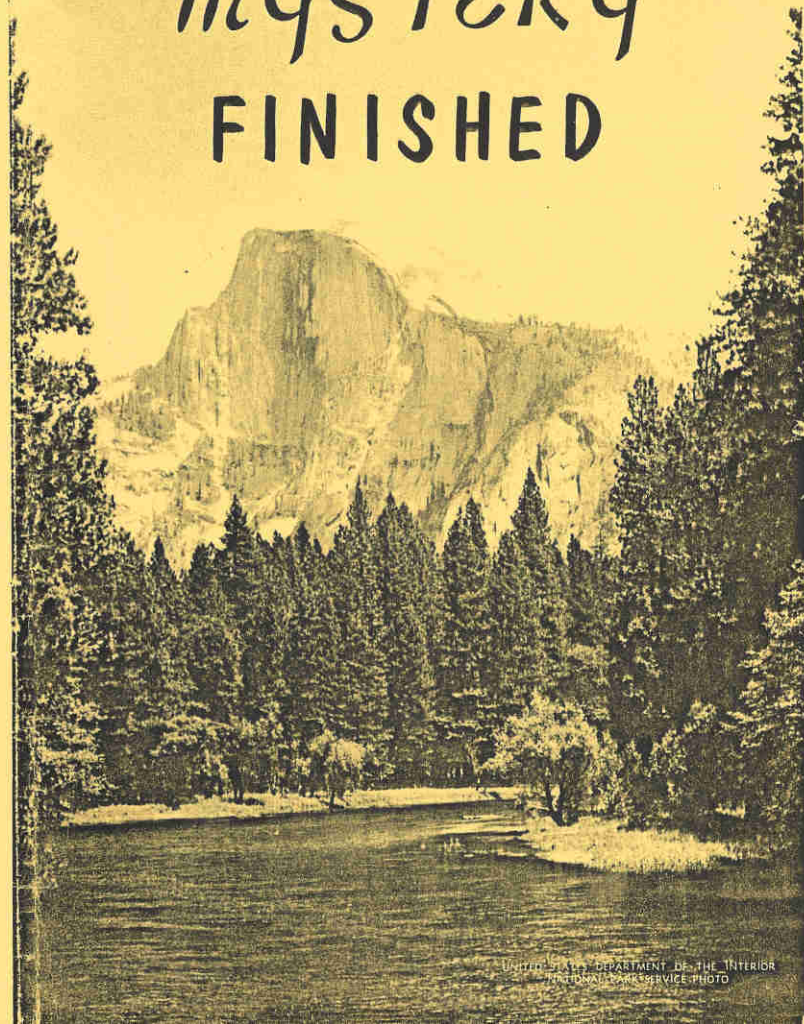


... Neither young nor old are excusable in trusting to another to have an experience for them. Said the angel: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." A noble self-reliance is needed in the Christian experience and warfare.

Men, women, and youth, God requires you to possess moral courage, steadiness of purpose, fortitude and perseverance, minds that cannot take the assertions of another, but which will investigate for themselves before receiving or rejecting, that will study and weigh evidence, and take it to the Lord in prayer.

Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 130.

The MYSTERY FINISHED



THE MYSTERY FINISHED

By Robert D. Brinsmead

"And the angel whom I saw standing on sea and land lifted up his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there should be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God, as he announced to his servants the prophets, should be fulfilled."

—Revelation 10:5-7, R.S.V.

When the last prophetic period expired in 1844, the hour had struck to finish the mystery of God. Accordingly, Christ entered the most holy place to cleanse the sanctuary from the sins of His people. Said the angel, "There should be no more delay." But there has been a delay in the fulfillment of God's plan. One hundred and twenty-two years have not brought Christ's anticipated return from the wedding (Daniel 7:13, 14; Revelation 19:7, 8; 21:3, 9-11; Luke 19:12; 12:36). The parable of Jesus has certainly been fulfilled, "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept" (Matthew 25:5). Time only intensifies the urgency of finding an explanation for this delay. To the people who profess to believe present truth in this seventh and last period of the church's history, comes the startling message:

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:14-19).

Since Christ's New Jerusalem bride is to be composed of the sealed saints (Revelation 19:7, 8; 21:2, 9-11; 3:12), it is unthinkable that the heavenly Bridegroom would proceed to consummate the marriage while the bride-elect offers nothing better than a nauseating, lukewarm response to the love of Christ. Not yet can that mighty chorus of rejoicing thunder forth, "Let us be glad and rejoice . . . for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Revela-

tion 19:7). She is not ready, and the disappointment of Christ must be beyond description.

It may come as a surprise to many that the Advent Movement which is called of God to bear a message rebuking the sins of Babylon and calling the inhabitants of the world to repentance, is itself called to accept the rebuke of divine love and to respond with zealous repentance. Human nature is more willing to help God administer reproof than to humbly accept it.

"Thou . . . Knowest Not"

Christ does not accuse His people of willful transgression. Thou "knowest not," says He, "that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Those of us who know the great points of present truth are prone to reflect very complacently about our knowledge of the truth and to interpret the blessings of God that attend the Advent Movement as evidence of our favorable standing before Him; *not knowing* that such goodness on the part of God is designed to lead us to repentance (Romans 2:4). The definite tendency is to treat any suggestion that all is not well and going according to schedule as uncalled-for criticism that interrupts the task of giving the message to the world. But time only serves to emphasize the counsel of the faithful and true Witness, "Thou . . . knowest not."

