of the movement, ever since it started more than a hundred and sixty years ago.

*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, (7) Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (8) And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. (9) And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, (10)*

*The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: (Rev 14:6-10)*

These messages are as well known to us as the back of our hands. The first angel proclaims that it is the hour of God’s judgment, the second declares that Babylon is fallen, and the third warns of the consequences of worshipping the beast and his image and of receiving his mark. What is interesting is that, as the first angel begins to fly through heaven, the Bible tells us very clearly that what he has to preach is, ***the everlasting gospel.***

For many years of my Christian life, this never made much of an impact on me. As far as I was concerned the message to be preached was, “the judgment is here and you had better get ready,” “Babylon is fallen and you had better get out,” and, “the mark of the beast is coming and you had better not worship on Sunday.”

The first tract we ever published in our ministry was entitled, “The Mark of The Beast” and we handed out close to a million of them. There was a time when I was so obsessed with the mark of the beast issue that if I sat beside somebody on the bus, the first thing that came to my lips in making conversation was, the mark of the beast. I realize that I was typical of many Seventh-day Adventists who believe that to preach the gospel in the context of the third angel’s message basically means

that you warn people that if they worship on Sunday, they are going to get it, that the answer to their problems is, they need to start keeping the Sabbath.

Not all Adventists see it this way, but it must be admitted that this is indeed what many regard as the preaching of the gospel and the message which is to be given to all the world.

### The Essence of the messages

There is no denying that there are three messages, but what is the essence, the heart of these three messages? It is the everlasting gospel. If it is everlasting then it goes beyond context, time and place. You can’t limit this everlasting gospel to the end of time, if it is everlasting it was there from the garden of Eden, it stretches across the ages, across the 6000 years.

I think what we have done to some extent, is that we have mistaken the context in which the message is preached for the message itself. The truth that Babylon is fallen is not the gospel. That is not the good news. What the Bible does is show us the setting in which the gospel is to be preached, the context in which the truth is to be proclaimed with power in the last days. We have taken the context

#### Also in this issue:

What is the difference? .....	3
Why did Jesus never sin? .....	5
Blue Gems .....	8
The three-fold witness .....	9
Are you ready? .....	12

Open Face  
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.

March 2008

*Open Face* is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

*Open Face* is published at least once quarterly, and is sent free of cost to all who desire to receive it.

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of the message, and we have made it the message.

It is true that there are some critical things happening. It is the hour of God's judgment, Babylon is fallen, the mark of the beast is here, but in all of these crises, what is God's answer for humanity? What is God's agency for delivering people, for saving people in the hour of the judgment, or the fall of Babylon, or the mark of the beast? What is the hope for any human being? It is only the everlasting gospel. If we give anything else to human beings as their hope we are doing something terribly wrong. Our message is the everlasting gospel, there never was any other message for mankind.

Of course when we preach the gospel, we need to put it in context. There are certain peripheral things associated with the gospel that might come into the picture, but really, essentially, men are saved only by the preaching of the gospel.

Ellen White wrote a great deal of material concerning the message that was

brought by elders Jones and Waggoner in 1888. Here is what she says in the 1888 materials on page 1575, speaking about the message brought by Jones and Waggoner:

*"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Gal 3:24) In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. The law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ, and to flee unto him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren Waggoner and Jones. By exciting that opposition, Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. **The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.** {1888 1575}*

It's hard to believe this and not want to weep. The main point I am focusing on here is that there is a certain light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory, and Ellen White was not discussing the fall of Babylon or the mark of the beast or the judgment hour, she was talking about the message of Christ and His righteousness, the light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory.

In 1888, the conflict was about the law, the law in Galatians. That's what Ellen White says right here. Why does the law have to become an issue? Why

does it seem that when we start lifting up Christ we put down the law? Why? It can only be because some people have put the law where Christ alone is supposed to be, they have put the law in place of Christ. If something is sitting in the place of Christ, how can we put Christ in His rightful place unless we topple that thing from that place? That's what happened in 1888.

The end is upon us and at the same time, we have not yet seen the glory that is to lighten the world with the glory of God, I don't think we have yet seen it, we cannot truthfully say that we have seen this glory. Here is another quote from Testimonies to Ministers page 91:

*The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. {TM 91.2}*

Righteousness by faith is not against the commandments of God. Righteousness by faith is against seeking to be righteous through the commandments, but it is not against the commandments of God. Any man who is righteous by faith will keep the commandments of God. "It is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God."

*Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. **This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world.** It is the third angel's message, which is to be pro-*

**Continued on page 4**

# What is the difference?

## **THE POPULAR CONCEPT OF HOW SIN IS OVERCOME.**

## **THE TRUTH OF HOW SIN IS OVERCOME**

1. We are sinners, only because we commit sin. Our problem is what we do. Our efforts at overcoming sin must necessarily be aimed at our actions. If we are able to stop performing sinful acts, then our sin problem will be solved.

