



2 Cor. 5:18

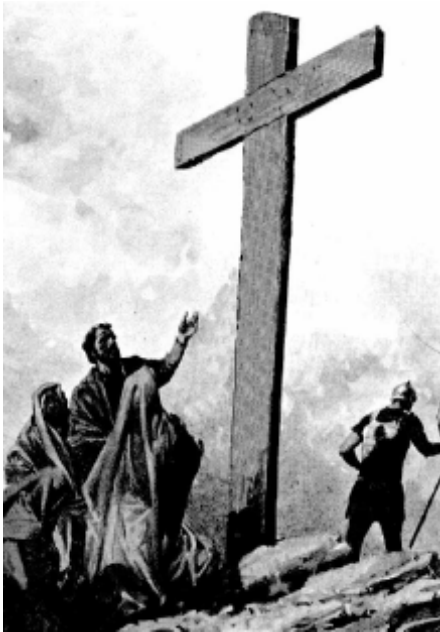
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DID JESUS DIE THE SECOND DEATH?

David Clayton



In the “Open Face” of December 2004 an article was published, entitled, “Thoughts on Christ’s Divinity”. In this article I stated that Jesus did not die the second death and that what He experienced was the pangs of the second death (the anticipation, the expectation of eternal death) but that He never actually had the experience.

This position has disturbed some of our readers and a few have contacted me objecting to this idea. I must admit that some of the comments and arguments which were presented needed consideration and have caused me to assess my position more carefully. One of the objections which seemed to me to carry some weight was the suggestion that if we say that Jesus suffered the second death, then we would be supporting Catholic theology which teaches that the wages of sin is suffering rather

than death. So I gave the matter more careful thought and as a consequence, I have here revisited the subject, taking what I hope is a more systematic approach.

WHAT IS THE SECOND DEATH?

There are only two places in the Bible where we are told what the second death is. These are found in Revelation 20:14 and Revelation 21:8.

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” (Revelation 20:14)

“But the fearful, and unbelieving and the abominable, and murders, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8.)

Both these verses tell us very clearly and unmistakably what the second death is. The second death is the **Lake of fire**. There is no second death outside of the lake of fire. Whatever or whoever dies the second death goes into the lake of fire. If we accept the Bible as our teacher we cannot successfully deny this fact. Therefore, we must conclude that if Jesus died the second death then He must have gone into the lake of fire.

WHAT IS THE LAKE OF FIRE?

Most people assume that the lake of fire is a literal molten lake where sinners will be destroyed at the end of the millennium. They conclude that this

lake of fire is created by the fire which comes down from heaven (Rev. 20:4) and destroys the wicked. However, this is also an idea which needs to be reconsidered.

Revelation 20:14 tells us that “death” and “hell” are cast into the lake of fire. But death and hell are not tangible things, they are not physical things which may be moved around. Death is the absence of life and hell is simply the grave, the place of the dead (Greek - Hades). What is God telling us when He says that they are cast into the “lake of fire?” He is simply saying that they cease to exist. That they will be no more, never ever again for all eternity. When they cease to exist then they are said to be in the lake of fire. In other words, “the lake of fire” is not a literal burning place. It is simply a term which is used to describe **a condition where things no longer exist**. It is true that fire will come down “from God out of heaven,” to destroy the wicked (Rev. 20:9), but this fire is not the lake of fire. While this fire which devours the wicked is real, the lake of fire is a figurative place, which describes a condition, rather than a literal place. This is similar to the “smoke of their torment” in Revelation 14:11 which we are told, ascends up “forever and ever.” It is not literal smoke,

Also in this issue:

Truth	3
Commentary on 1 John 5:7	8
Romania Report	10

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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.

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but refers to a condition. So, fire comes down from God out of heaven and destroys the wicked and when they are destroyed, they are said to be in the lake of fire because they cease to exist. Let us examine another verse which reinforces the fact that the lake of fire is not a literal place, but is simply a term which describes the end of existence

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Rev 19:20)

The events of this verse take place at the beginning of the millennium. Read carefully from verse 11 and you will see that this is describing the second coming of Jesus. Yet it says clearly that at this time, the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire! So, one thousand years before fire comes down from God out of heaven, the lake of fire already exists!. If we understood this lake of fire to be a literal place, then we would have to accept the Catholic teaching that there is

a present burning place of torment called, "hell," where sinners are constantly tormented, because one thousand years later, when the dragon (Satan) is finally cast into the lake of fire, it says he is cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Rev 20:10)

However, since we understand that this lake of fire is not a literal place, we understand that God is simply telling us that the beast and the false prophet die the second death – that is, they **cease to exist** at the second coming of Jesus. At the end of the thousand years, all the wicked, including those who made up the beast and the false prophet organizations will return to face judgment and final destruction. However, the organizations called, "the beast," and, "the false prophet," will never return. These systems cease to exist when Jesus returns the second time so they are said to be in the lake of fire.

Again we must conclude, the second death is the lake of fire, and the lake of fire is the end of existence. So we ask, did Jesus die the second death? Did Jesus cease to exist?