Our ignorance stems from a failure to understand the meaning of Daniel 8:14, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Our fellow Laodiceans who have been brought up and nourished on the great truths committed to the Advent Movement, may find this statement unbelievable. After all, how can this be? Do we not know that the 2300 days ended in 1844? Do we not proclaim that Jesus is in the most holy place? Are we not familiar with the work He is doing there? Are we not aware of an investigative judgment for every professed follower of Christ, to be followed by the blotting out of the record of sin and the sealing of each case favorably decided? Yes, we may know all this, but we have failed to enter into the experience that there is for us in the cleansing of the sanctuary. Both type and antitype show that the cleansing of the sanctuary is not just a work to be done for the sanctuary, but that it includes a *special experience* for those who take part in the service.

Consider that ancient ritual of the Day of Atonement. While the high priest was in the most holy place, the people were without doing their part. With prayer, fasting, and great affliction of soul they supplicated the great mercy of God. Then when the high priest sprinkled the blood to make the final atonement, it not only did something for the tabernacle; it did something for the people.

"And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. . . . For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. . . . And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation" (Leviticus 16:17, 30, 33).

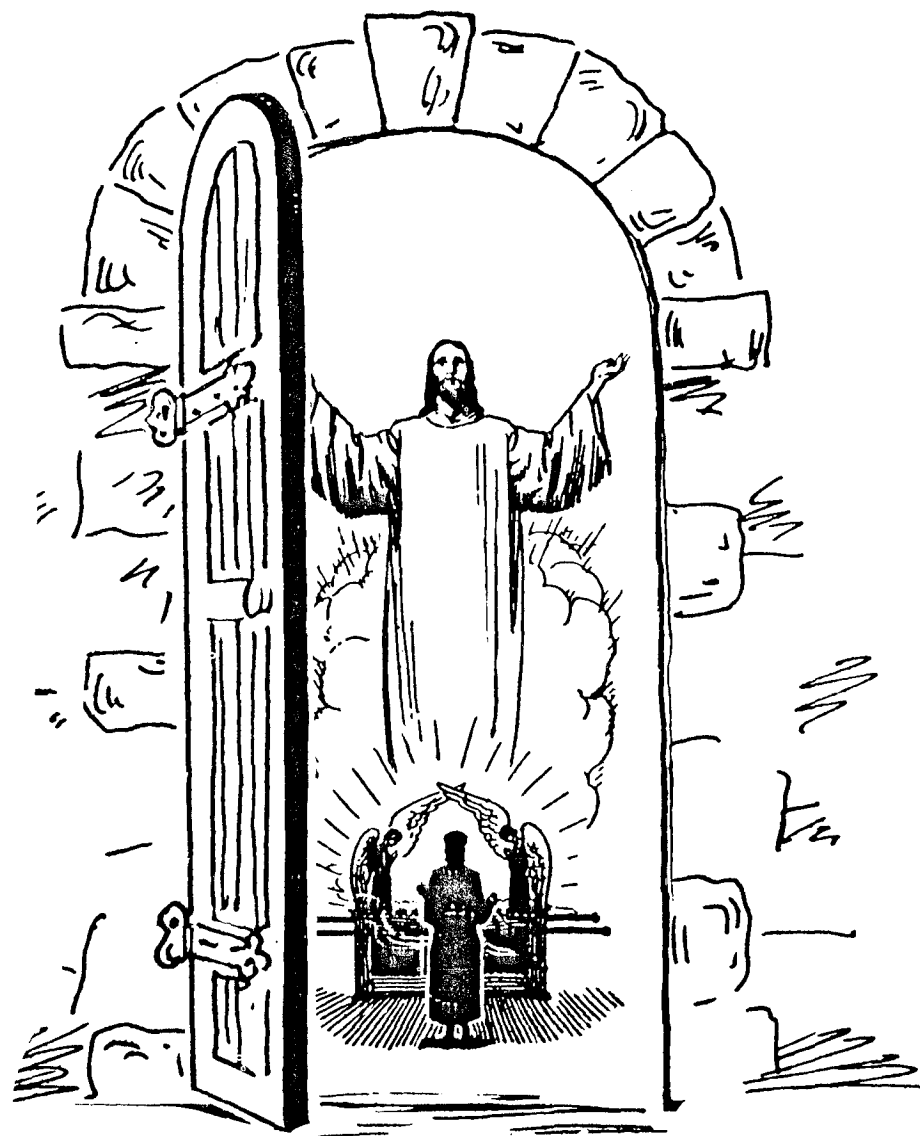
Now this symbolic service shows what must be done in reality. If the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary was only a work to be done for the sanctuary itself, then Christ would have done His work long ago. But God says that the work in the most holy place is "for you, to cleanse you." One of the outstanding pioneers of the Advent Movement put the truth of the matter thus:

"There are three temples brought to view in the Bible, and all should be blended into one study. The first one was a typical sanctuary built by Moses in the wilderness, afterward rebuilt by Solomon, again rebuilt by Zerubbabel. This temple and its services shadowed forth the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. The work of Christ in heaven is also to go forward in the living temple of His people on the earth; so while there was a sanctuary on the earth, and still one in heaven, the most important of the three is His people; for the object of the earthly sanctuary was to teach man how to know and believe the *actual* work done for him in the heavenly sanctuary. 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' 1 Cor. 3:16. All the work revealed by the typical temple shadowing the real work of Christ in heaven is for the purification of His church on the earth, and consequently a neglect of a knowledge of these truths will leave men unprepared for the impending judgments of God, as really as the Jews were unprepared for the destruction that came upon them."*

As our great High Priest is in the most holy place, can it be said that we Laodiceans are doing our part of the work without? Do we have that deep heartbroken repentance which fulfilled the type of Israel's attitude on the Day of Atonement? Are we so in harmony with Christ's special work that the work is going forward in the living temple of our hearts? What does Christ say? "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock" (Revelation 3:19, 20). The unwelcome truth of the matter is that we have not understood the experience implied in Daniel 8:14, much less have we entered by faith into that experience.