We commit sin only because of what we really are. We are incapable of doing good because we are born with carnal minds and consequently, we cannot help committing sin. Sinful actions are not our real problem, The true problem is that we have a carnal, sinful nature. The only solution is that we must have a new nature.

2. The reason for my sins is my lack of effort, my wrong choices, my lack of exercising the will. To become righteous, I must concentrate on my actions – on responding differently to life’s situations.

The reason for my sins is my corrupt nature inherited from Adam. I cannot help myself. All my efforts are vain – the only solution is to find Christ.

3. Sin is dealt with one sin and one temptation at a time. Each time temptation comes there is a renewed battle for the Christian and he must once again choose to deny self and to submit to Christ. This happens dozens of times each day. The battle against sin is a constant strain and is unceasing.

Sin is dealt with by Christ, not by us. The battle is already won in Christ and when we are in Him, the conflict is over. We do not have to fight with sin. When we have denied self and submitted to Christ, then our only need is to continue to maintain that relationship with Christ. It is Christ who lives, not I and as such, sin is no longer my problem. Christ cannot be overcome or even tempted to sin (he that is dead is freed from sin - Rom. 6:7)

4. The intent is changed, the desires are changed. Yet sin continues to be a real temptation and victory is obtained only by hard and painful struggles. A road which is littered with a record of frequent failure and defeat. Life is a strain and a burden with only the hope of “someday” to brighten it.

The nature is changed. Sin becomes hateful. The desire to do good is natural and victory over sin is the natural way of life of the individual. Sin does not elicit a response because he died to sin.

5. I must be constantly on the look out for sin. My eyes are on sin and on myself. I am guarding myself vigilantly, there is a constant strain and burden.

My eyes are on Christ only. All the rest is taken care of. With my eyes on Him I live His life naturally and sin is no more a problem to me.

6. Righteousness is determined by my actions as defined by the law – as monitored by the law.

Righteousness is mine “without the law.” I don’t live right by reference to law, but on the basis of a new nature.

7. Human effort and will-power are exercised in combating sin.

Human effort and will-power are exercised only in keeping the eyes on Christ (example of Peter walking on the water)

8. The conflict with sin never ends. There never comes a time when a person may say, “I am free. I have conquered sin.” There is always another sin waiting to ambush the individual. Even at the point of death there is the awareness of sins yet unconquered.

The fight is immediately won. We may now say, “I am free.” Free not only from guilt, but sin’s power and dominion. I have in me the One who has already conquered all sin, so I am already victorious, already perfect in Him.

9. Those who fail are condemned. The thinking is, “I can, so why can’t they?”

Those who fail are pitied. Efforts are made to enlighten them. The thinking is, “I could not and neither can they. They don’t need condemnation, they need Christ (John 3:17).

# The Everlasting Gospel

Continued from page 2

*claimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure. {TM 91.2}*

Inspiration is consistent and in every place that I can think of where it talks about the message to be preached at the time of the end, it identifies this message to be preached as, the gospel.

*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Mat 24:14)*

Then shall the end come, not when the American economy crashes, not when there is the seventh pope, not when all the conspiracy theories come together, it is when the gospel of the kingdom is preached into all the world, then shall the end come. That is the factor that is critical, for God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

One of the last things Jesus said to His disciples was,

. . . . Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)

That is our commission, that is our task, we have no other work to do. Anybody who is preaching anything else is not doing the work of God.

## The Good News

Every religion in the world is preaching morality. Each one might have slightly different rules. One person's concept of morality may be that my dress must be at my ankle, another person's concept of morality is that at a certain time of the month men and women must be separated. Each person's concept of morality is just based on what particular rule each religion emphasizes. But the gospel, the truth that saves men is the truth that God has given us life in His Son. Chris-

tianity presents a Saviour, it presents help for the helpless. It presents a way of lifting us up, not demanding that we do, so that we can have life, but presenting a gift of life, so that all that we could not do can be done. That is the gospel. That is what saves people and Jesus says it must be preached everywhere and then the end will come.

One of the difficulties we have had is that we have had different understandings of what the gospel really is. This confusion exists in the Adventist church, and it exists in Christendom in general. What is the gospel, what does the word gospel really mean?

The word gospel means, "good news." This alone dismisses many versions of the gospel being preached today.

If the gospel is the message of the mark of the beast, then it, in itself is not good news. It is not good news to tell somebody that he cannot buy or sell if he refuses to accept the mark of the beast. Good news is not about what you must do, Good news is about what has been done for you.

Let me clarify that: Good news is best understood and appreciated against the background of bad news. If somebody gives me a dollar, this may not be anything to shout about, especially if I already have a hundred dollars in my pocket. But if there is a man on the street who has not had anything to eat for a couple of days and somebody gives him a dollar, then that might just be the very best news in the world for him at that moment. Good news is appreciated when it is set against the background of the bad news and this is exactly what the Bible does for us in proclaiming the gospel.

