

Righteousness by Faith and the Cleansing of the Sanctuary

By Robert J. Wieland

1. WHY GOD GAVE ISRAEL THE SANCTUARY

That the Lord Himself might dwell among them. Ex. 25:8.
Earthly sanctuary a copy of the heavenly. Ex. 25:9, 30.
Earthly sanctuary a “shadow” of “true” heavenly one. Heb. 8:1-5.
Two apartments (or “tents”) in earthly sanctuary. Heb. 9:1-3.
Two apartments also in heavenly sanctuary. Heb. 9:24.
Seven golden candlesticks in first apartment of earthly sanctuary. Ex. 25:37;
Heb. 9:2.
Seven golden candlesticks in heavenly first apartment. Rev. 4:5.
Golden altar of incense in first apartment of earthly sanctuary. Ex. 30:1-6.
Golden altar of incense in first apartment of heavenly sanctuary. Rev. 8:1-4.
Incense offered on earthly golden altar. Ex. 30:7, 8.
Incense offered on heavenly golden altar. Rev. 8:3, 4.
Incense burned in censer in earthly sanctuary. Lev. 16:12, 13.
Incense burned in censer in heavenly sanctuary. Rev. 8:5.
Holy bread set on table in first apartment. Ex. 40:22, 23.
Christ is the “bread of life.” John 6:51.
Ark and mercy seat in second apartment of earthly sanctuary. Ex. 25:10-22.
Ark of the covenant seen in second apartment of heavenly. Rev. 11:19.
Ten commandment law in the ark. Deut. 10:1-5; Ex. 25:16.
Law of God is the “testimony.” Ex. 25:16; 31:18.
John saw “the ark of His testament” in heavenly sanctuary. Rev. 11:19.
Priests were taken from among the people. Heb. 7:28; 5:1.
Heavenly High Priest taken from among people. Heb. 4:14; 2:16-18.
Priests did not appoint themselves. Heb. 5:4.
Heavenly High Priest appointed by Father. Heb. 5:5, 6.

2. WHAT HIGH PRIEST DOES IN FIRST APARTMENT

Holy Spirit brought conviction of sin to sinner. Lev. 4:14, 23, 28; John 16:8.
Sinner confessed sin, laying his hand on head of sin offering. Lev. 4:4,
15, 24, 29, 33.
Sinner then killed the innocent victim. Lev. 4:4, 24, 29, 33.
Priest bore the sin into sanctuary. Lev. 10:16-18. (This was done either by priest
eating some of the flesh of the sin offering or by bringing the blood into the
sanctuary. Lev. 6:30; 4:5-7.)
When sin had thus been brought into sanctuary, sinner was forgiven. Lev. 4:20,
26, 31, 35.
Without shedding of blood, no forgiveness could be possible. Heb. 9:22.

Christ's blood shed for remission of sins. Matt. 26:28.

Christ is true or antitypical Lamb of God. John 1:29.

As earthly priest bore sin in his own body typically, so Christ bore our sins in His own body antitypically. 1 Peter 2:24.

Christ offers His own blood in heavenly sanctuary. Heb. 8:3; 9:12-14.

Ministry in first apartment accomplished forgiveness of sins in type, but did not accomplish blotting out of sin. Heb. 9:6, 7, 9.

First apartment ministry continued daily throughout the year. Heb. 9:6.

3. WHAT HIGH PRIEST DOES IN SECOND APARTMENT

Second apartment service only once a year. Heb. 9:7.

Day of atonement, tenth day of seventh month. Lev. 16:2, 29, 30.

Two goats chosen by lot represent Christ and Satan. Lev. 16:7, 8.

Lord's goat killed, blood offered for atonement. Lev. 16:9, 15-19.

Purpose of Day of Atonement ministry, blotting out of sin. Lev. 16:30.

High Priest entered Most Holy Apartment. Lev. 16:2, 3, 13-15.

His last work, cleansing altar of incense. Lev. 16:18, 19.

(This teaches that forgiveness of sin still available until last moment when High Priest leaves before seven last plagues poured out.)

Priest makes *an end* of reconciling as He leaves sanctuary. Lev. 16:20.

(Hebrew word *kalah* here connotes a "final atonement.")

