

"Watchman, What of the Night?"

COMMENTARY

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THE LIGHT FROM THE THRONE

Part One

EDITORIAL

While the name Seventh-day Adventist is cherished by some, and overly cherished by others, the sanctuary teaching is the heart of Adventism. Many besides Adventists keep the Sabbath. There are those who believe in the near return of Jesus a second time; albeit, the how and manner in which these perceive that Coming to be, differ widely from the eschatology of Adventism. But no others have understood the meaning and the significance of the sanctuary teaching. To remove this teaching from Adventism is to leave it merely a corpse without life and mission. This is what has occurred in Adventism over the past four decades.

Centennial 88 failed to restore the Church's life and mission. The sanctuary and its message was ignored in the John W. Osborn Lectureship series on the West Coast. One "Study Hour" presentation at Minneapolis by the now Associate Editor of the Adventist Review was billed as "One Pulse of Harmony: the Consumation of the Atonement." It was followed by a panel discussion which sought to interrelate and show that Statement #23 of the 27 Fundamentals is in accord with the message as given 100 years ago. The presentation set forth the Cross as the "completed" atonement, the consumation of which will be realized "when one pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation." (GC, p. 678) A panel member attempted to clarify the atonement of the Cross as a "completed sacrificial atonement" The new associate would have none of it. The "final atonement" was not discussed in the light of Christ's mediatorial work in the Most Holy Place.

On the other hand, there are those in Adventism who dress in duplicated vestments of the High Priest and lecture on details of the earthly sanctuary as if the model given by God to Moses was "the very image" of the reality. To borrow the words of the Lord to ancient Israel - "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount." (Deut. 1:6) This is not saying we should leave the sanctuary. No, we take it with us! But even as our spiritual forefathers restudied the message of William Miller and freed it from its false presuppositions in regard to the sanctuary, so we need to likewise rethink some of our positions which we have held over the decades to

At the John W. Osborn Lectureship Series held in Riverside, California, October 23-25, 1988, commemorating the historic message given at the 1888 General Conference session, William G. Johnsson, Editor of the Adventist Review, presented a paper on "The Biblical Message of Righteousness by Faith." In this presentation, he said:

We gain insight into the biblical message of righteousness by faith as we look at the language of salvation - the biblical models of salvation.

The Bible sets forth a series of models to describe the message of righteousness by faith. What God has done and is doing for us in Jesus Christ is too rich to be encompassed by any one term. Among the many expressions the principal ones are justification, reconciliation, forgiveness, adoption, and sanctification. (p. 12)

While the New Testament does use these illustrations - illustrations drawn from a court of law, financial transactions, human relations, and family ties - the editor omits other major illustrations, except by allusion - warfare, and the model revealed in the Scriptures for man's redemption, the sanctuary. The book of Hebrews clearly declares that the saving work of Christ can be understood by the model which the Hebrew sanctuary services revealed. In that book, Jesus Christ is presented as the great High Priest, who at the Throne of Grace ministers, to those who come boldly, the mercy of God. (Heb. 4:14-16) The sum of the whole matter is declared to be that we have an High Priest who is able to save to the uttermost, seated at the right hand of that Throne, "a minister of the sanctuary," even "the true tabernacle." (Heb. 7:25; 8:1-2) Paul further testifies that the Aaronic priesthood served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." (8:5) He further writes that when the wilderness tent had been erected, "the priests went daily into the first" apartment "accomplishing the service; but into the second, the high priest alone once every year." (See 9:6-7)

It should be thoughtfully noted that it was the Holy Spirit who signified that this dual service was "cast down beside" the heavenly reality that we might understand its ministry (Heb. 9:8-9; see below on parabolé). The Holy Spirit sent to guide into all truth unequivocally set forth the duality of the Hebrew sanctuary service as the model.

This sanctuary model dominated the Old Testament revelation and became the foundation of Adventist theology. This is not saying that the New Testament illustrations are not found

in the Old Testament, nor is it saying that Adventist theology rejects these New Testament illustrations. It is saying that true Adventist theology accepts the dictum of Jesus that "salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22) This dictum must be understood in context. Jesus was conversing with a woman of Samaria. The different places held sacred by the Jews and the Samaritans had been interjected into the conversation. Jesus declared plainly - "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." Basically, the two religions did not differ much at the time of Christ, but Jesus declared the model associated with the temple revealed the way of salvation. Today in terminology, there is little difference between Adventism and Evangelicalism, but the salvation model as revealed in the sanctuary is the truth, and spells the difference between salvation and the false redemption offered in Evangelical theology.