If Jesus died the second death (eternal extinction), then how is He alive today? This is an impossible contradiction. A couple of people have tried to explain it to me by saying that although He died eternally (forever) He had no sin in Himself and so God was able to bring Him back to life. I cannot see this as an acceptable explanation. All it says is that Jesus died forever, but He really didn't!

WHAT ARE THE WAGES OF SIN

"For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

Interestingly, the Bible says that the

wages of sin is death. Nowhere does it state that the wages are, "eternal death," or, "the second death." Ultimately all the lost will die and will never be resurrected. Effectively they will cease to exist, but is this what is required to satisfy the penalty for sin?

These questions may seem irrelevant, or the answers may seem obvious, but they need to be asked in order that we may clarify issues in our minds. Many times our greatest obstacles to understanding are long-held ideas which we have believed to be true without really examining the foundations for, and the implications of such ideas.

In examining this issue we need to isolate the facts which are beyond controversy, to look at each of these facts in the light of the others and see how these facts can be made to harmonize with each other.

UNDENIABLE FACTS

1. The wages of sin is death.
2. All sinners are required to pay the wages of sin.
3. Jesus paid the wages of sin on our behalf.
4. The death Jesus died was the price we were required to pay.
5. The second death is the lake of fire.
6. Those who enter the lake of fire cease to exist.
7. Jesus exists today so is not in the lake of fire, therefore He did not die the second death.

In Revelation 1:18 Jesus makes an interesting statement. He says,

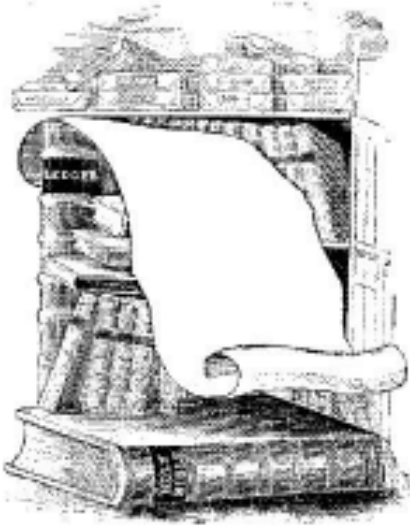
"I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation 1:18)

Jesus says, "I was dead." Here He is clearly referring to His experience of death on the cross and His sojourn in the grave over three days. But now He is alive, and it is in relation to these

Continued on page 7

What is TRUTH

Howard Williams



The word, “truth” is used to establish the certainty of fact. The speaking of truth is regarded as a necessary anchor to the moral foundation of society.

According to the dictionary, truth is:

“that which is true; statement, etc. that accords with fact or reality”

While the Bible defines truth in a similar way, it does carry another definition of truth, and this definition is what we want to look at.

TRUTH THAT SAVES

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” Jn1: 17 (RSV)

This verse seems to be expressing a startling reality which is worth considering, and that is, that before Jesus, there was no truth! While there was a theoretical conformity to that which is true, or to that, which is fact or reality, the truth which came through Jesus, was never before properly understood or experienced before the time of Christ.

Before His incarnation Jesus was the fountain of this truth; by His inspira-

tion the prophets spoke of it, and by him this truth was communicated to men, but in a concealed way. Upon His arrival on earth, Jesus declares concerning himself!

“...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6

TRUTH ABOUT THE FATHER

Jesus says, He is “the way,” but the question that follows is, “the way to who, what or where?” If we can understand just where this way leads, then we can also understand about, “the truth” and “the life” that Jesus is.

According to the verse, Jesus is “the way” to “the Father” because he says, **“no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”** Now if Jesus is the way to the Father, then it follows that he must be **the truth** about the Father, and that he brings **the life** of the Father to us.

Therefore, in this context, Truth is not an abstract word, but has reference to a specific person, the one who is the medium, **“...truth came through Jesus Christ.”** Truth was not something Jesus simply carried. It was embodied in him, and flowed through him, and thus Jesus himself is Truth!! (see Acts 10:38)

During the last few hours before He died, while standing before Pilate and answering to the question of whether or not He was a king, Jesus said,

“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” (Jn 18:37)

Though Himself the truth, Jesus came to witness, or to speak, to manifest the truth in a particular area, and as we read the Scriptures carefully it becomes evident that the truth which Jesus came to make known was primarily the truth concerning the Father.

What is this truth about the Father that Jesus brought, that before him were only shadows or symbols?

The truth Jesus brought was:

1. The truth concerning the greatness of God’s love for us. (John 3:16)
2. The truth that this love was manifested in the gift of the Father’s only begotten Son. (1 John 4:9)
3. The truth about the indwelling of the Father. (John 14:23)

These truths were never before opened to man as plainly as Jesus revealed them. As the medium of truth, He is the one who communicates truth for the salvation of men. The life and the teachings of Jesus Christ were the most complete and perfect representation of the Father’s life, that has been or can be presented to man, so Jesus told Phillip,

“...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...” (John 14:9)

The greatest blessing that Jesus brings to this world, is that the life of the father flows through him to us. (John 17:21-22; 6:63) Therefore the only hope for fallen humanity to be brought back into harmony with God and righteousness is wrapped up in Jesus. For us to experience this truth that is offered in Jesus, we must accept him as the Scriptures reveal him.