Then lays all confessed and forgiven sins upon head of live goat, signifying that Satan must bear ultimate responsibility. (This is not an atonement.) Lev. 16:21.

Did David sense this significance? Psalm 7:16.

Live goat sent into the wilderness, never to return. Lev. 16:22.

Satan, the antitypical scapegoat, banished to this earth and will perish. Rev. 20:1-3; 10, 15.

Heavenly Day of Atonement demonstrates that Satan, not God, responsible for sin.

God cleared of blame; entire universe reconciled in final atonement. Rev. 15:3, 4; 5:13.

Typical Day of Atonement was day of judgment for Israel. Lev. 23:27-30.

Heavenly, antitypical Day of Atonement a Day of Judgment for all. Rev. 14:6, 7; 22:11, 12. (Every case decided for eternity before Christ returns second time.)

Heavenly Day of Atonement accomplishes final blotting out of sin. Acts 3:19-21.

Forgiven sinner can cancel his own forgiveness, by impenitence. Matt. 18:23-35; 12:43-45.

Theme of Book of Hebrews is blotting out of sin, not merely forgiveness of sins. This is called "made perfect." Heb. 6:1; 7:25, 28; 9:9, 14; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; 13:20, 21.

Christ the demonstration of character perfection God desires to see in us. Heb. 2:9-18; 3:1; 4:14, 15; 5:7-9.

Christ's sacrifice on cross *provided* complete atonement. Heb. 9:11-14.

God's people as a *body* have never fully *appreciated* His atonement sacrifice or High Priestly ministry; therefore the atonement *provided* has never been *applied* fully and effectively. Heb. 9:23-28; 11:39, 40.

Purpose of Christ's ministry on Day of Atonement: to *blot out* sins. Lev. 16:30;
Acts 3:19-21.

This is same as sealing work. Rev. 7:1-4; 14:1-5.

Results in people who truly keep commandments. Rev. 14:12.

Next event is second coming of Christ. Verse 14.

Agape-love is true keeping of commandments. Rom. 13:10.

4. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IN LAST DAYS AND THE CLEANSING OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

Those who truly keep commandments in Day of Atonement do so by faith of Jesus.
Rev. 14:12.

Agape-love produces obedience to the law by faith. Gal. 5:6; Rom. 13:10.

We are to "consider" Christ our High Priest as having taken our sinful nature yet not
sinning. Heb. 2:9-18 and 3:1, 2 (these two chapters belong together).

Christ's work as High Priest bound up with His having taken our sinful nature "yet
without sin." Heb. 4:14-16.

Practical fruit of Christ's High Priestly ministry on Day of Atonement: to prepare a
people to demonstrate in our sinful flesh "the righteousness of the law," even as
He did "in the likeness of sinful flesh." Rom. 8:3, 4.

Is not only possible, but certain, that Christ's people will overcome "even as" He
overcame. Rev. 3:20, 21.

Those who so overcome will be His Bride. Rev. 19:7-9.

True justification by faith makes the believer obedient to the law of God.
Rom. 3:23-31.

"Curse of the law" is not obedience but *disobedience*. Gal. 3:10.

In justification by faith, Christ redeems us from disobedience to the law. Gal 2:16-18;
3:13.

"The works of the law" not pure obedience, but man's self-centered efforts to obey
for a selfish motive, seeking reward or fearing hell. Such "works" are of unbelief.
Heb. 4:10, 11; Phil. 3:9; Rom. 9:31-33.

Our "own righteousness" is selfish and proud, under the curse, is therefore actual
disobedience to the law; "God's righteousness" is by faith in cross of Christ,
destroys pride, changes the heart, and is therefore true obedience to the law.
Rom. 10:20, 21; 3:27, 28, 31; Gal. 3:10, 12-14.

"Under the law" means under self-centered motivation that ministers to pride, hard-
heartedness, self-sufficiency—is exact opposite of faith, and is the same as
being "under sin." Gal. 3:22-26.

In Greek, to have faith and to believe is same word. New Testament faith defined as
a heart-appreciation of the *agape*-love of Christ revealed at the cross. John 3:16;
Rom. 10:10; Gal. 5:6. (Try this definition of faith as you read Romans and
Galatians, and the truth will come alive for you.)