The relationship of the earthly sanctuary model to the Heavenly reality is expressed by different words:

1) Hupodeigma. In Hebrews 8:5, it is translated, "example" and in Hebrews 9:23, the word, "patterns," is used. It means: figure, copy, representation, or a delineation of a thing.

2) Skia. In both Hebrews 8:5 and 10:1, it is accurately translated, "shadow." The language of Hebrews 10:1 is emphatic that skia is the exact opposite of "the very image (eikon). Now eikon transliterated into English is "icon" or an idol. How often we have been guilty of making the "shadow" the very image, and have theologically worshipped the idols thus created by going into great detail, giving significance to every article and symbol of the sanctuary structure beyond the meaning and purpose revealed in Scripture. Whole series of studies have been built around the furniture, curtains, walls, and vestments of the ancient sanctuary layout, neglecting the objective indicated by the Holy Spirit - the significance and lessons of the service performed.

3) Tupos. Transliterated this word is "type," but translated "pattern" in Hebrews 8:5. It means "the pattern in conformity to which a thing is made."

4) Parabolé. This word is translated "figure" in Hebrews 9:9. Transliterated it is our word, "parable," and means literally - "to cast down beside." It is a comparison of one thing with another.

This last concept, that the earthly sanctuary is a figure, a comparison - "symbolic" (NKJV) - needs to be rigidly adhered to; and that in comparing the two, we dare not project onto the reality, the limitations of the "shadow." The prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple needs ever to be kept in mind. He asked - "But will God in very deed dwell with men on earth?" Then in answering declared - "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built!" (II Chron. 6:18)

A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST

The wilderness tent was 30x10x10 cubits. See Exodus 26, and the explanation in the SDA

Bible Commentary, Vol. I, p. 640. The Temple built by Solomon was 60x20x30 cubits. (II Chron. 3:3; I Kings 6:2) The extra 10 cubits in height can be explained by the size of the cherubim for the most holy place which "stood on their feet" rather than made a part of the mercy seat. (II Chron. 3:10-13) Besides this enlargement, a molten sea was made - ten cubits across - in which the priests washed. Then ten lavers were formed for the washing of the sacrificial offerings. Instead of one candlestick and one table of shewbread in the holy place, there were ten of each in the Temple of Solomon. (II Chron 4:1-8) The text states that "Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God." (II Chron 3:3) This instruction came from David of "the pattern...that he had by the Spirit." (I Chron. 28:12) Thus in each instance, the two sanctuaries were built from divinely revealed patterns, and each structure when completed was filled with the visible glory of God. (Ex. 40:33-35; II Chron. 7:1-3) Why the difference, and each constructed from a divine blueprint? Each was adapted to the time then present. In the wilderness a structure that would be mobile was required; but made permanent in the established kingdom.

By contrast, the Heavenly Sanctuary in size, even in the Most Holy Place, accommodates an angelic host numbering "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." (Rev. 5:11; Dan. 7:9-10) Even in the articles of furniture, there is a contrast between the "shadow" and the reality. The golden candlestick of the Mosaic structure was a single column with six branches topped by bowls to hold oil for light. (Ex. 25:31-32) The representation of the heavenly as seen by John is declared to be "seven torches of fire burning before the throne." (Rev. 4:5 Greek)

What is all of this saying? The earthly models were "not the exact image"; but the services performed in each were a "delineation" (hupodeigma) of the reality. The emphasis is on the priests "who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." (Heb. 8:5) Even in their service, there were the "shadowy" sacrifices which could not "make the comers thereunto perfect." (Heb. 10:1)

What is it not saying? 1) It does not deny the reality of "a Heavenly Temple." (Rev. 11:19) Heaven is not the sanctuary, no more than the earth was when so taught by William Miller. There is in the Heaven of Heavens a sanctuary. 2) Neither is it denying a movement of God's throne from one apartment to the other as the ministry of Jesus, the High Priest, changes. At the time of judgment, thrones were placed, "and the Ancient of days did sit." (Dan 7:9) The place where God is pictured enthroned in Revelation 4, is not the place described when "the temple of God was opened in heaven." (Compare Rev. 4:5 with 11:19) The "movement" of God and Christ in the heavenly ministrations is from the "throne of grace" on which Christ sat at the Father's right hand upon entering His high priestly ministry to "the throne of judgment" before which He appears to receive His kingdom. (Heb. 4:14-16; Dan. 7:13-14) Then following the judgment, "shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." (Matt. 25:31), and "He shall reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