We first of all have to appreciate what is man's real problem before we can understand what the gospel really is, and that is why, in all the discussions we have had, as we have tended to focus on certain issues, the difficulties

have come up again and again because we have not been agreed on what the bad news really is. Some of us say, "the bad news is that I have done a lot of wrong things in my life." But the real bad news is that I never could help doing those bad things. The bad news is not that the tree is bearing sour oranges, the bad news is that even if you pick all those sour oranges, the tree will continue to bear only sour oranges. The problem is not the oranges, the problem is the tree. Bad news.

It seems to be good news when God says, "keep my law and you shall live! There is a way to find life. Do what is right, keep the law." There seems to be a way out when God says that the fearful and the abominable and the liars and the thieves shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. Then you know, to avoid that fire I need to stop lying, stop being afraid stop being abominable and stop stealing. It sounds like good news, until I discover that I can't. Then it becomes really bad news! In order to have life you must do something which it is impossible for you to do. This is the worst news in the universe.

But when you discover that the one who demands it of you has done it, has fulfilled what is required fully, and gives it to you as an absolutely free gift and all that remains is for you to take it, what could be more wonderful? The good news is that God has given us eternal life and this life is **already** in His Son. And he that hath the son **already** hath life and is passed from death to life. That is good news!

Is there any other way that people can be saved? No for this is the gospel and the gospel is God's way of saving men.

*(Rom 1:16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

*(Gal 1:8-9) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach*

continued on page 7

# Why did Jesus never sin?

Why did Jesus never sin when we all other men have sinned? Was it just chance or coincidence that only one man of all the billions who ever lived never actually performed a sinful action, even as a baby?

We have seen babies get into a temper, we have seen selfish behaviour in babies even before they could reason or understand. Did Jesus ever display such behaviour?

If He had displayed sinful behaviour as a baby, (such as selfish behaviour, temper tantrums, anger etc.) He would have demonstrated that He had a corrupt spiritual nature and was in need of a new mind. He would have needed to be born again.

It is true that a baby cannot commit a conscious act of sin and therefore cannot be guilty of sin. But a baby can, and does display sinful behaviour revealing that from the moment of birth he has inborn tendencies to wrong, and that he has a corrupt nature.

Since He never sinned, then it is obvious that Jesus must have had something which no other person had. There is always a reason. But what was this element which made Christ different?

## Physical and spiritual nature

Let us first of all make note of a fundamental truth: Every person in the universe possesses a physical or a material nature which depends on genetics or physical attributes. However, each one also possesses another nature, a spiritual nature which depends on the state of his spirit.

Man's body has a carnal or fallen nature. It has weaknesses and tendencies which are genetically passed on. But he also has a carnal spiritual nature. He has a mind or spirit which is totally selfish and which will naturally lead him to do what is self-centered. Sin is not a matter of genetics. Sin

originates in the mind. It is a matter of the state of the mind.

## The source of selfishness

The only person in the universe who is naturally unselfish by nature is God. When God brought forth a Son, this selfless nature was passed on to His Son who inherited the very life and nature of His Father.

*(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;) (1 John 1:2)*

Therefore there are only two Beings in the universe who are naturally selfless and they are God and His Son. All other beings are only selfless if they are united to God through His spirit. Without this union they are naturally selfish and self-seeking.

But selfishness is not a thing of the flesh. Selfishness is not a thing which depends on behaviour or how a person responds to the law. Selfishness is a quality which comes from within, from the mind of man and is the natural attitude of all men who are separated from the spirit of God. Even if a person learns to obey the law, it will not make him an unselfish person.

Education cannot make a person unselfish. Studying the Bible, relating to the law cannot make him unselfish. The only thing which can make a person unselfish is union with God. Therefore, no amount of education in itself could have made Jesus behave properly if His nature was not a good nature.

Here, some say that He was good, only because He was filled with His Father's spirit, but that He Himself, by nature, was just as selfish and corrupt as all men are. This is a totally false idea. If this was so, where did this selfishness and corruption come from? He

inherited Adam's flesh, but not Adam's mind.

## The Divinity of Christ

When He came to this earth, Jesus emptied Himself of his divine power and divine glory. What else was left of the Son of God? What made Him still the son of God?

There are some who go so far as to say, His power was gone, His glory was gone, His mind was gone, His nature was gone, His character was gone – so what was it that came from heaven? What remained of the Son of God? According to their theory, He was all gone! All that remained was a name and it had to be a false name, because NOTHING of the original remained.

Well, if this were true, then the only conclusion we could come to is that Jesus was not the Son of God, and God could just as easily have taken any other human baby and done the same with him as He did with Christ.

Those who believe this have destroyed the Son of God. If we accept this belief we have destroyed the truth that Jesus was the Son of God even more effectively than the doctrine of the Trinity has done.

The truth is, divinity is not just *power*, but it also includes *nature*.

Divine *power* has to do with the almighty ability of God to do anything, to work miracles to create worlds, to repel every device of Satan. Jesus left every such ability behind when he became a man. (Phil. 2:5-8).