Those who truly believe will glory in nothing but cross of Christ. Gal. 6:14;
Phil. 3:7-10.

True gospel is justification by faith; a "perverted" gospel is a counterfeit. Gal. 1:6-11;
2:14-16.

Three angels' messages are genuine justification by faith in the judgment hour setting; warn against counterfeit. Rev. 14:6-12.

These messages given in the time when "the mystery of God should be finished," "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Rev. 10:7; Col. 1:27.

The "seventh angel" heralds Day of Atonement ministry. Rev. 11:15-19.

5. WHEN DOES THE HEAVENLY DAY OF ATONEMENT BEGIN?

At end the of the 2300 days, or years. Dan. 8:14 (Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6).

Daniel was wise enough to know that earthly sanctuary was a shadow of heavenly. Ex. 25:9; Psalm 51:16, 17.

2300 years and 70 "weeks" begin together. Dan. 8:26, 27; 9:22-25.

(457 B.C. See Ezra. 7:11-21).

The 69 "weeks" (483 years) bring us to anointing of Christ at His baptism. Dan. 9:25; Acts 4:27; 10:38; John 1:29 (27 A.D.).

In the midst of 70th "week" Christ crucified. Dan. 9:26, 27. (31 A.D.).

End of the 70 "weeks," or 490 years, was close of Jews' probation as people or nation of God. When they stoned Stephen, gospel went to Gentiles. Acts 7:59; 13:46 (34 A.D.).

Remaining 1810 years (2300 less 490) bring us to 1844 A.D. Cleansing of sanctuary and Day of Atonement same. Lev. 16:29, 30; 23:27.

Just before second coming of Christ, "everlasting gospel" of justification by faith goes to all world. This message performs a work of judgment as some accept and some reject. Rev. 14:6, 7, 14; 22:11, 12.

Although antitypical Day of Atonement began in 1844, it will not be completed until the end of the thousand years of Revelation 20. But the High Priestly ministry of Christ will end with the close of probation when His people are sealed.

Rev. 7:1-4; 14:1-7; 15:1-8.

6. OUR DUTY ON HEAVENLY DAY OF ATONEMENT

The Israelites left ordinary labors on annual Day of Atonement, fasted, gathered around sanctuary, afflicted their souls. Lev. 16:19-31; 23:27-31.

Afflicting soul means to "abase self" (Isa. 31:4); "humble one's soul" (Psalm 35:13); "chasten thyself" (Dan. 10:12).

This experience included health reform and simplicity of diet. Dan. 10:2, 3.

(Vegetarian diet; elimination of excessive sugar, no alcohol, that the mind might be clear.) These duties on the Day of Atonement are not "works" by which to earn salvation, but give evidence of cooperation with High Priest in His work.

Day of Atonement only day on which God commanded fasting. (Compare Acts 27:9; Isa. 58:3-5; Eze. 8:21.)

Dress reform, using simple clothing, accompanied "affliction of soul." Psalm 69:10; 1 Kings 21:27; Joel 1:13; Jonah 3:5; Judges 20:6; 1 Sam. 7:6; Neh. 1:4.

In times of spiritual emergency, God's people did not wear jewelry. Isa. 3:16-24; Ex. 33:4-6. (The Day of Atonement is therefore the real reason why Seventh-day Adventists adopt a health reform diet, do not use tobacco, drugs, or alcohol, nor wear jewelry or seek worldly greatness or wealth.)

Note: Israel were permitted to wear jewelry, eat flesh, and some even drank moderately throughout the year, BUT NEVER ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. Although Christian people through the centuries have used these things, those who cooperate with Christ in His closing work of atonement in preparation for His soon coming will gladly lay them aside.

Repentant Israel came close together in repentance, in unity and harmony of fellowship, on Day of Atonement. So today God's people are to come close together in unity for the finishing of His work. Lev. 23:27; Eph. 4:11-16.

7. ROOTS OF SIN CAN NEVER BE CLEANSED FROM HUMAN HEARTS UNTIL SPRINGS OF MOTIVATION ARE PURIFIED

Principle of self-centered motivation is Satan's unique invention. Isa. 14:12-14.