TRUTH ABOUT JESUS’ IDENTITY

According to the Scriptures, who is Jesus Christ?

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16-17

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John 1:18)

The Scriptures declare Jesus to be, “the only begotten Son of God.” There is no mistaking the emphasis on that fact in the Bible. Jesus’ mission to the world is to reveal to us the Father, and what better person to reveal him than He who understands him best, and this is implied in the phrase, “*which is in the bosom of the Father.*” This tells of the vantage point from which the Son speaks, and shows the bond that exists, between the Father and his Son.

So the Scripture invites us, to experience Him who sent, through Him who was sent.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in (by being in) his Son Jesus Christ. This (the one who is true) is the true God, and eternal life. (1 John 5:20)

BELIEVING GOD'S TRUTH

The majority of Christians today, confess with the mouth that Jesus is the Son of God, and even that He is the only begotten Son, but when asked the real meaning of their confession, they declare, “He is not really the Son but just acting or playing the role of the Son.” Others say He is God himself!

Can the scriptures be trusted to declare what is true, or even more importantly can God’s own voice be trusted? It was He who spoke from heaven in a thunderous voice and declared, “**...this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.**” Matt 3:17

Christians today say, “no, we can’t trust God, and in fact we won’t believe him either. In spite of what God says we will teach that he is not the actual literal begotten Son of God!!”

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. 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. (1 John 5:9-10)

Accordingly then, the large majority who refuse to accept Jesus as the literal only born Son of God have made God a liar!!

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. (1 Jn 2:23)

JESUS THE “WORD.”

In John 1:1, Jesus is represented as the, “Word.” Jesus is primarily the Word of God, the expression of God’s thought: and the Scriptures being the word of God fulfill the same purpose. So as we study the words of scripture, it is Jesus that we are getting acquainted with, and through Jesus, we are led to the Father.

Jesus encourages us to, “*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*” (John 5:39)

Even though we search the scriptures we often miss the greatest benefit of this search, and fail to find the reality of Him whom the scriptures reveal. So Jesus says that although you search, “*...ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*” (v.40)

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” 1 Jn 5:11

The apostle Paul in his second letter to Timothy tells of some devastating times that would exist in the Church in the last days, and he goes on to show the reason why this would happen, he says people will be,

“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Tim 3:7)

Inside the church the believers would be studying the scriptures daily, but would never find Jesus and come into an experience with him.

Have you found Jesus to be the truth as the scriptures reveal Him?

THE TRUTH ABOUT FELLOWSHIP

Jesus told his disciples that he had to go away, and great sadness came upon them, but he cheered them up by telling them that while he was gone, **his spirit** would live in their hearts and so they would still have Him with them. Notice what he promised that his spirit would do for them,

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...” John 16:13

Even when his body was absent his Spirit would continue to lead the disciples into all truth. All true Christians still have Jesus in their hearts just as if he were right here on earth with them physically. Jesus promised this before he left and it has been fulfilled just as he promised. He said,

“...If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John 14:23)

Not only is Jesus Himself here with us, but His Father dwells with us as well.

REJECTING TRUTH

There is a passage of scripture, which I think, is the most fearsome part of scripture and we are going to look at it now.

*“And for this cause **God** shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thes 2:11-12)*

Why would God allow strong delusion to overtake Christians?

“...Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2 Thes 2:10)

What does it mean to not receive the love of the truth?

DENYING THE TRUTH

Although receiving the love of the truth is our only guarantee to salvation, these people did not receive the love of God which came through Jesus. Like the Christians of the twenty-first century, they are deluded and deceived, they do not accept Jesus as the only begotten Son of God, and for this cause they cannot receive the Love of God in their hearts.

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.” (1 John 2:23)

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” (1 John 4:15)

To accept the truth that Jesus is the only born child of God the Father, brings us saving knowledge about God, thus enabling us to receive Jesus and the Father into our hearts.

There is a popular phrase which goes something like this, “If you don’t have something to stand for, then you’ll fall for anything.” This is true in Christianity too, “if you have not found Jesus who is the way to the Father, then you will fall for all the falsehoods and delusions that Satan will bring in, and in the end lose eternal life.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John 3:36

The reason for ungodliness and unrighteousness in the church, is the fact that men embrace the name of Jesus, but have a wrong conception of who He really is. For this reason the wrath of God will be revealed against them.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” (Rom 1:18)

OVERCOMING SIN

As Christians we should all have one great desire, and that is to overcome sin. It is impossible for us to be like our father in heaven if we still have sin in our lives.

*“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people **from** their sins.” (Matt. 1:21)*

“...for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” 1Jn 3:8

One of the main purposes for which God sent his only begotten Son was that he should conquer and destroy sin. but sin can only be conquered and destroyed in those who truly desire to be free from its power.

As the world with its attractions, temptations and allurements seem to be overwhelming us, what can we do, where can we turn for strength to overcome?

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5)

This verse is an amazing one. Surely, it promises a great deal and every struggling sinner should regard this text as a critical key in the search for victory over self and sin. But someone may ask, “How does believing that Jesus is the Son of God give me strength to conquer the world?”