Divine *nature* is that quality of being which God and His son alone possess as a natural attribute, but which can be imparted to those who receive the life of Christ. This quality is an aspect of God's nature which makes His attitude totally different from all created things. When Jesus came to this earth He did not leave this divine nature be-

hind.

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

*“.... let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such an one as ourselves; for it cannot be. The exact time when humanity blended with divinity, it is not necessary for us to know. We are to keep our feet on the Rock Christ Jesus, as God revealed in humanity.” (5BC 1128)*

God is good. He is wholly good. This means that He never has and never had a single impulse which was not wholly based on love and selflessness. We all know this to be true. This quality is not based on God's power, nor is it based on God's knowledge. It is the very essence of God's nature. As the Bible tells us, “God is love.” It is what He is. It is the essential quality of His being and in truth, it is the great quality which separates divinity from all created beings.

Contrary to what some believe, **power** is not the main attribute of divinity. If this were so, then Satan would be closer to being divine than men, because he has far greater power. The main attribute of divinity is that God is perfectly good. He is pure love.

Jesus, as the Son of God possessed this (spiritual) nature of divinity, fully combined with the fallen (physical) nature of Adam. It was His by right. It was His by birth, by nature, because He was divine. He was the Son of God. As Ellen White so aptly put it, “*a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh.*” So all His impulses were to do good, to do what is loving, to do what is righteous, and it was so by nature.

However, it is evident that the **power** of God was available to him and that without this power, He would not have

been able to carry out many of the good things which His mind made him want to do. Though He was good in himself, yet he did need to be baptized with the holy spirit, he did need the power of His Father to carry out the desires of his heart.

In one sense, Christ had to come down to our level. He took our physical nature with all its liabilities, weakened by 4000 years of degeneracy. Here, He came down fully to our level. But now that He was here, how could he help us if he was in exactly the same position? Can a man pull another from quicksand if he is also standing in the quicksand? No, that is an impossibility. Jesus needed to stand on vantage ground even as He came down to our level. He had to have some means of uplifting humanity and this means could not be found in humanity, for there is nothing good in humanity. He had to bring divinity into humanity and He could only do this if He himself was divine. In Himself He united divinity with humanity and in this way He elevated humanity to the place where man became the son of God.

He did not take humanity and then teach man how to receive the holy spirit. Any other man could have done this, but only the Son of God could have become one man who was both divine and human, for He was both. This is what humanity needed to save it.

### **Can divinity be tempted?**

A mind with divine **powers** cannot be tempted because such a mind knows the end from the beginning. But a divine mind without its powers which cannot see the future and which cannot know all things can be tempted. It can be tempted to choose the way of self rather than the way of surrender.

It is true that the very essence of evil is selfishness and divinity is entirely loving and selfless. Jesus by nature was selfless from the moment of birth. But what Satan tried to do all his life was to get him to do something which was

not outwardly selfish, but which was based on self-government. This was another way of getting Him to submit the principle of self, which is the foundation of Satan's government.

His three temptations in the wilderness were illustrative of how Satan tried to get Christ to sin.

He first tempted him to turn stones to bread. This was something which did not seem to be selfish, but it would have meant that Jesus acted on his own initiative without the Father's direction. In actual fact, Satan was tempting Jesus to become His own God. Jesus told Satan that man must live by the word of God. God must direct every aspect of life and man must make no decisions of his own.

Jesus was next tempted to jump from the pinnacle of the temple and prove that he was God's Son. This was an invitation to prove that He was God's Son by performing a miracle. This would have been His decision rather than God's. Again, He was tempted to act without God's direction.

Thirdly, he offered to give Jesus control of the world without any need to struggle or die, if he would just worship him. It was an offer for Jesus to gain control of the world by a means other than the one which God had ordained. Jesus immediately repelled the suggestion.

The only time the Bible reveals Jesus struggling with self-will is in Gethsemane and on Calvary. At no other time in his life did He ever struggle against the Father's will. But even then, what did Jesus say? “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.” Did He seek a selfish way? No. He said, “if there is some other way that they may be saved without me having to be separated from you, then please let it be done in that way.” There was no selfishness in this. If there was an easier way, then there was no need for him to take the difficult way. But

now, we see that He was being tempted to choose His way, rather than the Father's way. Not a selfish way, but a self-determined way.

This was the very root of Lucifer's rebellion. Selfishness means to be thinking of self instead of others. Self-determination, self-government means to be choosing my own way rather than God's, even in doing good. It has to do with faith or the lack of it and means trusting my wisdom above God's. Even if I do good for others and it is self-determined it is sin.

But did Jesus have to struggle and fight against the temptation to commit fornication? Did His body pull him towards sex with such force that He had to take cold showers to cool off? Did He have to struggle to avoid saying suggestive words to Mary and Martha and resist the urge to touch them in inappropriate places? Absolutely not! But there are some who believe that Jesus was tempted with the same temptations, with the same degree of intensity with which these temptations appeal to us. But the Bible says that sin was a thing which Jesus *hated*. It was not something which He was drawn towards.

*Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. (Heb 1:9)*

Of course the Bible says that He was tempted in all points like as we are. However, when we consider a few things carefully it becomes plain that though He was tempted like us in principle, He did not undergo our temptations in every detail.

First of all, two persons can face the same exact temptation and while one finds it impossible to resist, the other has no such problem. The fact that Jesus had to face the same temptations as we do and was tempted as we are, does not mean that He had to struggle just as we struggle with those

temptations.

When does temptation become really strong, is it when it momentarily comes to our minds, or is it when we begin to think about the possibilities?

*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. (15) Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (James 1:14-15)*

When a man looks at a beautiful woman, when is he really strongly tempted to go to bed with her, is it when he first looks at her, or is it when he begins to cherish the thought of what might happen between them? Every honest person knows the answer. Temptations are only strong when we cherish the thought of what it would be like to give in. When a person's mind is decisively made up that he will not carry out a certain action, then effectively, that action loses all power to tempt him.

We can consider Joseph's response to Potiphar's wife and compare it to David's sin with Bathsheba. Temptation gained a foothold in David's mind as he lingered on the roof, feasted his eyes on the beautiful body of his neighbour's wife and considered the possibilities. Not so with Joseph who never for a moment contemplated the thought of what it would be like to be in bed with his master's wife.

Now, did Jesus ever play with the thought of sin? Did He ever make room for the possibility of wrong doing? Absolutely not!! Therefore it is clear that in terms of the temptations which frequently beset us, Jesus never underwent the struggles to overcome which we often have to go through.

It is true that Jesus had to obtain victory over sin. This is what He has to give us. But this does not mean that He had to struggle with sin in the same way as I struggle. Why not? Because

He did not come to give me a struggle with sin, He came to give me a victory over sin. What He needed was to be victorious over sin. This is all He needed to do. Having obtained that victory, by whatever means, he now gives that life to me which is already victorious over sin.

Jesus said, "my yoke is *easy* and my burden is light." The reason why we find his yoke easy, is because Jesus came to give us what he had already obtained.

*"He is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions. As the sinless One, His nature recoiled from evil." (T2, page 202)*



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## The Everlasting Gospel

*Continued from page 4*

*any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (9) As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

This is the message that is to band this earth from end to end, from sea to sea from coast to coast, then shall the end come. We are at that climactic moment in time, that decisive point in the world's history when the power of God is about to fall upon His people. We are all sensing it because we can see what is happening, we can hear and see it. We know we are at that point in history. At this time it is imperative that we not only understand, but experience the gospel for ourselves. This is what our Father in heaven has been waiting for since 1888. He wants it to happen today. May we be among those in whom His will is fulfilled.



# Blue Gems

Annelie Clayton



One afternoon in late April, 2007, I was feeling particularly depressed and frustrated about the constant struggle I was having with sin. “Lord,” I prayed, “why is this so hard? I know I believe that I can be in Christ, I have faith that it is true so why can’t I experience it? I don’t know of anything that I’m holding back, if I am holding on to something, what is it?”

My prayer continued this way as I lay in my bed until I fell asleep, completely exhausted. Then I had a dream that I will never forget, I dreamt that I was standing in a room that was black all around, the only light was coming from my own body that was translucent and glowing a bright blue.

It was as if I was looking down at myself from above, watching what was happening and I heard a voice that I knew immediately to be God saying, “You must give everything to me before I can give you myself in return.” “That’s easy,” I thought, “I’m not holding on to anything anyway so take them.” As I watched myself from above I saw that the glow was coming from a beautiful and very large gem inside me. As I watched pieces began

to break off of various sizes, and began to sail away, going first in circles around me and then rising higher and higher and disappearing into heaven and I knew this meant God was taking them.

I watched, marvelling at how bright these gems were and how many there were, finally there was only one piece left and as it started to leave, panic filled me and I couldn’t understand why. “I need this one,” I said to God, “this one I must keep.” I realized that this piece was the biggest and brightest of them all and somehow I knew this gem was me, it was my personality, my character all bundled into one, it was my very essence – my nature.

“You must give me all,” God said to me.

“But this is what makes me me, if I give this to you I’ll be just as good as dead, I’ll be a different person, I won’t be myself anymore,” I replied. The gems had stopped moving, they were all frozen in place as I pleaded with God for this last gem. Then God replied, but His voice was fast fading, “How can I give you my life when you cannot trust me with yours? Isn’t my life worth the price of yours?” And then He was gone and all the other pieces that had disappeared came rushing back into my body and rejoined the piece that remained. “Let me not be this person, let me not be this person!” I screamed. Then I jumped out of my sleep, still shouting at God to not let me be that person.

But I was. As I reflected on my dream everything became clear to me, God had sent my answer, He was showing me why I couldn’t experience His life in me. These blue gems were my treasures, my goal, achievements, relationships and memories. Combined they were what made me who I am. My unwillingness to part with myself meant that I could not part with any of these other pieces because these were the things that had shaped my character and nature and made me who I was. They were all part of a whole and one could not exist without the rest.