For the remainder of this article we shall endeavor to explore the heart experience which awaits us in the great work of cleansing the sanctuary. We will examine five areas of which it may truly be said, "Thou . . . knowest not."

* Article by S. N. Haskell, "Review and Herald," August 13, 1901 (Vol. 78, No. 33) "The Sanctuary Question from the Standpoint of the Book of Hebrews."



"Behold, I have set before thee an open door." Revelation 3:8

1. What Is Sin?

The experience of being in harmony with Christ in His work of cleansing the sanctuary means first and foremost an experience of extraordinary repentance. Israel's repentance on the Day of Atonement was much greater than the repentance associated with the ordinary daily service. Laodicea is certainly not fulfilling the type.

Such deep, heartbroken repentance as demanded by this hour of judgment eludes us, for we do not really know what we have to repent of. Christ says, "Thou . . . knowest not." Oh, we will confess that we are not perfect (which is no evidence of humility), that we fail the Lord so often, that we know our shortcomings. After all, is it not sufficient if we keep confessing the sins we know about? But Christ calls us to repent concerning the sin of which we are unaware. It is not a conscious sin, but a subconscious sin.

We who live in the hour when the mystery of God is to be finished must apply ourselves, as no generation has ever done, to search out the mystery of iniquity. Sin will never be banished from the human heart until God's people are brought to a full awareness of that which appears too simple—What is sin?

What is sin? Let us put aside those definitions which come with such unconscious ease that they do not bring any real illumination to the human heart. We can see how that sin began with Lucifer who said in his heart, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:13, 14). We can trace how this principle of self-seeking, this cursed law of sin and death, has become an integral part of human nature. But unless we see the outworking of Satan's principle in the light of the cross of Calvary, we may view the Bible statements declaring the diabolic wickedness of the human heart as a sort of poetic exaggeration—at least as far as we are concerned.

Implicit in Lucifer's desire to have God's place, was the desire to get rid of God, to dethrone and destroy Him. In words too plain to be misunderstood, Jesus said that "he was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). Of course neither Lucifer nor his followers understood the true nature of sin or where it would lead. Sin had not appeared in the universe before. Lucifer was confident that his planned society wherein all would be free to live for themselves was an improvement upon the government of Jehovah. He was bent on carrying his defection to the entire universe, and unless God could effectively expose the true nature of sin, He could not secure His dominion against apostasy.

However, from eternity God had a way to expose sin, and that was the way of the cross. It took Satan completely by surprise. At Calvary, Jesus' statement about Satan being a murderer from the beginning was proved to the onlooking

universe. Here the real purpose of his rebellion was exposed. In his malignant hatred of the Son of God, he demonstrated that the true purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown. As the watching universe saw what sin was in the light of the cross, Satan was entirely uprooted from the affections and the last tie of sympathy for him was cut. Looking forward to this event, Jesus said, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (John 12:31; Luke 10:18).

We must press the matter further than this, for God designs that the cross shall reveal to man the true nature of his own rebellion. The human race has become partner with Satan. In tempting Eve, Satan presented the resolve that was in his own heart: "You will be like God" (Genesis 3:5 R.S.V.). Therefore, "he that committeth sin is of the devil" (1 John 3:8); that is, he is motivated by the same principle and possessed by the same spirit. That is why Jesus could say to those whom He loved and for whom He labored: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44).

There was only one way that God could show man the content of the human heart. He put Himself in the hands of sinners in the person of His Son. Thus doing, He allowed them to act out what was in their hearts. Not only the Jews, but the whole human race is depicted by Jesus' parable of the husbandmen who said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him" (Matthew 21:38). Not just the Jews who were literally present for the crucifixion, but the whole world stands charged with the murder of the Son of God. The cross proves that sin is the will to kill God.

Some years ago, an American preacher, noted for his vivid presentation, wrote a book called *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. It presented such a portrayal of the supposed torments of everlasting hell which arose as a sort of sweet incense to an angry God, that people were known to faint. This concept of God was supposed to bring men to repentance, which it never did, for sinners cannot find it in themselves to be reconciled to such a Being.

The gospel message is a complete reversal of that wicked Babylonian invention. The gospel is an account which could be entitled, "God in the Hands of Angry Sinners." It presents Jesus, the revelation of the Father's love. The purity and goodness of His life goads men to Satanic madness, and fired with intense hatred they cry, "Away with him . . . Crucify him!" Taking hold of their King, their Creator, and Sustainer, they proceed to crucify the embodiment of infinite love. Yet the unspeakable sin of men only serves to emphasize the unfathomable love of God. Before the rage of the infuriated mob, before shame and spitting, before mockery and

insult, before the heartbreaking loneliness of treading the wine-press alone, never was the love of God so majestically manifested. He is led as an unresisting lamb to the slaughter, and dies, not to appease an angry God, but to reconcile an angry sinner.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). In Greek philosophy, the highest love that could be conceived was that a man should lay down his life for his friends. But God's love is as much higher than that as heaven is higher than the earth. His love led Him to endure the horrors of the second death for His murderers.

Sin is enmity against God (Romans 8:7), and Calvary makes known the extent of the enmity. Christ prayed for His murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The human mind is not aware of the real character of sin. At Calvary the human race acted out the hidden enmity of the heart. This prayer of Christ embraces the world, and reaches down to Laodicea, of whom Christ says, "Thou . . . knowest not." The words of the Apostle Peter are addressed to every sinner, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, . . . And now, brethren, I wot that *through ignorance ye did it*, as did also your rulers" (Acts 3:14, 15, 17). The cross proves the truth of the words of the prophet, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

As a striking evidence that the real sin of the human heart is unconscious, ordinary, sinful men will deny that they have it in their hearts to do such a mean and horrible thing as to murder God. When Elisha met Hazael who was shortly to become king of Syria, the prophet wept.