The answer to that question lies in an understanding of who Jesus really is, and the love that exists in the Father’s heart for us, which led to such a sacrifice on our behalf.

When this love has filled our hearts, then we will understand that willfully doing what we know to be wrong would actually be hurting our Father and his Son. The motivation which comes with true love will make it impossible for us to do anything to hurt the ones we genuinely love!!

TRUTH ABOUT FREEDOM

Jesus said, “*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” (John 8:32)

The reality is that sin has us in bondage, and we are all by nature, slaves to sin, but Jesus made it clear, “*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*” (v.36) Freedom from sin comes only through Jesus!

A BANNER OF LOVE

How does accepting Jesus as the only begotten Son help us?

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. (PS. 60:4)

A banner is an open and visible sign that is seen and understood by everyone around. What then is the banner that Christians have that is displayed because of Jesus?

The recognition that God loves us so much that he gave his only begotten son to die to pay the penalty for sin, and that the son loves us so much that he agreed to give his life as a ransom for us, will give us an understanding of how much we mean to the Father and his Son. When we recognize this, it will cause us to live in a different way. The banner of **love** will be displayed to the world because of Jesus living in the hearts of the Christian. (Col 1:27)

The Bible says, “*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*” (Jn 13:35) But this love, this “banner,” will only be displayed, will only become a reality when we first of all recognize and accept the greatness of the love which God and His Son exercised on our behalf, when God gave His Son for sinful man. (1 John 4:11)

LOVE IS THE REASON

Understanding and experiencing this love impels us to love him in return and naturally to love one another too. The truth is that when we are truly in love, we will do all that the one we love re-

quires of us. This is the effect that love has on the one who experiences it.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us...” (2 Cor 5:14)

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1 John 3:16)

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” (1 John 4:9)

“We love him, because he first

loved us.” (1 John 4:15)

The true revelation of how much we love God and his Son is the testimony of love in our lives.

“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.” (1 John 2:5)

When our love begins to increase for the poor sinners in the world, then we may know with assurance that we are in him.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of

the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: (1 Pet 1:22)

Let us seek constantly to abide in Christ by daily studying his word with the one desire of meeting the living word, Jesus the Christ the Son of the living God, who was anointed and sent for the sole purpose of bringing us back into harmony with God and heaven.

When we shall have met him let us invite him to come and live inside of us daily, and then and only then can we truly experience the truth as it is in Jesus.



A Time for Action

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15). This was Jesus’ parting commandment to His disciples and in one way or another this emphasis is clearly taught in several other scriptures. For example, we read in Matthew 24:14, *“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,”* and of course, we are all familiar with the well known verse in Revelation 14:6 which says, *“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.”* Clearly, one of the greatest responsibilities which God’s people have, is the duty to preach the gospel everywhere.

Unfortunately, at times we become so distracted with side issues such as the minute definition of doctrine and the complications of formalism and church organization that we neglect this most important aspect of the Lord’s business. Yet Jesus never said, *“go ye into all the world and raise up churches.”* No, He said, *“go ye and preach the gospel.”* It is true that as we preach, we will see congregations being raised up as people accept the truth and seek fellowship. However, it is necessary that

we place the emphasis in the right place. Too many people have acknowledged the truth and are continually seeking to know more of the truth who do not recognize that the greatest duty which lies before them is to share the gospel with others. There are some who have embraced the truth about God who have not made it their life’s work to share it with others. This must change. We need to recognize our calling to be missionaries, and realize that if we are not involved in the Lord’s work, then it is probable that we are not even Christians at all.

The world is dying for want of the truth. This is what we say. Do we really believe it? Remember that truth which is not lived and taught becomes meaningless and ultimately, those who treat it in this way will cease to believe it. The more we share the truth with others the stronger will our faith be, the better we will understand the truth and the greater will be our zeal to propagate it. It is those who do nothing in the work of God who are continually dissatisfied, fault-finding, seeking some new message, plagued with doubt, and who will eventually become the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of the progress of truth.

It is our commitment at Restoration

Ministries to take the message to every major town in the island by the end of the year 2005. We are hoping to do this by way of tract distribution, newspaper advertisements, evangelistic meetings and by whatever means it is possible to reach people.

On the first weekend in March we traveled to Montego Bay where we distributed over 12,000 tracts. A few weeks before we had advertised our book, *“The Mystery Demystified,”* in the local newspaper and we will be going on another tract distribution drive on the third weekend in April. It is our expectation that people will be convicted by the materials which we distribute, but we also hope that even those who may not be initially impressed will be led to consider carefully, by the very fact that we are so persistent in placing the truth before them.

We are far behind in this work but we intend by the grace of God to extend our work into the rest of the Caribbean and hopefully we will be able to make positive moves in this direction before the end of this year. We desire that all who love the Lord and His truth will pray earnestly that His guidance and blessings may attend us in these endeavours.



DID JESUS DIE THE SECOND DEATH?