THE COVENANTS AND THE SANCTUARIES

Light from the Throne

(Continued)

The sanctuary in type cannot be disassociated from the first or "type" covenant. In Hebrews Paul stated - "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." (Heb. 9:1) This text does not say - There was a worldly sanctuary and with it was associated the first covenant. The primary instrument was the covenant. The secondary - the "ordinances of divine service" - provided for breaches by those under the covenant. Neither can the ministry of Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary be disassociated from the new covenant.

In setting forth Jesus as High Priest forever after the Order of Melchisedec, Paul declares the "sum" or chief point of the whole matter is that Jesus is "a minister of the sanctuary" and that "He is the mediator of a better covenant." (Heb. 8:1-2, 6) The word translated, "minister" (leitourgos), is a compound word derived from leitos meaning public, and ergon meaning work. It referred to a person with sufficient means who performed a public duty or rendered a service to the state at his own expense. How much greater the ministry of Christ who though "rich" rendered a service to the universe at a personal cost difficult for the human mind to grasp. One who died amid the agonies of Calvary, and who chose to be evermore associated in nature with those for whom He rendered such a service is the "minister of the sanctuary." But He is also a mediator (mesites), an internuncius, the medium of communication between God and man, and man and God.

Prior to the communication of a single sanctuary ritual, the relationship between the "type" covenant and the earthly sanctuary was established.

THE 40-DAY COVENANT

Before the proclamation of the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, God sent a message to "the children of Israel." If they would "obey [His] voice and keep [His] covenant" then they would be a "peculiar treasure" to God, a "kingdom of priests and an holy nation." Without waiting to hear His voice, the people responded, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Ex. 19:3-9) But when "the children of Israel" heard God's voice, they had second thoughts. They said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Ex. 20:19) God obliged, and had Moses set before them "judgments." (Ex. 21:1 - 23:19) These "judgments" were prefaced with a very specific

command - "Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold." (Ex. 20:23) After receiving from the people a verbal affirmation, Moses wrote these judgments and the preamble in a book which he read to them in a solemn convocation. They reaffirmed their commitment and Moses sprinkled the blood of sacrifice on both the altar and the people declaring - "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord made with you concerning all these words." (Ex. 24:3-8) [This "altar" was not the altar associated with the sanctuary, but an altar of worship in harmony with the instruction found in Ex. 20:24-26] Following this service, Moses repaired to the mountain and was there forty days. (Ex. 24:18)

There was a condition in this covenant which needs to be especially noted. It was a covenant without mercy. The "Angel" who would go before Israel to the promised land would "not pardon [their] transgressions." (Ex. 23:20-21) Further, it was based on human promises. A single transgression would annul it and break the covenant relationship.

Two things happened while Moses was in the mount. First, God gave to Moses a plan whereby mercy could be extended to a transgressor, and through that mercy, He would dwell among the people whom He had chosen. God said - "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Ex. 25:8) This instruction is recorded in Exodus, Chapters 25-31. God also gave to Moses, the Ten Commandments which He had spoken 40 days prior, but which now He had engraved in stone to be placed in the heart of the sanctuary. (Ex. 32:15-16; 25:16) This would be fundamental in the covenant God would make with Moses, and the basis of the "new" covenant of which Christ would be the mediator.

The other thing which occurred during the forty days was a continuing experience even as Moses descended the mount. The people had induced Aaron to make a golden calf in direct violation of the preamble of the covenant to which they had so solemnly committed themselves. Their worship of the calf had turned into a licentious orgy which was in progress as Moses entered the camp. (Ex. 32:1-6, 25)

The enormity of Israel's sin and the fact there was no pardoning provision in the covenant caused Moses to become deeply involved. He said to them - "Ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." (Ex. 32:30) He did plead with the Lord that if forgiveness could not be granted, then "blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." (ver. 32) The intercession of Moses resulted in a "type" covenant. After a prolonged interchange between the Lord and Moses, God said - "I make a covenant." (Ex. 34:10) But it was on a different basis. He instructed Moses - "Write thou these words" - similar to the 40-day Covenant, but much abbreviated - "for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." (Ex. 34:27) Moses was to be the "surety" of this covenant and under it, the "worldly sanctuary" functioned. (See diagram, page 4)