The following passage came forcefully to my mind,

*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: (20) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: (21) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also... . no man can serve two masters.” (Mat 6:19-24)*

This doesn’t mean that I shouldn’t care about my relationships, memories and goals but my priority was wrong. Who could better care for my treasures and me than God could? If I gave myself to Him, my greatest treasure, He would take care of me and all my other treasures as well but He could not take the other pieces without this, my pearl of great price. They were all joined and if even a tiny piece remained I was still me and I could not receive the new life that God wanted to give me.

And so it is with all of us. We believe that what God has said is true and He is willing and more than able to perform it but we cannot surrender ourselves, we cannot believe that anyone could care for us better than we care for ourselves. But we must surrender every aspect of our lives, not just individual aspects that we think we can afford to lose, but **everything**. When we reach the place where we can give God our entire blue gem and not just little pieces of it, then and only then can He replace it with the life that He so longingly yearns to give us.

“When you yield up your will to Christ, your life is hid with Christ in God. It is allied to the power which is above all principalities and powers. You have a strength from God that holds you fast to His strength; and a new life, even the life of faith, is possible to you.” {ML 318.5}

# The Three-fold Witness

János Sánta

Most often when we mention 1 John chapter 5, it is to point out that verse 7 is an interpolation. Yet there is little understanding about what the rest of the verses truly have to say. But, oh, if we did understand them correctly! How many a sin-sick soul would find blessed assurance in the grace that is in our Lord Jesus! Are you eager to have greater confidence in Him? Let us hear then, what the Lord tells us in His word. I will skip the added verse, for it has been dealt with elsewhere in other articles.

*“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth... And there are three that bear witness (in earth), the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”* (1Jn 5:6, 8)

Here we have a trio of Witnesses: the Spirit, the water and the blood. All three of them bear witness to the self-same thing, because they “agree in one.” Now, the question is, what is this witness they bear and what do they prove? Please note that verse 6 talks about who Christ is: “This is **He... even** Jesus Christ.” Whatever the witnesses have to say, it concerns the **identity** of Christ. John continues:

*“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.”* (1Jn 5:9)

From this verse, it should be clear that whatever this witness is, it is the witness of God which surpasses all human authority. Have you ever accepted any witness from your fellow men? Even if you didn't, you can trust this one, because it is as true as God Himself. But what is this witness about? The Word says that in this witness, God has “testified of his Son.”

Let's stop for a moment. What is John talking about here? Spirit, water and

blood – and God's testimony? Now, the Scriptures don't leave us in darkness about what these mean. We have records of the events when God “testified of his Son,” so we should have a look at each of them.

## The Spirit

In the series of witnesses, the **Spirit** takes the first place. And indeed, from the very beginning, the presence of the Spirit of God in the life of Jesus has been a mark of his divine origin. Said the angel to Mary:

*“The **Holy Ghost** shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: **therefore** also **that holy thing** which shall be born of thee shall be called **the Son of God.**”* (Lk 1:35)

Someone may say: “Okay, this might be true, but in what sense is this a witness?” We are told this by John the Baptist:

*“**He that cometh from above** is above all... **He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.** For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: **for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.**”* (Jn 3:31,33,34)

There we see that the Spirit is given to the Son of God without measure! And that is the testimony of God that Jesus is from above – that He is the Son of God!

## The Water

But let's turn to the second witness, the **water**, which is also fairly straightforward:

*“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**”* (Mt 3:16-17)

This verse plainly and unmistakably identifies the baptism of Jesus as an event when divine testimony was made that Jesus is the Son of God. But there's even more to this. God says of Jesus that this is my “**beloved Son!**” Not just any Son, but a beloved Son. One who pleases God. One who has access to Him, one who can enter the “counsel of peace” that is “between them both.” No being on heaven and earth could be closer to God, than His “beloved Son.”

## The Blood

As we shall soon see, this is an essential truth. But let's not rush forward. The third witness is the **blood**. The record says:

*“Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, **Truly this was the Son of God.**”* (Mt 27:54)

The death of Jesus was not an ordinary death. Everyone watching, including his pagan executors could see that something unusual was happening around that man. As they saw the signs: the darkness, the earthquake, the cracking rocks and the whole wrath of God centering on the man who “was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth:” they came to realise that indeed this was no ordinary man: “Truly this was the Son of God.” But by no means does the witness of blood end here:

*“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and **declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**”* (Rm 1:3-4)

God proved Christ to be His own Son by resurrecting Him from the dead. Were He not the divine Son of God, He could not have received His life back, because it would have been cor-

rupted by sin. But sin could not take hold of Him: it was abolished in the flesh by the divine life that was in Him, and God witnessed to this by bringing Jesus back to life. Yet this witness reaches even further in heaven:

*“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”* (Heb 9:12)

This witness leads us to the very sanctuary of God! Christ, through His own blood, became our high priest before God. Could God have put Him any closer to Himself than that?