(The highest form of self-seeking motivation is desire for reward in heaven, or immortality. All non-Christian religions built upon this foundation.)

Christ came to demonstrate a new motivation—*agape*-love, which is completely self-emptying, "even the death of the cross." The same "mind" is to be in us. Phil. 2:5-8.

Genuine New Testament faith is a heart-appreciation of this heavenly, unworldly motivation of *agape*-love. Eph. 3:14-19; John 3:16.

Paul goes on to explain that failure to appreciate this new kind of motivation leaves us immature "children." Eph. 4:11-14.

A true Bride is no longer a child, nor does she marry for money or for any self-seeking motivation. Marries because she appreciates her husband, responds genuinely to his love. Paul sees the Church as Bride of Christ. Eph. 5:22-32. (Compare Rev. 19:5-9. Babylon is "the great whore" whose spiritual motivation is purely self-centered, and knows no appreciation of *agape*-love. Doctrine of natural immortality nullifies true motivation.)

Genuine righteousness by faith in time of cleansing of sanctuary is a "truth in love [*agape*]" that makes it possible for people to "grow up into ... Christ" as a true Bride relates to her husband ("head"). Eph. 4:13-16; 5:22, 23; 2:4-9; 3:8-12.

A concern for honor and glory of Christ, rather than for their own personal security, motivates God's people in the "hour of God's judgment" or vindication. To "fear" Him is to reverence or appreciate His true character of love. Rev. 14:6, 7.

Moses and Paul are examples of *individuals* who grew up to appreciate true *agape*-love, the self-emptying motivation. Ex. 32:31, 32; Rom. 9:1-3.

When a *people* or *church* grow up to appreciate the same motivation of concern for God's "glory," the "harvest" will be "ripe" and Christ can come immediately. Mark 4:26-29; Rev. 14:14, 15.

Laodicea does not realize that her basic spiritual motivation is self-centered, childish, poverty-stricken, shameful. Rev. 3:14-17.

In His being sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh" Christ was *tempted* to surrender to same self-centered motivation, yet He "*overcame*." Laodicea too will "overcome." John 5:30; 6:38; Heb. 4:15; Rev. 3:21.

WHY THIS SUBJECT IS SO IMPORTANT

The cleansing of the sanctuary in relation to justification by faith can hardly be over-emphasized. We must have a clear understanding of this truth in order to endure unto the end:

“The subject of the sanctuary and investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. ...

“The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ’s work in behalf of men [justification by faith]. ... It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin.” *The Great Controversy*, p. 488.

Further, this great sanctuary truth in relation to justification by faith is the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist message:

“The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith.” *Evangelism*, p. 221.

“God’s people are now to have their eyes fixed on the heavenly sanctuary, where the final ministration of our great High Priest in the work of the judgment is going forward,—where He is interceding for His people.” *Ibid.*, p. 223.

“In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. ... The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. ...

“Satan is striving continually to bring in fanciful suppositions in regard to the sanctuary, degrading the wonderful representations of God and the ministry of Christ for our salvation into something that suits the carnal mind. *He removes its presiding power from the hearts of believers*, and supplies its place with fantastic theories invented to make void the truths of the atonement, and destroy our confidence in the doctrines which we have held sacred since the third angel’s message was first given. Thus he would rob us of our faith in the very message that has made us a separate people, and has given character and power to our work.” *Ibid.*, pp. 224, 225, emphasis added.

Ellen White recognized that the 1888 message of Christ’s righteousness restored the “presiding power” of the sanctuary message to the “hearts of the believers.” She saw that the joining of the Adventist truth of the cleansing of the sanctuary with a more complete view of justification by faith was like the confluence of two rivers that had flowed separately but now joined to produce a tide that could bear the ship safely to port. She saw in the 1888 message the glorious means of divine grace provided to make a people ready for the coming of the Lord. She recognized that “union with Christ” meant *union with Him in His closing work of atonement*. She saw the clear distinction from His work in the first apartment, where the “door” was now “shut.” (See *Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56, 260, 261.)

In her enthusiastic support of the 1888 message she said:

“We are in the day of atonement, and we are to work in harmony with Christ’s work of cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. Let no man who desires to be found with the wedding garment on, resist our Lord in His office work. As He is, so will

His followers be in this world. We must now set before the people the work which by faith we see our great High Priest accomplishing in the heavenly sanctuary." *Review and Herald*, January 21, 1890.

"Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary, and He is there to make an atonement for His people. ... He is cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. What is our work?—It is our work to be in harmony with the work of Christ. By faith we are to work with Him, to be in union with Him. ... A people is to be prepared for the great day of God." *Ibid.*, January 28, 1890.

"Christ is cleansing the temple in heaven from the sins of the people, and we must work in harmony with Him upon the earth, cleansing the soul temple from its moral defilement." *Ibid.*, February 11, 1890.

"The people have not entered into the holy place [most holy], where Jesus has gone to make an atonement for His children. We need the Holy Spirit in order to understand the truths for this time; but there is spiritual drought in the churches." *Ibid.*, February 25, 1890.

"Light is flashing from the throne of God, and what is this for?—It is that a people may be prepared to stand in the day of God." *Ibid.*, March 4, 1890.

"If our brethren were all laborers together with God, they would not doubt but that the message He has sent us during these last two years is from heaven. ... Suppose that you blot out the testimony that has been going during these last two years proclaiming the righteousness of Christ, who can you point to as bringing out special light for the people?" *Ibid.*, March 18, 1890.

The 1888 message made the cleansing of the sanctuary to be a practical subject. This is how the two great rivers, the sanctuary truth and justification by faith, joined together. The message not only called for holy living; it also provided the means. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is a work that includes the people and extends to them. It provides for the perfection of their character in Christ on the one hand; and on the other hand in the final destruction of sin and sinners and the cleansing of the universe from all taint of sin. This is the "finishing of the mystery of God." It is Christ fully formed in each believer. The sanctuary itself cannot be cleansed so long as God's people continue to pour into it a constant stream of sinning. The stream will be stopped at its source in the hearts and lives of God's people. The ministry of Christ in the Most Holy Apartment does make "the comers thereunto perfect" and does perfect "forever them that are sanctified."

"For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the [heavenly] sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent sinners, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father; yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. ...

"As the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which [the earthly sanctuary] had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded." *The Great Controversy*, pp. 421, 422.

"Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their

robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. ... While the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people *upon earth*. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14." Ibid., p. 425.

True forgiveness that is not rejected by the forgiven sinner is continued by a further experience of repentance. Thus the High Priest is able to *blot out* the sins that have been *forgiven*. "Forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. ... God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart." *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 114.

This does not mean the "eradication of the sinful nature." It is not the heresy of "perfectionism." "Perfectionism" is the false doctrine of the eradication of man's sinful nature at any time before the glorification at the coming of Christ. Christ "took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature" (*Medical Ministry*, p. 181), yet was "without sin." So those who are sealed will still have a sinful nature, yet will "not retain one sinful propensity" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 943). "Perfectionism" is also the false doctrine that it is impossible for anyone, including Christ, to overcome sin so long as he has man's sinful nature.

There is a difference *in principle* between the forgiveness of sin in the daily service of the sanctuary and the blotting out of sin in the Day of Atonement. Rain is rain, whether it falls in the early or latter season. Both the forgiveness and the blotting out of sin are by the blood of Jesus spilled at Calvary.

But the typical service of the sanctuary clearly taught that forgiveness can be rejected by the forgiven sinner and the sin then reactivated in the life. And sin may lie much deeper than we have known, so that temptations of greater intensity can cause us to fall. An example is the mark of the beast. There must therefore come at last a "sealing," from which there will never be a turning away. This is the same as the blotting out of sins, or a final preparation for the coming of Jesus.

No child of God will ever *claim* such a sealing or blotting out. The closer he comes to Christ the more unworthy he will feel himself to be. But nonetheless, the great High Priest will accomplish the work He sets out to do for all who do not resist Him in His office work.