If there was one lesson above all others which the 40-day Covenant taught, it was that

man is unable to keep his promises, or to do what God commands, no matter how sincere his intentions. Centuries later, Jeremiah the prophet would express it in these words - "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (23:10) However, there was a way, and that way, the way of God, was in the sanctuary. (Ps. 77:13)

A MICROCOSM OF THE REALITY

The experience at Sinai reflected the experience of the human race. When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden, He said to them - "Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:16-17) It was a commanded covenant. It was obey and live; disobey and die. There was no mercy revealed. Our first parents chose to disobey, and had not One stepped in, as did Moses, they would have died. A promise was given. (Gen. 3:15) In fulfilling this promise, Jesus, the Surety of a better covenant, suffered in reality what Moses offered to suffer. Jesus experienced the meaning of having one's name blotted out, when from the darkened, clouded skies that hung mercifully about Calvary, He cried - "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Adam's transgression necessitated another covenant. With a second Adam, God entered into a covenant. He would deal with humanity again, in and through Jesus. Paul wrote that "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) The ancient prophet declared that "the counsel of peace shall be between the Two of Them." (Zech. 6:13, Heb.) This Mediator between God and man ministers in the Heavenly Sanctuary, which is the sanctuary of the New Covenant.

A CONTINUAL SERVICE

Before a single act of work had been performed on the sanctuary - it was merely in blueprint stage - God gave instruction concerning the morning and evening sacrifice. The revelation of all other sacrifices - including the sin offerings - did not come till after the sanctuary was completed and erected. The only thing that preceded the instruction for the morning-evening sacrifices was the provision for the priesthood.

Concerning this continual burnt offering, God commanded:

This is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer in the evening... This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there will I meet with the children of Israel and [Israel (margin)] shall be sanctified by my glory. (Ex. 29:38-39; 42-43)

Before instruction was given as to how sin could be confessed and forgiven, provision was made to continually cover Israel. Even as the morning and evening sacrifices of a lamb formed the foundation of the whole typical system, so Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and on Him the whole redemptive process rests. While we were yet in sin, Christ died for us. It must also be realized that this was a covering for a covenant people. Those outside of Israel could only realize this blessing, when, they too, joined "themselves to the Lord" and took "hold of [His] covenant." (Isa. 56:6)

The place of meeting between God and His people, and where God would converse with Moses is defined as "the entrance of the tabernacle of the congregation." Thus the meeting which would bring "sanctification" to Israel was focused on the first apartment of the sanctuary. It was not the Shekinah glory of the Most Holy Place which Israel needed, but the glory of the revelation for which the symbols of the first apartment stood. When Christ came, the glory He revealed was the fullness of grace and truth. (John 1:14) It was this truth that sanctifies. (John 17:17) Only once each year was Israel to appear before God in the Most Holy Place, and then only through a representative. Grace and truth were revealed at the Altar and at the entrance of the tabernacle - the first apartment.

THE ERECTING OF THE SANCTUARY

One year following the Exodus, the sanctuary was ready for erection. This became the responsibility of Moses in the first month of the second year "on the first day of the month." (Ex. 40:17) When all things were in order, Moses anointed "the tabernacle, and all that is therein." He also anointed "the altar of burnt offering" as well as "the laver" at the base of the altar. (Ex. 40:9-11) Thus Moses entered into the Most Holy Place before any services were performed by

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 "OLD" - "TYPE" COVENANTS

Abraham	Mt. Sinai	Golden Calf	
	Ex. 19:5	Ex. 32	
	--- 40 Days ---	-----	"Type" Covenant - Ex. 34:10, 27 -----
Old Covenant		The Earthly Sanctuary	
Ex. 20:22 - 24:8			

For further study see - M. L. Andreasen, The Book of Hebrews, pp. 281-305.

BASIC PRINCIPLES FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT

Light from the Throne

(Continued)

Can God forgive sin as a matter of fact? The answer is - NO! Consider the terms of the 40-Day Covenant. Moses was told - which he in turn conveyed to the people - "Behold, I send an Angel before thee... Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him." (Ex. 23:20-21) To forgive sin per se would reflect upon the very character of God, and place in jeopardy the entire universe. A whole series of questions arise. Is God just? Does He mean what He says? Is He infallible? Are there alternatives? Can pluralism exist in the universe? Or is there just one way of righteousness? These questions are as new as today, and as old as eternity, yet basic to the question - Can God forgive sin?

