



## Coming Into Full Agreement with God

For 6000 years, the human race has been suffering from the effects of the fall of their first parents in the Garden of Eden. At the same time, God has been working to bring us back to the perfection of character with which we were created. This has necessitated three basic phases of the work of Christ to complete the entire process.

The first phase was initiated at the gates of the Garden of Eden, where the sinner could come to the altar which had been erected there and offer a slain lamb for their sins. The way into the garden was barred from entry by two angels with fiery swords. This foreshadowed the actual Sanctuary which was erected by Moses in the wilderness for the children of Israel after they had been delivered from Egypt and were on their way to the Promised Land. Later, of course, the temple erected by Solomon took the place of the wilderness tabernacle.

In every phase of the plan of salvation, Jesus has been present and active. Enshrouded by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, He led the people of Israel through the wilderness to the Promised Land. After the tabernacle had been built, He was present in the Shekinah between the two cherubim above the Ark of the Covenant which was behind the inner curtain, and was unapproachable by the people, just as the two cherubim had barred the way to the Garden of Eden.

Everything in the Sanctuary services was an acted-out prophecy of the future work of Christ in all three phases of the plan of salvation. The court represented His condescension in becoming one with the human race, going successfully over the ground where Adam fell, and sacrificing Himself as the Lamb that was slain for our sins, so that everyone who accepts His sacrifice can live His life through the impartation of the Holy Spirit. The last two phases of the Sanctuary services represent Christ's work in the heavenly Sanctuary, as He is working out in His followers their complete restoration from sin.

In former articles I have gone into detail about the experiential meaning of the Sanctuary services as they apply to us this side of the cross. Now I want to examine carefully the two last phases of Christ's ministry in the heavenly Sanctuary as they apply to the work of Christ in perfecting our characters back into the image of God which was lost by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

After Jesus' death on the cross, His resurrection, and ascension back into Heaven, He entered the Holy Place phase of His work in the heavenly Sanctuary and began His work of interceding for us before His Father. Until this time, emphasis was placed mainly upon correct behavior. But

when Jesus came to earth, He opened up a whole new level of the sin problem and emphasized the necessity of being aware that sin begins in the thoughts and feelings.

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder,' and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment... You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Matt. 5:21, 22; 27, 28.

Jesus was hated for this revelation, for the scribes and Pharisees and leaders of the people were very proud of their outward behavior, and they dealt with the sin problem by requiring outward obedience to man-made rules and regulations. Many people today are in the same condition as were the scribes and Pharisees. They feel that as long as they are doing good deeds and acceptable behavior, they are fulfilling the requirements of God for their salvation. They trust in Jesus' shed blood on the cross to make up the difference between their imperfections and His perfect life and example. In other words, they have not moved on from the brazen altar in the courtyard, where the slain lamb was burning day and night for the sins of the people. But Jesus has moved on, and if we expect to be saved, we must also move into His intercessory work in the heavenly Sanctuary, and be aware of what He is doing right now, so that we can cooperate fully with Him and receive the blessings of His intercession.

"The truth is kept altogether too much in the outer court. Bring it into the inner temple of the soul, enthrone it in the heart, and let it control the life. The word of God should be studied and obeyed, then the heart will find rest and peace and joy, and the aspirations will tend heavenward; but when truth is kept apart from the life, in the outer court, the heart is not warmed with the glowing fire of God's goodness." 5T 547.

"It is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement, who receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf; while those who reject the light, which brings to view this work of ministration are not benefited thereby." GC 430.

Can you see how essential it is for us to study the Sanctuary and be aware of what Jesus is doing right now for us so that we can cooperate with Him intelligently?

"Jesus told the angels that all who found Him would understand the [cleansing] work which He was to perform." EW 251.

"There must be a purifying of the soul here upon the earth in harmony with Christ's cleansing of the Sanctuary in Heaven." Mar 249.

In every age God has desired that His people should go all the way with Him to perfection of character. There is an important text in Ezekiel that expresses God's ultimate goal for those who follow Him and have a cleansing relationship with Him.

"I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God." Eze. 11:19-20.

Those who have only a court experience are focused mainly upon behavior - both theirs and others - and tend to have a critical, judgmental attitude. But they do not know Jesus as their personal Friend, because they have not followed Him into the first apartment of the Sanctuary where He is changing hearts and lives and filling the void by His Holy Spirit, which is represented by the seven-branched candlestick. Also, in the first apartment is the table of showbread, representing the life of Jesus which is imparted and imputed into us as we fellowship in close communion and companionship with Him. The golden altar before the second curtain also represents communication with Heaven and a vibrant prayer life with Jesus.