Continued from page 2

two facts, Him being once dead and now alive, that He says, “*I have the keys of hell (the grave) and death.*” How did he obtain these keys? By conquering both death and hell. By triumphing over them He destroyed their power and obtained the keys, that is, the authority, to set their captives free. Notice, Jesus has the keys of death because He was death’s prisoner, but escaped from death’s grasp. Jesus will one day use these keys to liberate many who are presently prisoners in the cage of death and hell.

But let us consider, to which death does Jesus have the keys? Is it the first or the second death? Obviously Jesus will never release anyone from the grasp of the second death. According to Rev. 20:14 death and hell do not even exist after the second death, so there is no key for them. Evidently, Jesus has the key to the first death. This is the only death from which prisoners will be released and so, it is evident that this is the death which Jesus conquered. This is the death which held Jesus in its grip and which He defeated.

What we must focus on is one, or both of two questions.

1. What really are the wages of sin?
2. What really happened when Jesus died?

It seems evident that it cannot be true to say that Jesus did die the second death. This does not harmonize with what the Bible says. In seeking to understand how the price of our sin was paid we must look at other questions.

The obvious question then is, if Jesus did not die the second death, what was different about His death? In what way was it any different from that of anyone else who has ever died from the time of Adam until now? In what way did He take the penalty of sin on our behalf?

THE REAL PENALTY

Those who die the second death will never come back to life. However, although Jesus came back to life after His death, there is something which He had in common with those who die the second death. There is something which they have in common in terms of the circumstances surrounding their death, which they have in common with no one else. This is the critical element which is really the wages of sin. This is the critical factor which was necessary in order that Jesus should take the penalty for us, and it did not have to do with the duration of time for which Jesus was dead.

There are three places in the Bible which describe death as the ultimate **penalty** for sin. I do not mean as a **consequence** of sin, but as the ultimate penalty. Two of these places are in prophecies which relate to the future, while one is a prophecy which relates to a past event, already fulfilled. The fulfilled prophecy, of course deals with the death of Jesus. He is the **only one** in all existence who has ever, up to this point, paid the penalty – the ultimate penalty of sin.

WHAT HAPPENED TO JESUS?

This death of Jesus in payment of sin’s penalty is clearly described in Isaiah 53. This chapter gives us a comprehensive commentary on the background reasons for the death of Jesus.

In verse 4 it says that it was God who smote Him. He was “smitten of God and afflicted.” This verse as well as several others gives us an awe-inspiring view of what was happening on Calvary. Jesus was dying under sentence of God. He was being deliberately executed by the pre-determined decision of God, a sinner, judged and condemned by the Almighty.

- God laid our iniquity on Him (v.6)
- He was smitten of God (v.4)
- The Lord bruised Him...put Him

to grief (v.10)

Of course this was not because Jesus was in any way deserving of such a judgment, but,

- He was wounded for our transgression (v.5)
- He bore the sin of many (v.12)
- God laid our iniquity on Him (v.6)

So there can be no question that the death which Jesus died is the death which sinners should die. He did take our place and as we examine what happened to Him we may understand what really are the wages of sin.

The next place which describes the ultimate penalty of sin is Revelation 20:11-15. Here we have a description of the final destruction of the wicked. But as we read carefully we notice that this destruction is as a result of the express sentence of God. The dead stand before God, are judged out of the books and are sentenced “according to their works.” Only then are they destroyed. Their death is simply an execution as a consequence of God’s sentence. (Romans 1:32)

The third place where we find a description of an entity suffering the ultimate penalty of sin is Revelation 19:20. Here we are told that the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire. This final destruction of the beast is also described in Daniel 7:11 where we are given an interesting background to his execution. We are told in verses 9, 10 that the judgment sits and the beast is finally destroyed forever. He is judged and condemned by God and heaven and finally executed, that is, he is “given to the burning flame.”

So then, what is the common element in the deaths of, (a) the beast, (b) the sinners who are lost and (c) Jesus? Obviously, it is the fact that all were judged, and died under direct condemnation and sentencing of God. None

Continued on page 12

Clarke's Commentary on 1 John 5:7

Verse 7. *There are three that bear record*) The FATHER, who bears testimony to His Son; the WORD or Logos, who bears testimony to the Father; and the HOLY GHOST, which bears testimony to the Father and the Son. And *these three* are one in essence, and agree in the *one* testimony, that Jesus came to die for, and give life to, the world.

But it is likely that this verse is not genuine. It is wanting (missing) in every MS. Of this epistle written *before* the invention of printing, one excepted, the *Codex Montfortii*, in trinity College, Dublin: the others which omit this verse amount to *one hundred and twelve*.

It is wanting (missing) in both the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Ethiopic*, the *Coptic*, *Sahidic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonian*, & c., in a word, in all the ancient versions but the *Vulgate*; and even of this version many of the most ancient and correct MSS. Have it not. It is wanting also in all the ancient Greek fathers; and in most even of the Latin.

The words, as they exist in all the Greek MSS with the exception of the *Codex Montfortii*, are the following: -

“6. This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7. For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; these three agree in one. 9. If we receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater, &c.”

The words that are omitted by all the MSS., the above excepted, and all the *versions*, the *Vulgate* excepted, are these:-

[In heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one: and there are three which bear witness in earth.]

To make the whole more clear, that every reader may see what has been

added, I shall set down these verses, with the *inserted* words in brackets.