Does God forgive sin? The answer is - YES. When Israel sinned and broke the 40-Day Covenant, Moses told the people that he would "go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." In speaking with the Lord, Moses made confession for Israel - "This people have sinned a great sin." Then he said - "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin --; (Ex. 32:31-32) An extended pleading followed on the part of Moses, climaxing in the request - "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." (Ex. 33:18) To this God consented, and placing Moses "in a cleft of the rock" and covering him with His hand, He passed by proclaiming "the name of the Lord." In this self-revelation, God declared Himself to be "merciful and gracious...keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." (Ex. 33:22; 34:5-7)

How then do we reconcile the Name of the Lord which cannot pardon transgression, and the revelation of that God as merciful, "forgiving...transgression and sin"? Paul answers this question by stating that "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," God can remain "just" and yet show forgiving mercy to the one believing "in Jesus." (Rom. 3:24-26) This reconciling revelation of God's character is portrayed in the sanctuary services of types and shadows.

Another basic principle from God's viewpoint can be recognized by asking the question - "Can I provide for the forgiveness of my sins? The answer is an emphatic - NO! To do so would be my demise for time and eternity. This is what the Judgment of the Great White Throne is all about. Those who stand to be judged before that Throne must provide for their own transgressions. These can be satisfied only in the second death. (Rev. 20:12-15) God is just. There is a wrath of God against sin. The Third Angel's Message reveals how His wrath will be manifest against those who persist in worshiping the epitome

of iniquity. (Rev. 14:9-10) There is only one escape. Having been justified by the blood of Christ, "we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Rom. 5:9) Again the sanctuary reveals the way.

VIGNETTES

In the book of Genesis, there are vignettes revealing man's inability to face his Maker in an acceptable way. The record states that as soon as the first pair sinned, they perceived their nakedness, and made for themselves "aprons" of fig leaves. (Gen. 3:7) But when the Lord God called to Adam - "Where art thou?" - he responded - "I was afraid because naked I (am); and I hid myself." (3:10, Heb.) You will observe that in the KJV, the word, "was," is supplied. The word order of the Hebrew would indicate the use of "am" rather than "was". Even though Adam and Eve had covered their nakedness with a garment of their devising; when facing God, they sensed how totally inadequate was the "apron" of their making. To meet their need, God Himself took the first life ever taken in the universe from all eternity, and made for them "coats of skins." (3:21) In the light of this sketch, how vain is the hope that man can by his works obtain the favor of God, and thereby atone for his transgressions.

The word sketch from the life of Cain and Abel reveals a fundamental principle upon which the message of the sanctuary is based. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground and expected the Lord to accept his offering. He perceived of it as something he had produced, even as his parents had made "aprons" from the things of nature. Abel, on the other hand, brought of the flock, and life was taken. God can forgive sin, but only when the penalty of that sin is met. Abel provided his recognition of that fact. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect." (Gen. 4:4-5) How is man to regain acceptance with God? Through his works? A thousand times - No! How then? Through the acceptance from God of the Offering He has provided. In other words, Abel "obeyed" the gospel. He accepted the basic principle upon which God could be just and the justifier of those who would accept His provision for sin. Tragically, there will be untold millions - even professed Christians - who will suffer the "vengeance" of "flaming fire" because they "know not God and...obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Thess. 1:8) God is just and cannot condone sin. Because man cannot provide for his own nakedness, God has provided a covering in Jesus Christ. This is the gospel. This is the way of God in the sanctuary. The acceptance of that way is to "obey the gospel."

THE BASIC "GOSPEL" IN LEVITICUS

The unfolding of the "gospel" revealed in the sanctuary is found in the book of Leviticus. In the instruction for the first offering - the law of the burnt offering - fundamental

principles were enunciated. First, the offering was to be "voluntary" - no coercion. (Lev. 1:3) Even as God freely provided for man's redemption, so man's acceptance of the means of redemption must be from a willing heart. Secondly, it was to be offered at "the entrance of the tabernacle of the congregation." A significance of this rule will be seen when we study the sin offerings in particular.