"And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child" (2 Kings 8:12).

With all conscious sincerity, Hazael exclaimed, "But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" (verse 13). He did not know what was latent in his heart. Neither does any other sinner. Even Jesus had to rebuke His well-meaning disciples: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" (Luke 9:55).

Psychoanalytical science today is aware of the reality of man's unconscious mind. More and more it is being realized that the basic ills of the human mind are hidden from conscious awareness. Yet only Inspiration can reveal the true reason for the repression of man's terrible guilt complex. It is time to allow the light from the cross to expose the universal neurosis of man's hidden enmity toward God. That

light, reflected from the most holy place of the sanctuary, will show that there is a complete remedy for the diabolical principle of sin.

While the daily service of the tabernacle ritual symbolized a cleansing from known acts of sin, the yearly service of the cleansing of the sanctuary prefigured an atonement for unconscious sin. The apostle writes, "The second [apartment] is entered only once a year, and by the high priest alone, and even then he must take with him the blood which he offers on his own behalf and for the people's sins of ignorance" (Hebrews 9:7 N.E.B.). Laodicea needs cleansing from the great sin of ignorance. A candid study of her history will show that this community of respectable, self-satisfied, and well-meaning Christians is capable of the most intense hatred to the truth as it is in Jesus. She is a prisoner of hope, until the Spirit anoints her eyes to see that the sin of Calvary is her own.

2. Where Is Sin Recorded?

When we have a true sense of the awful reality of our sins being recorded, there will be heard among us on every hand, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin *against* God?" But we stop at the form of the truth rather than grasp the substance of it; we content ourselves with the mechanical concepts of the sanctuary truth rather than embrace the reality, which is Jesus Christ. In a very real sense He is the door of the enclosure. He is the altar and the laver opened for sin and uncleanness. He is the bread of the table, the light of the seven lamps, and the sweet incense of merit. Likewise His flesh is the veil, and His life is the law. He is the mercy seat, and manna, and the rod that budded. He is both Shekinah and High Priest, Judge and Advocate. So, too, in a very real sense, Jesus is the book of life, symbolized by the breastplate of judgment. The record states:

"And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually" (Exodus 28:29).

As Aaron bore on the breastplate the names of the tribes of Israel as he went into the sanctuary, so Jesus bears upon His heart the names of all who accept Him as the Saviour. As a book contains words and thoughts, so Jesus is the Word of God, the Father's thought made audible. This is, indeed, a Book "of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). No wonder Jesus told His disciples to rejoice because their names were in the book of life! No wonder that men will weep and gnash their teeth when they look in vain to find their names in the book of life.

There is more to the book of remembrance and the book of record than cold ledgers of names, good deeds, and bad

deeds. Jesus says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). The angels who record our sins register the anguish and unspeakable sadness of Jesus as He is crucified afresh by those who are called by His holy name. "In the midst of the throne" there stands yet "a Lamb as it had been slain"—torn and bruised by our sin. (See Revelation 5:6). As His continued goodness leads us to repentance, He must take the burden of our guilt. Our High Priest must bear the iniquity of the sanctuary (Exodus 28:38; Leviticus 10:17). Because of the continual commission of sin, the Saviour must continually undergo the pangs of Calvary.

"Those who think of the result of hastening or hindering the gospel think of it in relation to themselves and to the world. Few think of its relation to God. Few give thought to the suffering that sin has caused our Creator. All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him. When there came upon Israel the calamities that were the sure result of separation from God—subjugation by their enemies, cruelty, and death—it is said that 'His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.' 'In all their affliction He was afflicted; . . . and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.'"—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 263.

At the same time, we should have a true understanding of what sin does to us, for God says, "he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul" (Proverbs 8:36). Sin is not only recorded in living characters in heaven; it is recorded in the minds of men. "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart" (Jeremiah 17:1).

In the inner apartment of the soul temple, upon those tables of the heart whereon God originally wrote His law, man has inscribed the law of sin and death. Those who imagine that sin is only a matter of guilt which is removed instantly upon repentance, should look at the awful consequence of sin in a different light. Let them consider how often Adam must have repented for his one "little" sin as he brought his sacrifices to the gate of Eden. Having eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that knowledge of evil remained in his mind. It was not just a knowledge about evil, but an actual experience in sin which left a lasting impress upon his mind. As he was obliged to battle with the ground cursed to bring forth thorns and weeds, he was constantly reminded about the evil of his nature. He was sentenced to "eat of it"—that is, experience the result of his sin—all the days of his life (see Genesis 3:17, 18).

A sinner may repent of his sin and be cleansed from its guilt, but as surely as that sin remains upon the records of

heaven, its record remains upon him. To those who have received forgiveness, the Lord says, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations" (Ezekiel 36:31). Many things may be consciously forgotten, but even as neurologists have recently discovered, the whole stream of one's conscious life is retained in the unconscious mind. Every thought and emotion of the soul is recorded in the mind, as the Bible writer says, "graven upon the table of . . . [the] heart."

The Apostle Paul shows that there can be no moral and spiritual perfection possessed experientially while this "conscience of sins" and "remembrance of sins" remains (see Hebrews 10:1-3). That is why the Bible worthies are not described as men who lived in a state of sinlessness. "These all died in faith, . . . God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:13, 40).