### Recap

We have looked at the witness of God by which He testified of His Son. From the very beginning of the incarnation, Jesus was filled with the Spirit of God and in His character, He was proven to be the Son of God. The testimony of the Spirit followed Him all throughout His life and His ministry.

When Jesus was baptised in the water, God made witness that Jesus was His Son, beloved of Him and accepted with Him. And when the sacrifice of the cross was made, again God made witness that the life of Christ was of divine origin and that sin was abolished in humanity united with divinity.

We’ve also learned that this trio of witnesses testifies to the same thing: that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God, and is worthy of God’s approval. But the question arises: how does this help us?

### The Witness

*“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”* (1Jn 5:10)

Oh, now it starts to get personal. It says that if you believe on the Son of God, you have witness in yourself. But what if you don’t? You are calling God a liar! But how can that be? One might

ask, “If I don’t feel the assurance of God, Does God condemn me for that? And what does “the record that God gave of his Son” have to do with me having a witness in **myself**, anyway?! I know Jesus is okay with God, but that has nothing to do with me. I’m just too sinful and crooked. God cannot possibly put any witness in me.”

This is how many people reason in their hearts, and that is how I also have reasoned many times. But please note how the Scripture reads: it says, “**the witness.**” Is it talking about just any kind of witness? Of course not! If it did, the verses we just read would have been just ramblings without any real meaning or purpose. But this is not the case. It couldn’t be more plain from the Scripture, that “the witness” John is talking about is none other than “**the record that God gave of his Son:**” the triune witness of the Spirit, the water and the blood. But how can that be **in us**?

### Life in the Son of God

*“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”* (1Jn 5:11-12)

As we have already seen, God has testified of His Son, and in this witness, He expressed unambiguously that He accepts the divine-human life of Christ, and that it is worthy not only to live until the grave, but even beyond. Indeed, not even the grave could hold the life of Christ, for it was bound to come back. (cf. Acts 2:24) So God clearly testified by a trio of witnesses that **the life of Christ is an eternal life, accepted with Him, filled with the Spirit without measure, and forever worthy to dwell in His immediate presence.** This is the life that is in the Son of God.

Now the Scripture tells us that this life has been given to us! Let’s think about this for a moment. Can we have the same assurance that Christ had? That our lives are accepted with God, filled

with the Spirit without measure, and forever worthy to dwell in His immediate presence? Yes and no. On the one hand, it must be yes, because the verse we read before, says that the one who believes, has the witness “in himself.” Yet, on the other hand, it would be presumptuous to say that we can have the **same** assurance that Christ had, because He was the Son of God, and we aren’t.

What I’m saying is that we are not to have **the same** kind of witness that Christ had, but **the very** witness that He **already** had. That is, we need no new experience. Whatever we need is already there in Him, in His experience. We just have to accept the “*record that God gave of his Son,*” which has been available in the Bible for two thousand years.

Why, what did you expect? Did you think that surely, God should utter in your ears with a low voice, “You are my Son, I love thee.” Would you accept that as proof? And what if you sin again after accepting that? Would you need another testimony to believe that He still considers you His Son? Would that be the word of God in a higher sense than what the word that is already recorded in the Bible is? Definitely not. You would still have room for doubt. But God did not place our ground of acceptance on such uncertain footing. He set our feet on solid ground and “*made us accepted in the beloved.*” (Eph 1:6)

### The Triune Witness in us

So how do you know you’re a Son of God and the seed of Abraham according to the promise? Do you have a witness in yourself? Or should I rather ask, “Do you have **the** witness in yourself?” Please look at how Paul admonishes the saints:

*“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ... Now if we be dead with Christ, we **believe** that we shall also live with him: **Knowing** that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death*

*hath no more dominion over him... Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (Rom. 6:3,8,9,11)

Did Paul ask the Corinthians to believe something that was only imaginary or untrue? Psychologists may ask you to do so, but God deals only with reality. We are told not just to believe something, but to know and to reckon! There’s something so evident in these truths that we can think of them as our own memories.

Let us remember the witnesses. One was the water and another was the blood, with reference to the baptism and the cross, respectively. Now, we see that we are baptised into Jesus Christ, and we are dead and resurrected with Him. That is how Jesus’ baptism makes sense: not that He needed a remission of sins, but that our baptism may find acceptance with God! If He were not baptised for us, our baptism would be totally invalid and worthless in the sight of a holy God.

Speaking of worthlessness: has the thought ever passed your mind after failing God many times that your conversion might have been a farce? Have you ever doubted **your** devotion and had to renew **your** promises from time to time? I have. Even the fear of having so offended God that He would withdraw His Spirit from me forever, had crossed my mind. But then He raised my head and I saw how foolish I have been. I shouldn’t **again** have trusted my **own** efforts and my **own** resolutions – no, not a single bit. God never ever accepted me or anyone on this world on any term, save in His own Son, the Beloved.