This "Holy Place" experience began at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out in mighty power upon the waiting disciples and followers of Jesus as a signal that Jesus had been inaugurated into His work as High Priest in the Sanctuary in Heaven.

"When Christ passed within the heavenly gates He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity." AA 38, 39.

"After Christ's ascension, His enthronement in His mediatorial kingdom was signaled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit." COL 120.

This second phase of Christ's ministry brought His followers into a deeper personal relationship with Jesus than had been experienced by most believers during the earthly Sanctuary ministration. This is because the daily connection with God was done through human priests and intercessors, rather than a one-on-one personal relationship with God. Although the way was always open for a personal walk with God such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David had, most people were satisfied with a human mediator between them and God.

When Jesus began His work in the heavenly Sanctuary, the way was opened for every person to have a deep, personal relationship with God, and constant communication with Jesus through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This personal walk with Jesus gave His followers courage to go through the long dark ages of persecution that arose as a result of Satan's hatred for Jesus and the members of His kingdom. Satan's counter-attack developed as the papacy, whose principles are based upon the premise that the common person must have a human mediator between them and God, for he wants to control the individual rights and conscience of every person. But notwithstanding the persecution, the kingdom of God advanced and prospered through the propagation of Protestantism and the understanding that salvation is only possible through a personal, one-on-one relationship with Jesus, and His continual mediation for us in the heavenly Sanctuary.

Unfortunately, as the centuries passed and persecution waned, Protestantism lost its fervor, and with many, formalism took the place of a personal, individual relationship with Jesus. Thus, the very tenets of popery became subtly incorporated into the popular churches. People were more satisfied to listen more to their ministers and leaders than to spend personal time in individual Bible study and prayer. The time had come for Jesus to move into His final work of judgment, when He would judge both the dead and the living and blot out sin, once and for all, from the universe.

This transition took place in 1844, when God raised up the Advent movement. People again became students of the word and received the messages of truth from Jesus, who had moved from His first apartment work to the second apartment where He would cleanse and blot out the sins of His people in preparation for His second coming. But those Christians in the nominal Protestant churches who did not catch the light from the second apartment that was shining upon them through the preaching of the first angels message, were left behind in darkness, and Satan took the position which Christ had formerly occupied when the Protestant movement began.

"I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, 'Father, give us thy Spirit.' Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children." EW 56.

Thus, they did not go on to enter with Jesus into the cleansing work of the second apartment, and the blotting out of the sins of His people that Jesus would perform for those who followed Him and participated in this special work. Notice that Satan's object was not only to keep the Protestant world deceived, but also to use them to draw back the members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church into his net of deception.

One hundred seventy-five years has now passed since the beginning of the Advent movement which became the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the natural trend for a movement to become institutionalized is the direction which many are taking. Our young people are coming from educational institutions and teaching in the pulpits what they have learned. There is nothing wrong with institutions of learning, nor in teaching what we have learned through formal education. The problem begins when we take what we learn, without doing our own personal deep study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Every person needs to be a Berean and compare Scripture with Scripture to make sure that what we have been taught still contains the truth that was given to us from Jesus in the second apartment of the heavenly Sanctuary where He is presently ministering for us. Are we moving with Jesus as He progresses from the judgment of the dead to the judgment and cleansing of the living, in preparation for the seal of God to be placed upon our foreheads?

I will now speak directly concerning a belief and teaching that is presently held by many Adventists, that complete victory over sin is not possible until the carnal nature is removed at

Jesus' coming, and therefore we will sin until He comes. It is a doctrine that is being taken directly from other Protestant churches, and completely destroys the understanding of what Jesus' ministry in the Most Holy Place is to accomplish before He comes. Therefore, this teaching destroys our identity and our calling as Seventh-Day Adventists to preach the finished work of salvation. Those who are believing and teaching this are, perhaps unknowingly, following the natural inclination of the human heart to receive from others our doctrines, beliefs and teachings.

This principle really started in Heaven when a third of the angels followed Lucifer, their chosen leader, and allowed him to influence and finally control their thinking. In the Garden of Eden, Satan introduced this to Eve by promising her that if she ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, her position would be elevated to be as a god.

"You will not surely die, the serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3:4, 5.

This was precisely what caused Satan's fall in Heaven.

"Coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, the prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone." PP 35.