Then what is this "better thing" that God has provided for those who shall not die in faith. Those who do not die in faith are those who experience the blessings of the cleansing of the sanctuary. In the ancient ritual, the high priest entered the most holy place with blood to make the final atonement for the people who afflicted their souls without. This symbolically blotted out the sin of Israel. So in completing His work of atonement in the sanctuary above, Christ blots out the record of His people's sin. This great work of final atonement, or blotting out of sin, is not a mere judicial act. It is an experience involving God and His people. Firstly, the blotting out of sin is for Jesus' sake. Says the Lord:

"Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:24, 25).

As unpleasant as the nightmare of sin has been to us, it has been worse to our Lord. Not just from the cold ledgers, but from the memory of the Saviour will our sins be removed. Says the Lord through the apostle, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:17, 18).

When will this take place? Just as soon as God's people receive the eyesalve to realize what sin is and what the long-suffering love of Christ is, then will come the repentance of the ages.

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and thy shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10).

Such repentance will not be inspired by fear of the judgment, the consequences of sin, or self-pity. It will be inspired by a sympathy for Christ as they look upon Him as the sin-bearer of the sanctuary, and mourn for Him. This will be a new experience in repentance that transcends the normal Christian experience, which expresses a longing to be free from the burden of sin. Here will be a longing to free the Saviour from the burden of sin. Here will be a consciousness that the sufferings of Calvary will not end until we be done with sin forever. Here will be supplications to have every root of the awful sin principle blotted from the heart for Jesus' sake.

Secondly, the blotting out of sin is for the people of God. This is explicitly taught in the tabernacle ritual.

"And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place [most holy], until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. . . . For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (Leviticus 16:17, 30).

When God remembers the sin no more, it will be a blessed experience for the saints to remember them no more. Says the prophet:

"In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve" (Jeremiah 50:20).

This will not mean that God's people will have a mental amnesia to events in the history of sin, but it will mean that the record of the sin itself—the thoughts, emotions, and ways of rebellion—will be erased from the human mind. Neither will any trace of that sin principle be remembered or found in the mind again. The worshippers will have "no more conscience of sins" (Hebrews 10:2).

"In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; . . . Oh Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish" (Isaiah 26:1, 13, 14).

3. Total Dependence Upon Christ

The cleansing of the sanctuary involves such an experience in total dependence upon the merits of Christ that it will bring to human experience a complete and lasting reversal to the experience of original sin. For original sin was man's effort to be independent of God. When he severed his relationship to God, he severed his relationship to righteousness, for God is the only source of righteousness. Even in its fallen condition, the proud heart strives to earn salvation.

The gospel is designed to reverse the process of original sin and bring man to realize his need of total dependence upon God. The great truth of justification by faith strips man of all self-sufficiency and presents Jesus as man's only righteousness. It lays the glory of man in the dust, and exalts the saving merits of the Son of God. When a man is convinced of his sinfulness without Christ, through the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and is brought to cast himself by faith upon the merits of Jesus, he is justified before God. This is the message of Romans 3.

We have already considered the power and glory of justification by faith—how that through the imputed merits of Christ sinful man is robed with the eternal and absolute righteousness of God Himself and exalted to be an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. Through Jesus the repentant sinner is exalted to the very throne of the universe; he is a man born to be king, not of some earthly empire, but of the whole universe. See there an humble sinner bowing in penitence at the foot of the cross, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Do not look upon this humble suppliant in disdainful pity, for he is, for Jesus' sake, exalted more than the angels who have never fallen. He has reached the highest point to which man can attain.

It is a hard lesson for man to learn that the merits of Christ are all-sufficient, and that faith in His righteousness is all that God requires. It is often thought that *sanctification* is an experience to supplement *justification* so that the standing of the justified sinner may be improved before God. But God wants total dependence upon the merits of His Son—nothing more. *Sanctification* is that daily experience of learning again and again the lesson learned at the start of the Christian pathway—that self is nothing and that Jesus is everything. The precious truth of justification by faith is not learned perfectly in one lesson. The element of self-sufficiency is so much a part of human nature, that this original sin is not eradicated from human nature instantaneously. But as the believer learns more and more that the righteousness of Jesus is imputed to him without any merit on his part, it works a great change in the life. The fruit of justification by faith in Christ's merit is unto holiness. It brings peace, hope, love, joy, and crucifixion of self to the heart (see Romans 5 and 6).

The common mistake of humanity is to suppose that when the life is changed by the gospel, then there is some good thing in the flesh. A recent article in a religious paper that is supposed to be an organ of the third angel's message expressed the thought that the more and more imparted righteousness a believer received, the less and less imputed he would need. Since that which is imputed implies a dependence upon the merits of Christ, it is inevitable that in such a program, the more righteous a person feels he is becoming (as religious

activity increases) dependence upon the merits of Jesus is decreased. It is inevitable that through this subtle error, Christ and His righteousness is dropped out of the experience, the love of Jesus grows lukewarm in the heart, and a deadly spiritual complacency envelopes the church. This is precisely our condition as presented in the Laodicean message.

It is often expressed that the imputed righteousness of Christ is only something needed for the past sins. Some recognize that this is inadequate, and admit we need His imputed merits to cover the hidden sinfulness of our nature as we press on toward perfection. But the Word of God clearly teaches that our prayers, praises to God, and good works performed under the impulse of His Spirit need the added merit of Jesus to make them acceptable to God. Without the righteousness of Christ imputed to all good works, they would merely be "filthy rags" in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6). This truth was constantly emphasized in the sanctuary service. Every sacrifice was to be salted with salt, and every prayer in Israel was to ascend to God mingled with the sweet incense of the sanctuary. Thus Israel was instructed concerning their need of the continual intercession which would apply the merits of their Saviour to all their religious activity.