Should I be reconverted, then? Should I ask for another baptism, because I have failed Him? Based on what we’ve read from the Bible today, I would say no. We are to have not just **any** witness in us, but the **very** witness by which God testified of His Son 2000 years ago. And that witness is available for us as soon as we **accept God’s word** to be true and **stop call-**

**ing Him a liar!** Because He has already shown abundantly that He has accepted Jesus, and we need not have any other assurance, save for that which is in Him.

Remember, we read that when we were baptised into Jesus Christ, we were baptised into his death, and the same is true for our resurrection. We need not look for any evidence other than that. It is so sure, that Paul says we should have known it and simply remember it as **fact!** And the same is true for the witness of the Spirit:

*“Now he which stablisheth us with you **in Christ**, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and **given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.**”* (2Cor 2:20-22)

*“But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”* (1Cor 6:17)

Now when were you joined unto the Lord? If you were baptised into Christ, you cannot be more joined to Him. Then the Word of God says you **have** the earnest of the Spirit in your heart!

#### Let God be True

Maybe some people may still have doubts and unbelief in their hearts. They may reason, “Oh, but I will fail Him again. I don’t want to be so presumptuous and claim that I have the Spirit of God when I don’t feel it. I don’t want to bring shame on Him.” Should you ever have such ideas, like I did, I tell you they are so devilishly twisted

that one can barely recognise their fallacy. But think about this: What is more reasonable – risking your credibility before men or declaring God a liar openly? For the Word says that if you don’t believe that God has done everything for you in His Son, you are calling Him a liar! You are not accepting the plain record that God has given of His Son!

My dear Christian Friends, I want to appeal to you. There is no depth from which God cannot pull you back. He never accepted you or anyone for your own devotion and earnestness, but on the basis of the perfect life of Christ. That is the way you have always been accepted with Him, and that is the way you will ever be accepted, even in the heavenly glories.

Have you ever doubted yourself? You’re not doing it well enough? Despair! Until you give up. Then **discard your unbelief**, and speak the words of faith: “It doesn’t matter what I have done. What matters is that I have been baptised into Christ, and God has accepted me in the Beloved. He has put me to death in Him and raised me back to a life of righteousness. He has given the Spirit of Adoption to me, whereby I have free access to His immediate presence. All this because God has borne a threefold witness of His Son and I trust that record that He has given of Christ. I will not call God a liar any more. **Let God be true.**”



## Pennsylvania Campmeeting

July 2-6, 2008

This is a tent campmeeting so please bring food and items needed for camping (food, tents, sleeping bags, utensils etc).

There will be health and cooking classes. Speakers will be announced at a later date.

*A newsletter and catalog will also be soon available from this ministry and interested persons may request these items.*

Interested parties may contact Calvin and Paula Bickel at [seedoftruth@comcast.net](mailto:seedoftruth@comcast.net)

# Are you ready?

No man knows the day nor the hour of Jesus' coming. (Matt. 24:36) Nevertheless, certain current events have combined to produce a nagging sense of urgency in the back of my mind.

A couple of years ago I did a study on the age of the earth (see Open Face #43) and by my calculations (which perhaps are faulty, but not too far off), the 6000<sup>th</sup> year of this world's history would be about the year 2016. This is reason to keep both eyes open.

For many years I have heard rumours that the US economy was headed for a terrible crash. I confess that I never paid much mind to the prophets of doom, but suddenly I realize that something is happening and that even the experts are now beginning to predict a plunge in not only the economy of the USA, but something which will have a ripple effect right around the world. This time it is sounding really serious.

In addition to this, a lot of excitement

has been generated in some circles by a Hal Meyer report of a secret meeting recently held in Washington DC. Three religious organizations were involved in these meetings. They are the Christian Coalition of America (CC), Christian Churches Together (CCT) and Catholic Campaign for American (CCA).

The issues discussed were the state of the world, the moral condition of the United States, and most importantly the need to protect the Lord's day, or Sunday, as a day of rest. Key congressional lawmakers were present, and a high-level Vatican cardinal addressed the group.

The details concerning this secret meeting are not verifiable from public sources. Apparently what we have is the first-hand testimony of one who was present. This person was a credentialed participant in the secret meeting and is a retired SDA pastor.

The Christian Coalition along with Chris-

tian Churches Together and Catholic Campaign for America has developed a ten point agenda for America that they want to implement at the federal and state levels by law. Most of them are designed to uphold the principles that are important to Christian people, such as marriage between one man and one woman, public prayer, references to God in the pledge of allegiance and on coins and bills, judicial integrity, limits on eminent domain, the right to bear arms, etc. But here is what number seven on the list of their "ten amendments" says;

*"Throughout all the land a National Day of Rest shall be honored by governments and industrial manufacturers and public shopping facilities."*

Add to all of this the reality that the message of Christ and His righteousness is being restored and I cannot help the growing conviction that we are in the midst of something of eschatological proportions.

"Be ye therefore ready."



## ***Open Face***

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