This seed of rebellion is now in the heart of every person born into this world since the fall of Adam and Eve. We can see it in Cain when he rebelled against God's requirements of a blood offering for sin and replaced it with his own works - the fruits of his own labors. We can see it in the Israelites when they demanded to have Moses as their spokesman rather than to be responsible for hearing the voice of God to them personally and individually. They said to Moses:

"Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.' Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid. God has come to test you so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.' The people remained at a distance while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was." Ex. 20:19-21.

Notice the reason that the Israelites gave for not wanting to hear God's voice. They were afraid of God's presence because they realized that they had sins in their lives, and they did not have the desire to make the effort that would be necessary to overcome and be cleansed of their sins in order to be able to be special friends with God, as did Moses and their father Abraham. Therefore, they chose to have a human intercessor between them and God. This is still the underlying reason why people do not want to be responsible for themselves directly to God but choose to have human intercessors to whom they give their allegiance. This gives a false sense of security of being saved without making a full and complete surrender to God.

Today most Christians are looking to pastors, teachers, scholars, and popular leaders to do their studying for them so that they can live their lives as they choose, without making the effort to be students of the Word and have a conscious, ongoing, living relationship with Jesus. But this

is a vain hope and will eventually cost their souls, for only Jesus can make the changes necessary in our lives that will prepare us to be citizens of Heaven.

"The life of the soul depends upon habitual communion with God." OHC 130.

"We cannot attain perfection of character if we do not hear the voice of God and obey His counsel." SDG 90.

"It is only by personal union with Christ, by communion with him daily, hourly, that we can bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit.... Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness, all depend on our union with Christ and the degree of faith we exercise in Him." SDG 290.

It takes all to win the prize of salvation. Jesus, our example, gave His all to win us back from the power of Satan. And we must give all to Him in order to have a character that is restored to the image of God as we were created. Those who are lost will find out too late that they loved the wages and pleasures of sin more than they loved the blood-stained path of self-surrender in order to walk with Jesus moment by moment, and not allow anything to interfere with that relationship.

Have you ever wondered about the mysterious number 666? While the primary meaning may be referring to the name Vicarius Filii Dei, meaning, "vicar of the Son of God," - one of the titles of the pope of Rome [see 7BC p. 823], I suggest that a broader meaning embracing all of mankind can also be applicable. While the KJV translates Rev. 13:18 as "the number of a man," the NIV favors the translation in a broader context as "the number of man." I believe this translation of the text to be worthy of some consideration.

When Adam and Eve were created in the Garden of Eden on the 6th day as the last of God's created works, they were perfect in every way. But they had not yet been **consecrated** to their relationship with their Creator.

This would take place upon the Sabbath as they spent a full 24-hour period of rest, communion, and fellowship with Jesus and the attending angels. Thus, the Sabbath of rest and communion with God was indelibly placed upon the minds of our first parents as an essential part of their creation.

"By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so, on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done." Gen. 2:2, 3.

Do you see how the Sabbath and the need for fellowshiping with God was indelibly placed upon the heart and soul of man as a part of their creation? Therefore, it cannot be changed or abrogated without destroying God's original purpose for creating mankind to be in constant connection and communion with Him. When God established the first Sabbath to be a full 24-hour period of loving communion with Himself, the heart of man was wedded to Him in such a way that a continual need for communication with Him throughout the rest of the week, even

while engaging in other activities, was a natural response to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which was placed in their hearts at their creation.

No wonder Satan hates the Sabbath so much! If it is kept as it should be, as a relational day of communion and worship with God, it is a bulwark against the temptations of the devil. But if the Sabbath is kept in name only, without a true relationship with Jesus, it is no more salvational than any other day. Those who believe that they can go to church on the Sabbath but live their lives as they see fit the rest of the week, will come up to the time of the Sunday law, and easily transfer over their obedience to the laws of man. The Sabbath can only be kept holy when the other six days of the week have also been spent in loving service and communion with God. This is why the number 666 is a symbol of the number of man, for it is a number reflecting the unfinished work of salvation in the heart.

"In order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy." DA 283.

"The creative energy that called the world into existence is in the Word of God.... Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and recreates the soul in the image of God." Ed. 126.

"That law of ten precepts... is the voice of God from Heaven speaking to the soul in promise, 'This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan.'" 1BC 1105.