W. W. Prescott at one time understood this glorious work:

"There is a difference between the forgiveness of sins and the blotting out of sins. There is a difference between the gospel being preached for the forgiveness of sins and the gospel being preached for the blotting out of sin. Always, and today, there is abundant provision for the forgiveness of sins. In our generation comes the provision for the blotting out of sin. And the blotting out of sin is what will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord; and the blotting out of sin is the ministry of our High Priest in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary; and it makes a difference to the people of God today in their ministry, in their message, and in their experience, whether they recognize ... or experience the fact of the change. ... That should be distinctly brought out in the third angel's message; and with that, of course, will come the clearest revelation of the gospel ministry for this time, ... thus preparing the way of the Lord." *General Conference Bulletin*, 1903, pp. 53, 54.

The popular churches have no understanding of these special truths: "I saw that as the Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these [three angels'] messages, and therefore they had no knowledge of the way into the most holy [apartment]. Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices [after Christ was crucified], they offer up their useless prayers to the apartment which Jesus has left; and Satan, pleased with the deception, assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself, working with his power, his signs and lying wonders, to fasten in his snare ... He also comes as an angel of light and spreads his influence over the land by means of false reformations. The churches are elated, and consider that God is working marvelously for them when it is a work of another spirit." *Early Writings*, p. 261.

Who is this "another spirit"? Obviously, a counterfeit "holy spirit" that will deceive multitudes. The mark of the beast will not be a crude, obvious deception. It will include counterfeit justification by faith. Preparation for the coming of Christ must include, therefore, learning to know Him so intimately that deception will be discerned and rejected. This suggests the intimacy of marriage and love that makes such a relationship possible.

The blessed fruits of the cleansing of the sanctuary include freedom from the oppressive fear and slavery of devotion to self-centered motivation. *This is what produces lukewarmness*. This paralyzes the world church in her time of greatest opportunity. "It is not fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love, revealed throughout His pilgrimage on the earth, from the manger of Bethlehem to Calvary's cross, and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul. Love awakens in the heart of the beholders. They hear His voice and follow Him." *The Desire of Ages*, p. 480.

Is there anything we can do to hasten the coming of the Lord? "When the fruit is brought forth, immediately He putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Mark 4:29. "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.

Never can God's people *equal* the Pattern. Christ's act of righteousness [which led] to acquittal and life for all men is beyond duplication for all eternity (see Rom. 5:18). But God's redeemed will learn to *appreciate* it. A community of ransomed sinners will stand by the side of Christ with the kind of appreciation and love that a Bride feels for her husband. This is the eschatological sense of "perfection." The sinner is made obedient and is reconciled fully.

A worthless scrap of broken mirror can be cleaned and polished to reflect the brightness of the sun. In fact, it can dazzle one's eyes. But it would be ridiculous to think of it as being *equivalent* to the sun! The Bride of Christ is said to be "bright as the sun," and thus "dazzling." (See Song of Solomon 6:10, Septuagint translation.) But it is always only reflected light, its origin in Christ.

One hundred and forty-four thousand scraps of worthless broken mirror can be polished until each reflects a unique facet of Christ's beautiful character. They will be

one precious gem in which “He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul, and [shall] be satisfied” (Isa. 53:11).

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible constitutes one thrilling love story, with the tragic plot developing in the first three chapters, and the grand climax of resolution coming in the last four chapters. The victory was won in Christ’s incarnation, and all that His people have to do is to have faith in that tremendous accomplishment of their Lord.

True “Christian perfection” is the development of that faith to the place where the “child” grows up to become the Bride of Christ. “Some few of every generation” have overcome by conquering self and reflecting a facet of Christ’s character (*Review and Herald*, March 3, 1874). Enoch and Elijah are examples. But those “few” never met the full force of temptation as God’s people must meet it in the last days. In a special sense they will “drink of the cup” that Christ drank of and “be baptized with the baptism” He was baptized with (Matt. 20:20-23).

Has God withheld His grace so that no former generation should be “ready” for the marriage of the Lamb? No more than it could be said that something is “withheld” from a child that she should not be “ready” to be a bride. The ministry of the High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary is to accomplish for God’s people what has never been accomplished through all the thousands of years of history. The High Priest “will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, that they present right offerings to the Lord” (Mal. 3:2, 3, RSV). These will be offerings free from self-centered concern which is the foundation of sin. A true Bride marries her husband because she loves him, not because she wants his money.

This glorious work will be the final demonstration of genuine justification by faith. It will be a work full and complete, based entirely on the merits of Christ.

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