If Israel needed that covering incense during the daily service, they were made to realize they needed it more than ever on the Day of Atonement. They were to abase themselves about the enclosure while the high priest entered the most holy place with blood and two handfuls of incense. By having both hands full of the incense, it was illustrated that Israel could not enter the most holy place through the mediation of the priest by holding on to anything save the merits of their Substitute. As they thus abandoned themselves to trust entirely in the proffered mercy, they were not only acquitted, but the final atonement symbolically blotted out their sins and brought them the culminating victory of the year.

So too, on this great antitypical Day of Atonement, God wants to teach His people absolute trust in the merits of Christ. He wants to bring them to the place where they will commit themselves to trust forever in the righteousness of Christ. This is why Inspiration depicts a deep, agonizing experience that comes to the saints as the "spirit of judgment, and . . . the spirit of burning" brings to them the full consciousness of the sinfulness of their lives (Isaiah 4:2-4; Joel 2:12-17; Zechariah 12:10). While under such deep conviction of their own nothingness, the people of God are called to enter into the most holy place of the sanctuary, to stand before the judgment bar of God, and to receive according to their deeds. It is in this experience that God's people realize that they must take hold of the merits of Christ with both hands, holding on to nothing but His righteousness. As ancient Israel depended entirely upon the blood, the incense, and the high priest, so God's people are called to heed the invitation:

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:19-22).

The experience of the cleansing of the sanctuary is not some supplemental experience to justification by faith; it is a confirmation in the experience of justification by faith forever. Those who depend altogether and forever upon the righteousness of Christ are altogether and forever righteous. The final atonement brings the saints into a lasting relationship with God, and fully and finally reverses that original sin of human nature.

4. Perfecting the Saints

The cleansing of the sanctuary is not just a work that Christ does to the heavenly sanctuary, but it is that work which accomplishes "the perfecting of the saints" whereby they "all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12, 13). Since the sanctuary is defiled by the sin and sinfulness of the people of God, it is apparent that the sanctuary cannot be cleansed until sin is stopped in the hearts of God's people forever. The prophecy of the cleansed sanctuary at the end of time before the coming of Jesus presupposes that there will be a people who do nothing to defile the sanctuary. It presupposes a people cleansed in heart and perfected in character. When God has a people without sin, then He can have a sanctuary without sin.

In the Revelation of John, this work at the end of time is designated by the phrase, "the mystery of God should be finished" (Revelation 10:7). The mystery of God being "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27), the mystery of God being finished means that Christ is fully formed in every believer. And this work of perfecting the image of Jesus in every believer, this work of finishing the mystery of God, is what is comprehended in the prophecy, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

Since, as we have already seen, the perfecting of the saints involves the final atonement or blotting out of sins, and since this blotting out of sins takes place at the investigative judgment, it is evident that it is at the judgment that Christ actually perfects "for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). It is in the judgment that Christ seals His people with the indelible name of His Father's character, and frees them eternally from the dominion of Satan's kingdom. For it is written, "The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion" (Daniel 7:26). We must understand this good news of the judgment, because for all who gather at the sanctuary with a broken and contrite heart, the judgment means victory, deliverance, justification full and complete, the final

seal of God's approval forever. Let us realize that the object of the judgment is not just to investigate cases, but to bestow the benefits of the final atonement upon all who are found in Christ.

This final work of grace, called the sealing of the 144,000 (Revelation 7:2-4), is a work of the Spirit in the last baptism of power called "the latter rain." As in nature, so in grace. The latter rain ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle. So the latter rain of the Spirit completes the work of God's grace in the soul. It brings the seed to perfection, ready for the sickle at the coming of the Son of man (Revelation 14:14). By the power of the Holy Spirit, the moral image of God is perfected in the character. Therefore, it is written, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

God's people must wait in vain for the latter rain until they realize that there must be a gathering at the sanctuary in prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart as illustrated by the ancient Day of Atonement. There must be an awakening to the great work left undone. The prophet declares:

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" (Joel 2:15-17).

When this awakening call is heeded in Laodicea, then the latter part of Joel 2 will be fulfilled:

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit" (Joel 2:28, 29).

The Laodicean message is also given in the words of the Apostle Peter: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