Thirdly, the offerer "put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering." (Lev. 1:4) The Hebrew word, samach, means "to lean upon in full support." This word is also used in Amos 5:19 describing a man who leaned with his hand upon a wall. This placing of the hand in full support upon the offering signified total dependence.

Fourth, the offering was "accepted for him to make atonement." This principle is fundamental and applies to all offerings wherein the hand is laid upon the victim. It is especially significant when understood in relationship to the sin offering. In the Hebrew, one word - chatta'th - is used for both "sin" and "sin offering." The sacrificial animal became sin, and was accepted in the place of the offerer. In the elementary burnt offering and in the sin offering, the one offering sacrifice slew the victim. (Lev. 1:5) The disposition of the blood differed, and in the elementary burnt offering, the whole of the animal was burned on the altar. (Lev. 1:7-9) Of Christ, Paul wrote - God "hath made Him to be sin for us." (II Cor. 5:21) Jesus is accepted in our stead to make atonement. Upon Him, we must place our full dependence.

There is deep meaning in the fact that the one bringing the offering, slew the sacrificial victim. I, by my sin, slew the Lamb of God. I, at Calvary, pounded the nails; I, too, pierced His side. I placed the crown of thorns - the curse because of sin (Gen. 3:18) - upon that holy brow. I mocked; I derided; and I scoffed because my pride would not accept such a provision. In all the actions and the attitudes of the people who literally surrounded Golgatha's hill, I can see myself as I am, or ought to be. But when I am willing to go "without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Heb. 13:13), I will find peace with God - once more at one with Him - at the altar.

WHAT IS SIN?

The basic purpose of the sanctuary rituals was to deal with the sin problem so that communion between God and man might be restored - an at-one-ment be realized. God desired to dwell among His people whom He had chosen. In the services prescribed were outlined how man could approach God; and God revealed through them how He planned to eradicate that which had separated - sin. But first, what is sin? We have a very pat definition for sin - "Sin is the transgression of the law." But it is more than that. The text reads - note all the words:

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. (I John 4:3)

Sin is more than merely the outward act by which the law is violated.

Consider, what God is, not who He is. In the song of Moses, God is declared to be "a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right

is He." (Deut. 32:4) He with whom sin began "abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." (John 8:44) Deviation from truth leads to sin, and thus separation from God, who is truth. The way back to God must be a way of truth. That way is in the sanctuary. (Ps. 77:13) This is why the sanctuary truth as entrusted to Adventism is so vital.

Because God is just and right, He demands that justice be met. Every sin must be accounted for. None - not a single one, no matter how small - dare be overlooked. Every vestige must be ultimately removed from the universe - root and branch. (Mal. 4:1) To ensure this, the most meticulous record system ever devised was set up in Heaven. There the record of every sin is recorded and by whom committed; for all must give an accounting. The Bible is specific that there are books in heaven and the nature of the records contained therein. (Dan. 7:10; Rev. 20:12) With our knowledge of computer technology and recording devices, a text strikes at us:

Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice." (Eccl. 5:6)

In this time when we wish to project God as only a God of love, we must keep in mind that the Bible plainly teaches - "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29); and "it is fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). God is just and requires that justice be meted out against sin and those who persist in sin.

In the first two categories of the law of the sin offerings, the bullock which had been accepted for those confessing was burned without the camp. The text says:

The skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung, even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, ... and burn him on the wood with fire. (Lev. 4:11-12; See also verse 21)

The symbol is very clear. Either a substitute was to be "accepted" for the sinner, or else he himself would suffer extinction. God is serious about the sin problem. It will never arise the second time.

In the sanctuary of the Heaven of heavens, all sin will be accounted for, and all sinners will give an accounting. The earthly sanctuary, as a parable, was cast down beside to show how a sinner can escape the final judgment of God against sin. For just as surely as we live, we face a judgment. There is only one exception to this rule. Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life - the living tabernacle in flesh - declared - "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that is hearing my word, and is believing on Him that sent Me, hath life eternal, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24, Greek) While the Heavenly Sanctuary involves the whole universe, the earthly "model" pictures a way - light from the Throne - whereby those who enter into covenant relationship with Christ as "minister...of the true tabernacle" and "mediator of a better covenant" escape the wrath of God against sin.

[The Sanctuary Studies will be continued in Commentary, Vol. III, Number 2.]