“6. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7. For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. 8. And there are three which bear witness in earth,] the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one. 9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, &c.” Any man may see on examining the words, that if those included in brackets, which are wanting in the MSS. And *versions*, be omitted, there is no want of *connection*; and as to the *sense*, it is complete and perfect without them; and, indeed much



more so than with them. I shall conclude this part of the note by observing, with Dr. Dodd, “that there are some internal and accidental marks which may render the passage suspected; for the sense is complete, and indeed more clear and better preserved, without it. Besides, the Spirit is mentioned, both as a witness in heaven and on earth; so that the six witnesses are thereby reduced to five, and the equality of number, or antithesis between the witnesses in heaven and on earth, is quite taken away. Besides, what need of witnesses in *heaven*? No one there doubts that Jesus is the Messiah; and if it be said that Father, Son, and Spirit

are witnesses on earth, then there are five witnesses on earth, and none in heaven; not to say that there is a little difficulty in interpreting how the Word or the Son can be a witness to himself.”

It may be necessary to inquire how this verse stood in our earliest English Bibles. In COVERDALE'S Bible, printed about 1535, for it bears no date, the seventh verse is put in brackets thus:-

And it is the Sprete that beareth wytness; for the Sprete is the trueth. (For there are thre which beare recorde in heaven; the Father, the Woorde, and the Holy Ghost, and these thre are one.) And there are thre which beare record in earth: the Sprete, water and bloude and these thre are one. If we receyve, &c.

Tindal was as critical as he was conscientious; and though he admitted the words into the text of the first edition of his New Testament printed in 1526, yet he distinguished them by a different letter, and put them in brackets, as Coverdale had done; and also the words *in earth*, which stand in verse 8. without proper authority, and which being excluded make the text the same as in the MSS., &c.

Two editions of this version are now before me; one printed in English and Latin, quarto, with the following title:-

The Newe Testament, both in Englyshe and Laten, of Mayster Erasmus translation – and imprinted by William Powell – the yere of our Lorde M.CCCCC.XLVII. And the first yere of the kinges (Edw. VI.) moste gracious reygve.

In this edition the text stands thus:-

And it is the Spirite that beareth wytnes, because the Spirite is truth (for there are thre whiche

bearre recorde in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.) For there are three which beare recorde, (in earth,) the Spirite, water, and blode, and these three are one. If we receive, &c.

The other, printed in London “by William Tylle, 4to, without the Latin of Erasmus in M.CCCCLXIX. “*the thyrde yere of the reigne of our moost dreade Soverayne Lorde Kynge Edwarde the Syxte.*” Has, with a small variety of spelling, the text in the same order, and the same words included in brackets as above.

The English Bible, with the book of Common Prayer, printed by *Richard Cardmarden*, at Rouen in Normandy, fol. 1566, exhibits the text faithfully, but in the following singular manner:-

And it is the Spyrte that beareth witness, because the Spyrte is true. (for there are three which beare recorde in heaven. the Father, the Woorde, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are One) And three which beare recorde (in earth) the Spirite, and water, and blode; and these three are one.*

The first English Bible which I have seen, where these *distinctions* were omitted, is that called *The Bishop's Bible*, printed by Jugge, fol. 1568. Since that time, all such distinctions have been generally disregarded.

Though a conscientious believer in the doctrine of the ever blessed, holy and undivided Trinity, and in the proper and essential Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, which doctrines I have defended by many, and even new, arguments in the course of this work, I cannot help doubting the authenticity of the text in question; and, for farther particulars, refer to the *observations* at the end of this chapter.

Observations on the three Heavenly Witnesses

SUMMARY of the whole evidence relative to the THREE HEAVENLY WITNESSES, 1 John v.7.

1. ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN Greek MSS. Are extant, containing the First Epistle of John, and the text in question is wanting in 112. It only exists in the *Codex Montfortii*, (a comparatively recent MS.,) already described. The *Codex Ravianus*, in the Royal Library at Berlin, is a *transcript* taken from the *Complutensian Polygot*.

2. All the GREEK fathers omit the verse, though many of them quote both verse 6 and verse 8, applying them to the Trinity, and the Divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit; yea, and endeavor to prove the doctrine of the *Trinity* from verse 6 and verse 8 without referring to any such verse as the 7th, which, had it existed, would have been a more positive proof, and one that could not have been overlooked.

3. The *first place* in which the verse appears in *Greek* is the Greek translation of the Acts of the *Council of Lateran*, held A.D. 1215.

4. Though it is found in many *Latin* copies, yet does not appear that any written previously to the TENTH CENTURY contains it.

5. The *LATIN fathers* did not quote it, even where it would have greatly strengthened their arguments; and where, had it existed, it might have been most naturally expected.

6. *Vigilius*, bishop of *Tapsum*, at the conclusion of the fifth century, is the first who seems to have referred expressly to the three heavenly witnesses; but his quotation does not agree with the present text either in *words* or in *sense*; and besides, he is a writer of very little credit, nor does the place alleged appear to learned men to be genuine.

7. The *Latin writers* who do refer to the three heavenly witnesses vary greatly in their quotations, the more ancient placing the *eighth verse* before the *seventh*, and very many omitting, after the earthly witnesses, the clause *these three are one*. Others who insert *these three are one* add in

Christ Jesus; others use different terms.

8. It is wanting in all the ancient *VERSIONS*, THE *Vulgate* excepted; but the more ancient copies of this have it not; and those which have it vary greatly among themselves, as may be seen in the specimens already produced.

9. It is wanting in the *first edition* of Erasmus, A.D. 1516, which is properly the *editio princeps* of the Greek text.

It is wanting also in his *second edition* 1519, but he added it in the *third* from the *Codex Montfortii*.

It is wanting in the editions of Aldus, Gerbelius, Cephalaeus, &c.

It is wanting in the *German* translation of LUTHER, and in *all the editions* of it published *during his lifetime*.

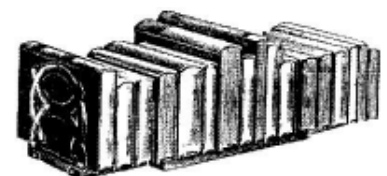
It is inserted in our early English translations, but with marks of *doubtfulness*, as has already been shown.

10. In short, it stands on no authority sufficient to authenticate any part of a revelation professing to have come from God.

See *Griesbach's* Dissertation on this verse at the end of the second volume of his Greek text. Halae et Londini, 1806.

In defense of this verse see “Archdeacon *Travis's* Letters to *Gibbon*,” and on the other side, “Professor *Porson's* Answers to *Travis*.” The latter left nothing farther to be said on the subject either in vindication or reply.

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Taken from *Clarke's* Commentary, by Adam Clarke, LL. D., F.S.A., &c., 1874 edition



ROMANIAN REPORT

Vlad & Andi Ardeias

This report came to us a couple of months ago but we were unable to publish it before now. We hope that it will still prove to be a blessing. (ed.)

My dear brothers and sisters,

Here I am with more news about the Work of God from Romania! The reasons for me writing the following lines are

- (a) because I always enjoy reading news about God's way of dealing with the people all around the world;
- (b) because God is praised by all these experiences;
- (c) because your faith is strengthened!

Two days ago, my dear wife Andi and I, got back home from a week long missionary trip to the centre and south part of the country! We have been abundantly blessed by the presence of our God, and He gave us wonderful experiences!

Before we left our home, the weather was like in the spring time, and all our country enjoyed temperatures between + 5 to + 24 degrees Celsius! We didn't have snow at all, and we were happy for this gift! But two days before we left, the temperature got low and in the centre and south part of the country the snow blocked some of the roads! We knew that Satan would do everything in his power to hinder us! We could have easily cancelled the trip, but we knew that God wanted us to be in the SDARM (*Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement*) church from the city of Ploiesti on the following Sabbath, and I will tell you why!

The Sabbath lessons of the SDARM church are now dealing AGAIN in the past year, with the doctrine of the Trinity! They reserved five lessons for this subject, lessons entitled:

1. "Jesus Christ – fully God"
2. "The divinity of Christ - Confessions"
3. "The Word became flesh"
4. "The Holy Ghost"
5. "The heavenly trio"

When I first saw these lessons, I knew that God had a plan for us, and we understood that He wanted us to send the Truth everywhere! So, I started to write commentaries to every lesson, and to send them all around the world to all the addresses that I had! The people seemed to be interested, and so I went on till the last lesson! But: while I was writing the commentaries to lesson 4, "The Holy Ghost", I observed something very interesting: for the first time (as much as I know) the SDARM church edited an Ellen White text! It is the well known and the precious text that says:

"Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall (although unseen by you), [THIS PHRASE WAS ADDED BY ELLEN WHITE.] teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" [John 14:26]. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will come not unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you"

[John 16:7]." {14MR 23.3}

The way that they printed it is:

"... with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Ghost to be His successor on earth. The Holy Ghost is divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He (Christ – translator's note) would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Ghost, as the omnipresent. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall (although unseen by you), [THIS PHRASE WAS ADDED BY ELLEN WHITE.] teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" [John 14:26]. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will come not unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" [John 16:7]." {14MR 23.3}

So, they took away the first word "**cumbered**", the word "**Himself**" from the proposition "*The Holy Spirit is HIMSELF divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof,*" they added a note and they wrote the word "**Omnipresent**" without the capital letter! Interestingly, when I checked out the English version of the lessons on the SDARM website, I noticed that they published the text as it stands in the Ellen White manuscript, and so in the French edition! But only in the Romanian and the Hungarian editions the text was edited. (the lessons in the Hungarian language are also printed in Romania!)

Of course, you may easily understand the implications! And I knew that God

wanted everybody to know that, and that's why we thought of spending the Sabbath in the SDARM church in Ploiesti, which is a big one, and also, that's why Satan wanted us so badly home, and not in any of the churches! So, we left, although the weather forecast sounded very bad! The night before, trucks and cars were blocked in several parts of the country, including some of those where we were supposed to pass! But, although we have a light 2x4 car with old tires, the Lord was beside us all the time, and we didn't have any problem at all!

Our first stop was in Topoloveni with an eighteen year old sister that we met on the internet and who accepted the truth about God not long ago, and the 1888 message two years ago. We had a blessed correspondence and when we arrived at her place, we found her, her mother and sister, all three happy to meet us. We had a blessed few hours of talking about the truth about God and about the true Church of God! The eighteen year old sister (Gabriela) had always been excellent at English in school, and she thought of going to the university this year to become an English teacher, but after discovering all those truths, she wanted badly to work for God! We have been talking about that during our correspondence, and she said that she is seriously thinking of starting the work of translating books from English to Romanian, but her main problem is that she doesn't have any computer! I thought of giving her my first one, but the CD-Rom is dead, and it is almost impossible to work without it! We concluded that we will pray for that, and she expressed her faith in God's guidance, and in His plans! Now, she is seriously thinking of not going to the university at all, but to engage in God's work full time! Of course, she would be of a great help here in Romania, and we remembered Jesus' words: "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." Luke 10:2. We ask you to pray also for the Romanian field, for more consecrated workers; we badly

need more!

After this short but extremely blessed visit, we went to a brother in Olt, one of the most influential in the SDARM church in Romania, a brother that recently went out (resigned) from the "organized work of the church" because of his conscience. He is a strong believer and preacher of the truth about God and of the 1888 message, and we spent wonderful, blessed moments with his family. He told me of several ideas that he had concerning the work of God in Romania, and we concluded that we should earnestly pray for God's guidance for the next step in this country! He recently wrote a letter to all the employed workers of the SDARM church in Romania, in which he denounced the abuses of the leaders and their satanic way of dealing with the people in general, and with their sheep in particular! The letter was very strong, and it had a very large influence in the field!

After that, we spent a couple of days at my mother's place, and then we finally went to Ploiesti! There we spent the two nights at our friends, Alexander and Diana, a faithful couple that is doing a wonderful work in that area! After he told me about the situation in the local church and after I earnestly prayed for God's guidance, I concluded that it would be best if next morning, in the Sabbath school, I would not say anything except concerning the edited text!

Next morning we went to the church and during the Sabbath school I didn't say a word, although all of them (including the pastor) were astonished because of my silence. But when the question with the edited text came, then I got up and I told them that I would not comment on the Bible verses and the paragraphs that were misused, but I would only call their attention to this grave action! All of a sudden, many of them started to defend the editor and the translator, and a sister said that I went there to shake their faith! Then I turned to her and asked, "Do you understand what you are saying? Do you understand that this means that I have

a pact with the devil to lead you to eternal death?" And she answered "Yes!" Then I said that I had nothing more to say, I sat and we waited until the end of the program. At the very end, the pastor read the well known text:

"The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden." {AA 52.1}

Of course I got the point, and so, in the pause till the sermon time, we left the building! After that, the elder and the sister that told me the words came to me and apologize. We accepted them, and had a long conversation! They tried to defend the editor again, saying "This is something small; let us stick to the essentials, to the points that we agree on!" I told them that if they don't care that they have poison in their soup, they will not get to the cake!

We left the very next day, knowing that now all the country (and more than that) will find out what had happened there, and what I said! In our way back home, we also visited a brother that I met on the internet, a brother who was glad to read my commentaries on those Sabbath school lessons! He is employed in a firm, but wants to get in the lines of God's workers!

Seven days: a whole week lasted our trip, and we were so happy for all that God could do in this time! When we got home, we found the water pipes for the bathroom frozen! So, pray for us! My dear brothers and sisters, I hope and pray that our Heavenly Father may give you wonderful experiences with Him!

With all our love,
Vlad & Andi Ardeias.

DID JESUS DIE THE SECOND DEATH?

Continued from page 7

of them had a death which was simply a consequential result of sin. All died as an act of execution, decreed by the judgment of God and heaven.

CONCLUSION

We must conclude then that the wages of sin, or the penalty of sin is to die, condemned of God and separated from Him. The question of a resurrection from that death is irrelevant to the sentence. The issue is that this is what justice requires – death, totally separated from God, His grace and His mercy, with the mind under the weight of the conviction of sin and judgment. This is what Jesus alone has experienced, and what the finally impenitent will also experience.

This helps us to grasp a little more fully the concept of the “death of the cross.” This is a term which is used to describe the kind of death which Christ died (Phil. 2:8) and it suggests the death of a condemned, disgraced criminal, exposed laid out to the view of the world.

This is the way Jesus died and when we understand this, it helps us to understand a little better the nature of the sacrifice which both God and His Son made. I have often heard it asked, “where was the greatness of God’s sacrifice when He full well knew that He would have His Son restored to Him within forty hours?” But the truth is, the suffering of both Christ and the Father – the horror which they suffered, the price which they paid – was

surely not in the approximately 39 hours during which Jesus slept the sleep of death in the grave. No, it was the agony of the separation, the pain of rejection, the awful sense of God’s condemnation which preceded His death which was the real suffering of Jesus, and which broke both His, and the Father’s hearts.

These are some of the facts which become evident as we examine this question of which death Jesus died. Hopefully, these thoughts will help us to better assess the question of whether or not Jesus died the second death.



Open Face

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