5. Vindication of God's Name

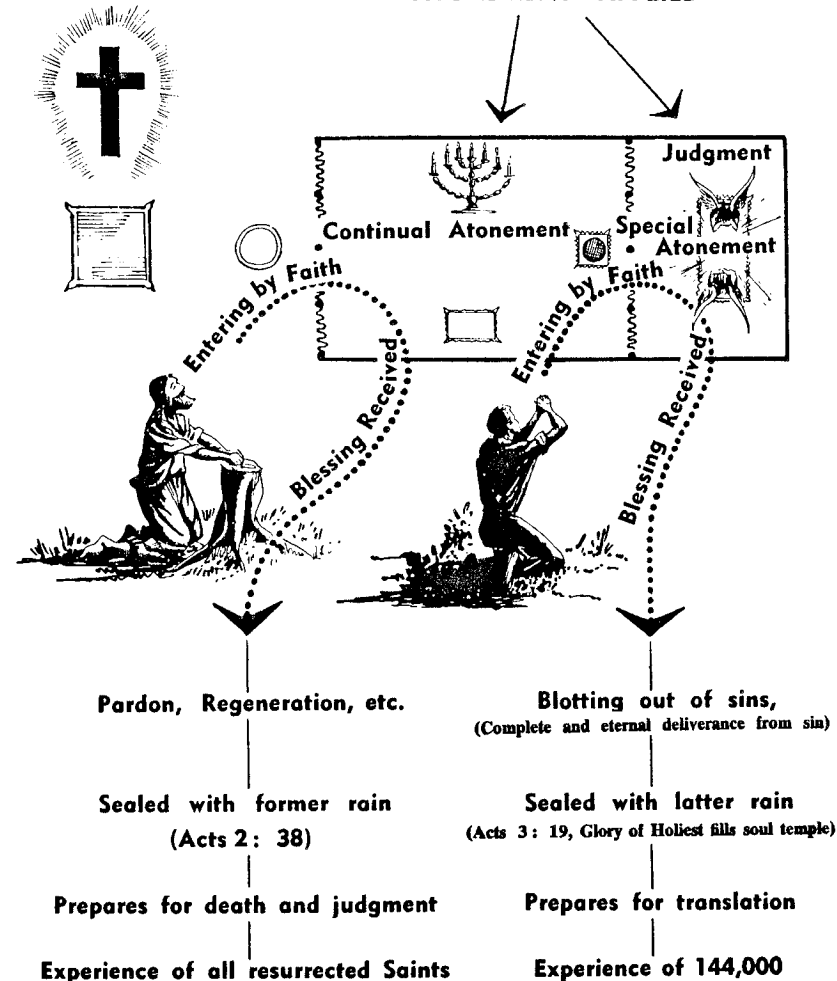
All the way through the Bible, the sanctuary is shown to be the dwelling place of God's name (Deuteronomy 12:11; 1 Kings 8:29; 9:3; Psalm 74:7). Through sin, not just a place is defiled, but God's name is profaned. Satan began this evil work of defiling God's name by his opposition to the law of God.

The cleansing of the sanctuary, therefore, is not just a cleansing of a place, but a "cleansing" of the name of God. The original word for "cleansed" in Daniel 8:14 signifies to justify, to clear, to restore, to set right, to vindicate, etc. The

ATONING SACRIFICE



ATONEMENT APPLIED



salvation of God's people and of the entire universe depends upon the vindication of God's name and the exoneration of His law. This is the *primary* object of that work called the cleansing of the sanctuary.

We consider again the purpose of the creation of the human race. Here was a special order of being, made in God's image, whose special privilege it was to glorify God. The Lord purposes that man give a new revelation of the love, mercy, and grace of God to the universe. God created man to vindicate His name and exonerate His law, and to help bring to an end the work of Satan. And having done this work, man was to have a share in Christ's glory and a seat with Him on His throne.

Man's experiment with sin has not set aside the divine plan in man's creation. Man's selfish detour to glorify himself has not cancelled God's eternal purpose of love for the human race. Man's base infidelity has not destroyed God's faith that His bride-elect will yet respond to His love and vindicate His name. Prophecy declares that the time has come to cleanse the sanctuary. Therefore it is now, as never before, that we must "give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come." For Jesus' sake it must be done. His honor is at stake in the perfection of the saints. "There should be no more delay" (Revelation 10:6, R.S.V.). Coming events, casting their shadows before them, show that the seventh angel is about to sound, and it is in this time "when he is about to sound"* that the mystery of God is to be finished.

Now is the time for Laodicea to shake off her complacency, to lose sight of her primary interest in her own salvation, and to give glory to God for Jesus' sake. For this last generation are those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Revelation 14:4). Did not the Lamb lose sight of His own salvation in Gethsemane and on the cross? He did not have the hope of coming forth from the tomb. Not a ray of light pierced the darkness of eternal separation from God. Yet He "loved me, and gave Himself for me." It is now time that that love awaken such a response in the heart of Laodicea, that she will arise "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" and, losing sight of her own salvation, she will go forth in final conflict against the enemy to vindicate the name of her Lord.

Prophecy designates the closing glory of the Advent message.

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed forni-

*Literal Greek of Revelation 10:7.

cation with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:1-4).

In the hour when the religious world reaches the limit of wickedness through enforcement of the laws of man, the church of God will give the full and final display of the love, mercy, and grace of God.

A Summary of the Significance of Daniel 8:14

The cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14, is nothing less than the full unveiling of the everlasting gospel which is to lighten the earth with the glory of God. Containing the eternal answer to the problem of sin, it will, therefore, finish the mystery of God by making an end of sin in the experience of the church. The ministration of Jesus in the most holy place of the sanctuary is to make effectual the completeness of that redemption which has been wrought out by His incarnation, life, and death. For God has taken humanity in the person of His Son, and He has not only purged our sins, but He has abolished the enmity—the very principle of sin which constitutes the sinful, Adamic nature. The call to enter by faith into the most holy place is a call to enter by faith into the fullness of this finished work in Christ.

After God created man *by* Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:9), "he rested, [on the seventh day] and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:17). When Adam and Eve kept God's first Sabbath, they shared that refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Now the everlasting gospel declares that God has re-created man *in* Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:1-10). The work is, indeed, finished in Christ, and we may enter that rest by faith (Hebrews 4:1-10). When with strong, unwavering faith God's people take hold of the reality of the finished work in Christ, then may they take a long breath of restfulness and enjoy the refreshing from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3:19). Then with their sins blotted out, with the seal of God upon them, they will go forth to proclaim the Sabbath more fully.

The Final Generation

When God can look upon every believer in Jesus and declare, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus;" when every saint is sealed with the indelible mark of God's perfection, then human probation will close. Christ's work will have been completed, and He will make the solemn announcement:

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11).

Human probation will close a short time prior to the coming of Christ. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted by the wicked, will be fully withdrawn from sinners. Here that event is symbolized by the letting loose of the four winds (Revelation 7:1-4). It takes place after God's people are sealed, after Christ leaves His office as intercessor in the sanctuary above. In holy vision the Revelator saw this time when there would be no mediator in the heavenly sanctuary.