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see if they truly conform to the revelation of the Scriptures. This will be the object of this issue of Commentary and the one to follow. We may not draw concrete conclusions but merely review some aspects of the factual revelations in the Bible, so that we can bring the structure of our doctrinal perceptions in regard to the sanctuary and its message in line with what the Word of God is actually saying. Until we get the structure of our belief in place, we will be unable to form a proper exterior - right conclusions from the data given. A corrective process could help us better understand the issues of the present time; what is taking place in the Heavenly Places now; and restore our confidence in the heart of the message committed in sacred trust to the Advent Movement.

Since the way of God, the way of holiness, is in the sanctuary, and we are admonished to follow "holiness, without which no man shall see God," it is mandatory that we know and understand the light which came from the Throne of God. (Ps. 77:13; Heb. 12:14) "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7) Is not this cleansing the promised result of Christ's final atonement? Would not the "fellowship" fulfill the High Priestly prayer which Christ prayed just before entering the Garden of Gethsemane? (John 17:21-23; 18:1) Then let us walk progressively and understandingly in the light from the Throne, and soon we may walk in that light at the Throne.

We would suggest that this Commentary, and the one to follow, be read only with the use of the Bible, and that every text cited be carefully checked and studied. It would be well not to read these issues unless one has time to think about what he is reading. In other words, do not read it hurriedly, but meditatively, comparing Scripture with Scripture and conclusion with conclusion. All human work is fallible, and only truth with a solid basis in the revealed Word of God gives a firm foundation. All else is sand. "But the path of the just is as a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. 4:18) As we approach that perfect day, we can expect the brilliancy of that light to increase. To ignore or to discard past light - the sanctuary truth - is to take us from the pathway to the Throne, and leave us stumbling on in darkness. God forbid!

WHG

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Aaron, the high priest. (40:20-21)

Further, Moses set the bread in order on the Table of Shewbread; he lit the lamps of the Golden Candlesticks; he burnt incense upon the Golden Altar before the veil. Then upon the Altar of Burnt Offering, he offered sacrifice. All of this was done before Aaron entered into his priestly ministry. (40:22-32) The final act was the erecting of the curtain about the court and tabernacle. (40:33) Then the text reads - "So Moses finished the work." "The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" and from that time on the priestly ministry

began. Immediately from the tabernacle, the Lord, in conversation with Moses, started the instructions concerning the sacrifices and offerings to be performed by priests and people. (Lev. 1:1-2)

The significance of these typical acts dare not be overlooked. God had told Moses that He would raise up a "Prophet" from the midst of Israel "like unto thee" and in His mouth would be the words of God. (Deut. 18:15, 18) Thus Jesus Christ, that "Prophet," when He too, had "finished" His work (John 19:30) would go into "the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched" (Heb. 8:2) and "anoint" the Holy Places of Heaven prior to the beginning of His service as the great High Priest after the Order of Melchisedec. All during His earthly ministry, Jesus was revealing what He would do and be. He lit the lamps. He was "that true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9) He declared Himself to be "the light of the world." (John 8:12) He was the true "candle of Israel." (II Sam. 21:17, Heb) He provided the bread for the table of the Lord. He said, "I am the living bread." (John 6:51) The symbolic bread of the communion service represents His body which He gave for the life of man. He provided in that sacrifice, the "incense" to be offered with the prayers of the saints on the Golden Altar before the throne. (Eph. 5:2; Dan. 9:24; Rev. 8:3)

Combining in Himself, not only the typical role of Moses, but also He is an High Priest ministering according to "the example and shadow" of the Aaronic priesthood. Yet much more, He is a Priest-King after the Order of Melchisedec. The prophet declared that in building "the temple of the Lord," He would "be a priest upon His throne." (Zech. 6:12-13) This throne, Paul tells us, is "the throne of grace" from whence we obtain "mercy and find grace...in time of need." (Heb. 4:14-16) It is the ministry of the light and bread of Heaven in answer to the prayers of the saints made acceptable through the meritorious righteousness of the High Priest which meets the need. It is the ministry of the First Apartment, and there on "the Throne of Grace", Jesus and the Father have joined together. "The counsel of peace shall be between them Both." (Zech. 6:13)

It must not be forgotten that when the ministry moves to the second apartment, mankind faces the Throne of Judgment (Dan. 7:9-10), as preparation is made for Christ to take His "throne of glory." (Matt. 25:31; Rev. 11:15-17) The sanctuary in type and shadow reveals how we can face the throne of judgment, and be included in the kingdom of glory.

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