How dangerous it is for people to go on with their lives without making sure that their hearts are emptied of selfishness and sin of every type! If we are imbibing in the thoughts, feelings, fashions and behaviors of the world, the still, small voice of Jesus speaking to the heart will go unnoticed, and self will take the throne. Then when the decree goes forth that all the world should bow to the Sunday-sabbath of the Beast, the will of man will bow to the will of Satan speaking through the man of sin. There is no safety in simply knowing the truth; there must be heart obedience to Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Have you ever experienced the process of canning fruits and vegetables in the fall of the year in preparation for the winter? The jars must be completely clean and free of any dirt or organisms that could cause fermentation, and the canning process must produce the amount of heat that will seal the jars perfectly to preserve the food for the long winter months. So likewise, the process of preparing God's people for the time of trouble must produce a product that is completely free from the presence or roots of sin, so that the seal of God can be placed upon their foreheads to preserve them through the time of trouble.

"Only those who receive the seal of the living God will have the passport through the gates of the Holy City. But there are many who take upon themselves responsibilities in connection with the work of God who are not wholehearted believers, and while they remain thus cannot receive the seal of the living God. They trust in their own righteousness, which the Lord accounts as foolishness....

"The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character...

"As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ." 7BC 970.

"We are to copy no human being. There is no human being wise enough to be our criterion. We are to look to the man Christ Jesus, who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness.... He is the pattern man. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our model.... By beholding we may be changed into His likeness.... As we look to Him and think of Him, He will be formed within, the hope of glory.

"Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand." 7BC 970.

"Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself, 'the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.' Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble." GC 623.

Now that we have established the condition of the final product of God's people, the question becomes, what is the process by which we can reach that goal?

First of all, we must search our hearts as with a lighted candle to see if there is any tendency in us to place other human beings in ascendancy over Jesus as our Model, our Best Friend and Constant Companion, and the One to whom we look as our Example and Counselor. While we can certainly learn from one another as we share with each other what we have learned from Jesus, we must be careful to:

"Refer every thought and action to Him, inquiring: 'Is this the way of the Lord?' If [we] did [we] would walk with God as did Enoch." 6T 393.

"Come to Christ just as you are, weak, helpless, and ready to die. Cast yourselves wholly on His mercy. There is no difficulty within or without that cannot be conquered in His strength.... There is no nature that Christ cannot subdue, no temper so stormy that He cannot quell it, if the heart is surrendered to His keeping.

"No one need despond who commits his soul to Jesus." UL 323.

In order to break the power of pride and self-exaltation in the heart of fallen man, Jesus condescended to become a servant of servants. Only as we keep our eyes focused on Him, will



we enter His rest from the clamors of the man of sin in each of us, to want to have our own way by producing a brand of righteousness which allows us to have ultimate control of our lives, and still feel that we can have salvation through our own works. Everyone who does this will take the mark of the beast, for their characters are unfinished. As indicated in the number 666, they cannot enter the Sabbath of rest which is God's seal of approval upon the finished work of righteousness in the hearts and lives of His faithful followers who follow Him through the battle with the Beast at the end of time.

Paul describes the necessity of entering this Sabbath-rest in Heb. 4:1-11:

"Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.... Now we who have believed enter that rest.... and yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: 'And on the seventh day God rested from all his work.'... It still remains that some will enter that rest.... There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God: for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest."

This rest that Paul is speaking about is clearly the rest from trusting in our own works for salvation, or in a combination of faith in Jesus, plus our own works. Those who are a finished product at the end of time will have completely abandoned any faith in self or trust in self-righteousness; only these will be able to enter into His perfect Sabbath-rest and be sealed for eternity. These are those who are described in Revelation 14 and Revelation 17 as following the Lamb wherever He goes.

"Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads.... These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless." Rev. 14:1, 4, 5.

The 144,000, who have kept themselves pure from the lies and teachings of other denominations and churches, are fully prepared to follow Jesus in the final war against the great apostate church and her profligate daughters at the end of time.

"Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.... This title was written on her forehead: 'Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth.'..."

"They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings - and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers." Rev. 17:3-5, 14.

Will you be among that number who are the called, chosen, and faithful followers of Jesus through the time of trouble that is just ahead of us? If so, you must be willing to follow Him now in the cleansing work that He is doing in the second apartment of the heavenly Sanctuary. We must be cleansed from anything that is unlike the character of Jesus! This necessitates a constant walk with Him by which we will be purified from anything that would separate us from Him in thought, holt, or deed. We must love Him so completely that we would rather die than retain a character that is a combination of good and evil. Like Adam and Eve on that first Sabbath, we will then be able to enter the perfect rest of continual, unbroken communion with Jesus, without a flaw in our characters. We will then be the product of the finished work of salvation, just as Adam and Eve were the product of the finished work of creation; and we will be prepared to enter the eternal Sabbath rest that Jesus has prepared for us in our heavenly home.

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