"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled" (Revelation 15:8).

This short period between the close of human probation and the coming of Christ is the time of the seven last plagues, in which "is filled up the wrath of God." The last message of mercy warns men against receiving these plagues.

"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, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation" (Revelation 14:9, 10).

The sixteenth chapter of Revelation gives a brief description of the seven plagues which fall, unmixed with mercy, upon the rejectors of God's grace.

The wrath of God is not, as so often presented, a type of vindictive retaliation against sinners. Jesus suffered the wrath of God on the cross. His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" shows that the wrath of God is separation from God. In Romans I, the Apostle Paul shows that the wrath of God is revealed when God gives men up to follow the promptings of their own evil hearts. The close of probation is not an arbitrary act on the part of God. The final test brings men to the place where they make a settled decision to be independent of God. Reluctantly, God is forced to withdraw, and leave guilty men to the unrestrained power of wickedness in their own hearts. At this time Satan will have entire control over the impenitent, and they will have no protection from the strife of their own fierce passions. Crime, disease, bloodshed, lawlessness, hate, revenge, will burst forth as a torrent, and the most awful demonstration will be given of man completely separated from the restraining of divine mercy. This will be the time of trouble spoken of by Daniel the prophet—"a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Daniel 12:1). This period of time when there is no mediator in the heavenly sanctuary will be a time of unprecedented test for the people of God.

"For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace . . . all faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:5-7).

"Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness" (Ezekiel 14:20).

There is a purpose in this final trial for the sealed remnant that we should understand. This last community of saints is called "first fruits." In the economy of ancient Israel, a husbandman was required to gather the first ripe grain and present it before the Lord. Only when the first fruits were developed, presented and accepted, could the entire harvest be gathered into the garner. So Jesus is the husbandman, waiting to reap the harvest of all ages. He is waiting to come from heaven with a shout to raise the righteous dead and gather them to the heavenly garner. But this harvest is not possible until the "first fruits" are developed, presented, and accepted. Concerning those who "died in faith," the apostle says, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:40).

By the time probation closes, the final atonement will have been made by Christ for both dead and living. But what assurance will the universe have that none of the multitude raised from the dead will defile heaven with sin? Since those who died in faith did not attain to the experience of sinless perfection while they lived, how can the angels be sure that the blood of Christ is an eternal antidote for sin? How can the redeemed be sure of the effectiveness of the plan of salvation? All this has yet to be proved, and will be proved by that generation of God's people who live through the time of their judgment, and participate consciously in the experience of the cleansing of the sanctuary. Satan, the antitypical scapegoat, must be led away by the hand of the "fit man" (see Leviticus 16:21), to where it is demonstrated that he has no further power over God's people.

This final generation of saints will fulfill the great purpose for which man was created. They will vindicate the government of God by perfect obedience to His law. Through these sealed saints, the whole universe will be granted a full and final display of the love, mercy, and grace of Christ. Every argument and challenge of Satan will be met, and the great experiment of sin will come to its final end. A noted teacher and writer of the Advent Movement has written:

"The final demonstration of what the gospel can do in and for humanity is still in the future. Christ showed the way. He took a human body, and in that body demonstrated the power of God. Men are to follow His example and prove that what God did in Christ, He can do in every human being who submits to

Him. The world is awaiting this demonstration (Rom. 8:19). When it has been accomplished, the end will come. God will have fulfilled His plan. He will have shown Himself true and Satan a liar. His government will stand vindicated."

"... to produce a people that will keep the law is the task which God has set Himself and which He expects to accomplish. When the statement and challenge are issued by Satan: 'No one can keep the law. It is impossible. If there be any that can do it or that have done it, show them to me. Where are they that keep the commandments?' God will quietly answer, 'Here they are. Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' Rev. 14:12."

"In the last generation God gives the final demonstration that men can keep the law of God and that they can live without sinning. God leaves nothing undone to make the demonstration complete. The only limitation put upon Satan is that he may not kill the saints of God. He may tempt them, he may harass and threaten them; and he does his best. But he fails. He cannot make them sin. . . . Through the last generation of saints God stands fully vindicated. Through them He defeats Satan and wins His case. . . ."

M. L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service*, pp. 299, 310, 318.

The same author further states:

"Will any ever attain to the perfection to which Paul said he had not attained? We should be disappointed if Paul had claimed absolute perfection; for no man who attains to this will ever claim it, or perhaps know it. God knows, but man himself will make no such claim.

"But will any ever reach that stage? We believe so. Read the description of the 144,000 in Revelation 14:4, 5: 'These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.'

"Note that these are 'without fault before the throne of God.' They will be among those of whom it is said, 'He that is holy, let him be holy still.' Rev. 22:11. This, as will be noted from verse 12, refers to those who are living before the Lord comes and who have attained to holiness. Had they not so attained, it could not truly be said, 'Let him be holy still.'

"Anyone who claims to have attained to a state of holiness may confidently be said to be destitute of it. The nearer a sinful man comes to God, the more aware he is of his own shortcomings. Only when a man loses sight of God does he claim holiness.

"This is not written to discourage anyone from attaining perfection, but from making claims to having reached it. There is, indeed, a definite call for men to give themselves wholly to the power of God for the attainment of holiness. Before the end comes God will have a people behind in no good thing. They will reflect the image of God fully."—*The Book of Hebrews*, pp. 467, 468.

The harvest being ripe, Jesus appears in the clouds of heaven "with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). Thus comes the time when every man born to be king ascends to the throne with Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords.