

**1888 HISTORY**  
**By Paul Penno Jr.**  
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Every Seventh-day Adventist loves “that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). But Jesus wanted to return shortly after 1844? He wants to be united with His bride whom He loves. But does she want to be united with Him? Does she truly love Him? That is the question.

Let us review our history. “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.” LS 196; CET 204. Already within the days of the living apostles in the early church, even before the seventh-day Sabbath was lost Jesus said “thou hast left thy first love” (Revelation 2:4). The Apostle Paul foresaw “that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The rapidity with which the church of the first few centuries compromised the truth was like a toboggan ride which takes one’s breath away.

And so just before the great prophetic time clock was about to be fulfilled the Lord sent a message through men like Martin Luther to restore His love and righteousness among His people. Unfortunately the heirs of the Reformation failed to continue in the revealed light and trusted in the scholastics and their creedal statements. The traditions of men obscured the true love of Jesus for His church.

The last revelation to this sin-cursed earth was an unveiling of the true character of God. And so God raised up the Great Second Advent Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In different parts of the world there was a keen interest in the prophecies of the Bible and the second coming of Jesus. In South America, Great Britain, Asia and on the Continent many students of prophecy proclaimed Jesus’ love. And especially in North America under the leadership of William Miller was the gospel announced: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Daniel 8:14).

The believers from all denominational backgrounds who loved the thought of Jesus’ soon coming was one of the most pure movements of revival and reformation in the history of Christianity. The group that came out of the Great Disappointment of 1844 and continued to follow Jesus into the Most Holy place of the heavenly sanctuary received all of the light which He had to give them. The ark of God revealed the ten commandments and seventh-day Sabbath. The non-immortality of the soul, that there is only life in Jesus, was precious truth. The resurrection of the sleeping saints at the coming of the Lord was all glorious truth. The three angels’ message restored the Gospel, a gracious invitation to repent and come out of Babylon, and a warning to the church against uniting with the kings of the earth in seeking power to enforce its dogmas.

Jesus was gathering out His sheep from the world and leading them home. But Jesus had forecast that the missionary church of Philadelphia which

fostered a great outreach to the heathen of the world would become the church of Laodicea. Soon the prophetic voice was applying the words "because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16) to Seventh-day Adventists. There was an unknown sin of enmity against her Saviour which must be revealed. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). She had taken her eyes off Jesus and was looking to what she must do in order to keep the commandments and had become self-satisfied.

But Jesus was intent on coming quickly after 1844. "I was shown the company present at the Conference. Said the angel: 'Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus.'" 1T 131, 132 (1856).

Jesus would cleanse the sanctuary above as well as His people on earth so that they might be translated in purity at His coming. For this purpose He promised a special fourth angel's message that would unite with the other three. This message brought the power of the Gospel of Christ. "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. . . . Babylon the great is fallen, . . . Come out of her, my people" (Rev. 18:1-4).

The servant of the Lord saw this angel in vision: "Then I saw another mighty angel commissioned to

descend to the earth, to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and force to his message. Great power and glory were imparted to the angel, and as he descended, the earth was lightened with his glory. The light which attended this angel penetrated everywhere, as he cried mightily, with a strong voice, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." The message of the fall of Babylon, as given by the second angel, is repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the churches since 1844. The work of this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel's message as it swells to a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation, which they are soon to meet. I saw a great light resting upon them, and they united to fearlessly proclaim the third angel's message" (EW 277).

Jesus kept His promise. He sent a heavenly message to reveal the character and power of God within five decades of 1844 to complete the work and translate the church. "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders [E. J.] Waggoner and [A. T.] Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of

God” LDE 200. 1888 was to have been our latter rain.

Now we live over a century after all these events. Every one of the pillars of the Adventist message have been challenged both outside and inside the church. The crisis over Christ’s second advent has prompted repeated explanations for the delay. The sanctuary has been relegated to an antique doctrine of Adventist history with no practical relevance for today. The seventh-day Sabbath is assigned to the legalism of the old covenant of Israel which was done away at the cross.

Righteousness by faith is generally considered to be the one teaching we have in common with the evangelicals and other Christians. Are we to proclaim an evangelical gospel in order to prepare a people and a world for the coming of the Lord? God has given us a unique message. “Great truths that have lain unheeded and unseen since the day of Pentecost, are to shine from God’s word in their native purity. To those who truly love God the Holy Spirit will reveal truths that have faded from the mind, and will also reveal truths that are entirely new” FE 473.

There are two opposite mistakes that are commonly made concerning our message of righteousness by faith. Many assume that it is the message they have heard all their lives in campmeetings and weeks of prayer. Everybody believes it and nobody seriously opposes it. Ho-hum. Why the excitement?

The opposite error is to assume that because the message is different, it must be a difficult, complex

theological puzzle that few can unravel. We must understand why both ideas are dead wrong.

A little thought can readily show that if it is the message we have heard all our lives then why are we still here? Now a century has dragged by wearily. Two World Wars and many other conflicts during this long delay. Something went wrong. The 1888 message was “the beginning” of the latter rain and the loud cry, which was to have gone like fire in the stubble and in a short time lighten the earth with the glory of the closing message. “An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord’s message through Brethren {E. J.} Waggoner and {A .T.} Jones. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.” 1SM 234, 235.

The 1888 message and its history have a direct bearing on the truth of the seven trumpets of Revelation 8-11. Ellen White identified the 1888 message as “the beginning” of the loud cry of Revelation 18, and therefore the beginning also of

the latter rain, which must precede the loud cry so God's people can proclaim it:

"The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth [Rev. 18:1-4]" (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1073).

"[If it had been accepted] then the strong, dear light of that other angel who comes down from heaven having great power would have filled the earth with his glory. . . . The very message that God meant should go forth from the Minneapolis meeting" (p. 1070).

"[It was] showers of the latter rain from heaven" (*Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 6, p. 19).

The seven trumpets occupy four chapters of Revelation—nearly a fifth of the book. We know that Revelation 2 and 3 describe God's true church throughout seven periods of world history from the time of the apostles down to the end of the world. It's the story of God's true people in relation to Him:

"The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number seven indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world" (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585).

Likewise, chapter 6 of Revelation describes the seven seals, which also cover "different periods in the history of the world" "to the end of time,"

describing God's true people in relation to the world:

(1) The triumphs of the apostolic church, vss. 1, 2.

(2) The "red," bloody persecutions of the pagan Roman Empire, vss. 3, 4.

(3) How the corruption that permeated the early church did not fully destroy the work of the Holy Spirit for God's true people, vss. 5, 6.

(4) The spiritual "Death and Hell" of the great apostasy, vss. 7, 8.

During the 1260 years of papal persecution, the martyrs' cry for vengeance, and the Reformation of the 16th century begins to bring it, vss. 9-11.

The great Lisbon earthquake of Nov. 1, 1755, which shook Europe and awakened people to realize that "the sixth seal" had taken place—many came to realize that Revelation does make sense; the mysterious "dark day" of May 19, 1780 was widely recognized then as the direct fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24:29, and likewise later the falling of the stars of Nov. 13, 1833, vss. 12, 13, was recognized as the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Then comes an interlude during which a great final world storm threatens to break out continually, but is held in check by "four angels" who "hold" the hurricane/tornado back. During this time, God "seals" His people to be ready for the second coming (chapter 7):

(7) The seventh trumpet is the end of the world, and brings "silence in heaven." Again, the cycle of world history becomes complete.

Four entire chapters devoted again to world

history! The seven trumpets describe world events as they relate to God's true church through the centuries. This is the view that Seventh-day Adventists have held since the time of the early pioneers, through the decades of Ellen White's ministry. She never said a word to disparage the prophetic understandings of those pioneers and of church leaders in the 1888 era. There was nothing wrong with their main prophetic understandings; their problem was misunderstanding the message of Christ's righteousness and their rejecting it "in a great degree."

The Seven Trumpets proclaim:

- (1) The high priestly ministry of Christ for the world (8:2-5);
- (2) the abysmal fall of the world civilization that had prevailed in the time of Christ and the apostles (vss. 6-13);
- (3) the rise of Islam as a protest against the apostasy of the church, and the reasons for its world-shaking philosophy and phenomenal growth (9:1-21);
- (4) the rise of the Great Second Advent Movement and its impact on the world including the story of the Great Disappointment of 1844 (chapter 10);
- (5) the end of the persecution of the saints during the Dark Ages (11:1-3);
- (6) the care of God for His people and their nurture in persecution (vss. 4-6);
- (7) the French Revolution and the beginnings of world Communism (vss. 4-7);
- (8) the persecution of God's people in France and papal rejoicing over it (vss. 9, 10);

- (9) the growth and ministry of the great world Bible Societies (vss. 11, 12);
- (10) the French Revolution history (vs. 11);
- (11) the inauguration of Christ's Most Holy Apartment ministry (vss. 15-17);
- (12) the beginnings of the final great time of trouble for the world (vs. 18);
- (13) the work of Christ's final atonement performed in the Most Holy Apartment (vs. 19).

And there is where the 1888 message and its history figure prominently in chapter 10. It's the event which announces the completion of the gospel commission which began long ago at Pentecost:

"In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (11:7).

In the Bible, a "mystery" is not a secret God wishes to hide from us, it's a secret He wants to reveal to us. "The mystery of God . . . He hath declared to His servants the prophets" is explained:

"The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, . . . the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . is Christ in you, the hope of glory . . . that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:2, 6, 27).

That precisely was the impact of the "most precious message" which "the Lord sent to His people through brethren Waggoner and Jones" (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* [TM], p. 91). It runs like a thread through all the messages they delivered during the years of Ellen

White's enthusiastic endorsements. The very first paragraph that Waggoner published in book form after the Minneapolis Conference centered on that theme:

"In the first verse of the third chapter of Hebrews we have an exhortation which comprehends all the injunctions given to the Christian. It is this: 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.' To do this as the Bible enjoins, to consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is, will transform one into a perfect Christian, for 'by beholding we become changed'" (*Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 7).

Near the end of the period wherein the blessings of the latter rain were hovering over the reluctant church, A. T. Jones revealed again that this was the basic theme of the message which Ellen White was so happy to hear:

"The righteous will stand where it can be said of us by the Lord, to the universe, 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.' And it will be a fact, not merely because He says it, but He will say it because it is a fact" (General Conference Bulletin, 1897, p. 279, emphasis supplied).

In that statement is encapsulated the real issue of controversy about the 1888 message. Some say that the final atonement will be God declaring His people "perfect" in character when they are not so and never can be; but that can't be true for the Bible insists that He will never tell a lie. He will say this because they do in fact "keep His commandments .

. . . and the faith of Jesus." Something will have happened that has never before happened in world history regarding a corporate body of God's people.

"Impossible," some say; "as long as God's people have a sinful nature it will be impossible for them to keep God's commandments truly." And here is where the nature of Christ's message comes into focus.

The two who had "heavenly credentials" fearlessly declared that the Bible teaches that Christ did "take" upon His sinless nature "our sinful nature," "of the seed [sperm] of David" and "of Abraham," "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," and He lived therein a sinless life of righteousness by faith.

When the "seventh" of the angels who blow the "seven trumpets" shall "begin to sound," the message that God sends will not be a works message, but it will be a faith which works message (cf. Gal. 5:6). It won't be clench your fists and grind your teeth and try harder; it will be a revelation of the much more abounding grace of a complete Savior whom His people are to "behold." They are "to consider Christ . . . intelligently, just as He is, [this] will transform one into a perfect Christian, for 'by beholding we become changed.'

Is this the heresy of "perfectionism"? It is not perfection of the flesh, but a growing up into Christ, by faith in Him, to perfection of character while God's people are still in sinful flesh before the close of probation. In other words, it will simply be overcoming as He overcame, as Jesus Himself says:

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame” (Rev. 3:21). It will be the living out in the lives of His people who still have fallen, sinful flesh His overcoming life in our fallen sinful flesh which He “took.”

There are two Greek words for righteousness that describe this marvelous accomplishment of Christ. If one hesitates to see “the third angel’s message in verity” in this passage in Romans, it will help to make the distinction crystal clear. The unique 1888 message of Christ’s righteousness is unfolded in the Greek of Romans, and once you see it, it will astonish you:

“The righteousness of God [*dikaiosune*] . . . is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22).

Now note what happens when God’s people “believe.” Note that there is a second Greek word used this time that makes a world of difference:

“What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness [*dikaionoma*] of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:3, 4).

Now at last the *dikaiosune* (righteousness of Christ) is manifested in the lives of those who believe how good the Good News is, and it is now *dikaionoma* in them. We see it brought to view again when at the close of the blowing of the seventh trumpet in the Day of Atonement, this blessed living out process (by faith) has been completed:

“I heard as it were, the voice of a great multitude, .

. . . ‘Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints [*dikaionomata*]” (19:6-8).

This transition from “the righteousness of Christ” (*dikaiosune*) to “the righteousness of saints” (*dikaionomata*) was the theme of the 1888 message of Christ’s righteousness all during those years when Ellen White was so happy to hear it. She said she had never before heard it proclaimed publicly. This was what the seventh angel blows his trumpet to say:

“In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets” (Rev. 10:7).

“When Brother Waggoner brought out these ideas in Minneapolis, it was the first clear teaching of this subject from any human lips I had heard, excepting the conversations between myself and my husband. . . . And when another presented it, every fiber of my heart said, Amen” (*1888 Materials*, p. 349).

In spite of constant opposition, rejection, and even “hatred,” the two with “heavenly credentials” kept doing their best to present the message. For example:

“In His coming in the flesh—having been made in all things like unto us, and having been tempted in all points like as we are— [Christ] has identified Himself with every human soul just where that soul is. And from the place where every human soul is,

He has consecrated for that soul a new and living way through all the vicissitudes and experiences of a whole lifetime, and even through death and the tomb, the holiest of all, at the right hand of God for evermore. . . .

“And this ‘way’ He has consecrated for us. He, having become one of us, has made this way our way; it belongs to us. He has endowed every soul with divine right to walk in this consecrated way; and by His having done it Himself in the flesh—in our flesh—He has made it possible, yea, He has given actual assurance, that every human soul can walk in that way, in all that that way is; and by it enter fully and freely into the holiest of all, . . . live a life holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and as a consequence be made with Him higher than the heavens” (*The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, A. T. Jones, pp. 83, 84; pp. 87, 88, new ed.).

What glorious Good News! Note that the constant message is something never seen in any of the “righteousness by faith,” “gospel” messages of the Sunday-keeping Evangelical churches. Let us say they are sincere and faithful to the light as they have been permitted to see it. But they don’t comprehend it. It’s totally unique to the Seventh-day Adventist message that was “sent” to us in the 1888 era: this special ministry of Christ as High Priest centered in the Most Holy Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, where the “door” was “opened” for the “voice of the seventh angel,” a message never before clearly heard in world history. It’s the message of the final cosmic Day of Atonement, the

cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary that began in 1844.

Yes, that “most precious message” was not ashamed to speak this word:

“Perfection, perfection of character, is the Christian goal—perfection attained in human flesh in this world [note, not OF “human flesh”]. Christ attained it in human flesh in this world, and thus made and consecrated a way by which, in Him, every believer can attain it. He, having attained it, has become our great High Priest, by His priestly ministry in the true sanctuary to enable us to attain it” (*idem.*, emphasis original).

What made Ellen White so happy when she heard this was what she saw was a cutting of the Gordian Knot in Adventism:

“This [1888] message was to being more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world” (TM 91).

She perceived that deep inside the message was this grand truth of a universal judicial justification for the sins of the whole world, for they were all “imputed” unto Christ. This glorious achievement for “all men” made it possible for God to treat every human being as though his/her debt of sin was paid. It became possible now legally for God to send His rain on the just and on the unjust alike. “The sacrifice of the sins of the whole world” involved Christ coming to “taste death for every man,” the real thing, the “second death” (Heb. 2:9), for:

“The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, . .

. [for] the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:5, 6).

“. . . the uplifted Saviour, [said Ellen White, is] the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness [*dikaioisune*] of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God [*dikaioмата*]. . . . It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure” (TM 91, 92; 1896).

They inquired of Sr. White “if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have answered, ‘It is the third angel’s message in verity.’ The prophet declares, ‘And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory [Rev. 18:1].’”<sup>1</sup> “The third angel’s message in verity” is clearly identified with the fourth angel of Revelation 18:1 and that is “the third angel’s message in verity.” What is the significance of this statement? What does she mean by this affirmation “in verity”?

Justification by faith in connection with the sanctuary cleansing is the third angel’s message in verity. It prepares the way for the great and dreadful day of the Lord. It prepares a people to stand in the hour of crisis and to be translated without seeing death at the second coming of Jesus. It was and

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, “Repentance the Gift of God,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 67, 13 (April 1, 1890), pp. 193, 194.

still is the shaking message to the Laodicean church. It bears with it all the prospect of the loud cry and latter rain of the Holy Spirit.

Ellen White was overjoyed when she heard the message of justification by faith from the lips of A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner. To her this clear teaching was consonant with the message of the three angels. “The hour of His judgment is come” and our Priest is cleansing the heavenly sanctuary. What connection was there between justification by faith and the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary by Jesus our High Priest?

The answer is that since 1844 Jesus was performing the Day of Atonement ministry. He was engaged in the final blotting out of sins. But before the sanctuary could be cleansed in heaven the temple of His people on earth must be cleansed. The source of sin pollution must be ended in His people. The honor of God and the integrity of His covenant was at stake. God has the solution to the problem of sin. The gospel of Jesus Christ can forgive sins and His righteousness has the power by virtue of the Holy Spirit to cleanse the soul temple. This God has promised in His everlasting covenant.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:33, 34.

So when she heard this message she recognized in it the power and force of the gospel which would prepare God's people to stand with a pure character in the day of Christ's second coming. They would be a living testimony for God through the crisis hour. They would be part of the 144,000 who would be translated without seeing death at His return. They would be a living testament to the power of God unto salvation from sin. Living in sinful flesh, tempted, tried and afflicted, the mystery of godliness would be revealed in them—"Christ in you the hope of glory."

Like a drumbeat over the course of several weeks Sr. White wrote in the columns of the REVIEW during 1890 of her enthusiasm. The significance of this time frame from January to March 1890 and what was taking place in the ministers' Bible Institute in Battle Creek is of great importance.

Notice her statements: "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."<sup>3</sup>

"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.

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<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, "The Need of Complete Consecration," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 67, 3 (January 21, 1890), p. 33.

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."<sup>4</sup>

"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."<sup>5</sup>

"The people have not entered into the holy place, 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."<sup>6</sup> Notice here that entering the sanctuary with Jesus by faith in the day of atonement means progressing with the light which Jesus was giving on earth to His people. The truth of justification by faith which Jones and Waggoner were bringing to God's people was to be understood in connection with Jesus' day of atonement ministry in the sanctuary.

"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."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, "The Lord Must Be Our Light," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 67, 4 (January 28, 1890), p. 49.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, "The Danger of Talking Doubt," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 67, 6 (February 11, 1890), p. 81.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, "Need of Earnestness in the Cause of God," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 67, 8 (February 25, 1890), p. 113.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, "Draw Nigh to God," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 67, 9 (March 4, 1890), p. 129.

“If our brethren were all laborers together with God, they would not doubt but that the message He has sent to 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?”<sup>8</sup> The present message of justification by faith was the third angel’s message in verity giving power and force to the cleansing of the sanctuary. This is what she meant by “in verity”—or in truth.

The Sunday-keeping churches had not followed Jesus by faith into His most holy place work in 1844. Hence they were worshiping a god of their own creation—Satan if you please.<sup>9</sup> To this day, for the most part, they view the sanctuary message of Seventh-day Adventists as a colossal error. It has been termed the greatest face-saving device to

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<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White, “The Present Message,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 67, 11 (March 18, 1890), p. 161.

<sup>9</sup> “I saw that as the Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the way into the most holy, and they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there. Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, 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. . . . He also comes as an angel of light, spreading 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 the work of another spirit.” Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (1882), p. 261.

explain away a mistaken interpretation of Scripture—Daniel 8:14.

But God’s people have been given a unique understanding of justification by faith in connection with the cleansing of the sanctuary that is to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord. This is why the Lord gave it to His people to be proclaimed to the nominal Christian churches of the world. They had initially rejected it in 1844.

Christ now stands in the heavenly sanctuary and he ministers in our behalf the merits of His atoning death. And His blood alone can atone for sin. That’s not merely a legal atonement. There has to come a practical outworking of that atonement in the hearts and lives of God’s people or the great controversy can never be finished. And it must not go on for ever and ever.

While past generations of Adventists may have viewed the investigative judgment as a time to get ready and reform completely, there’s a different emphasis today. The gospel, the transformation of our characters from the inside out is what is important. There must be a wedding garment put on in order for us to enter into the wedding.

The important issue looming in the background is that wedding—the marriage of the Lamb—which has been postponed so long. The time must come, and it will come by the grace of God, by His people waking up and sensing how important it is. The time must come when the wife must make herself ready for the wedding.

How do we balance the good news of the wedding with the seriousness of the judgment that examines

every thought, every word, to see whether we are fit to have a home in God's kingdom. Christ is to accomplish a work unique in human history. It has never been done before in the past 6,000 years of human history. And that is He is not going to prepare just one Enoch or one Elijah or resurrect one Moses. He is going to prepare a body of people, a church, a corporate body of people for translation at the second coming of Jesus.

No child of God will ever claim that he has overcome all sin. And we cannot judge anybody whether he has overcome all sin. We must never dare to try and judge anyone. But that does not mean that Christ's ministry in the most holy apartment will ever achieve that result. It's not merely that He is going to impute legal righteousness to us. In His work in the most holy apartment He is actually through the Holy Spirit going to impart righteousness to those who believe.

Is the sacrifice of Christ on His cross, as the Lamb of God and is His ministry as the great High Priest, powerful enough to save His people from their sins, not just in their sins? Secondly, is Christ able to save to the uttermost, completely, those who come unto God by Him (Heb. 7:24)? Three, will Christ be truly successful as a refiner and purifier of silver to purify the sons of Levi, that's the ministry, and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer an offering in righteousness (Malachi 3:3)? Four, When Christ comes the second time, will He find a body of people of whom it can be said honestly, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12)?

The Lord can accomplish this wonderful work. He can prepare a body of people, a church, to be ready for the second coming of Jesus to be translated when they see Him come in the clouds of heaven. They will keep the commandments of God and they will have the faith of Jesus. To say that these saints don't really keep the commandments, but God only pretends that they do so, can't be true. When Heavens says that they do keep the commandments, Heaven says it because it is true.

We read that they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. In their mouth was found no guile for they are without fault before the throne of God. Rev. 14. That is the preparation for the second coming of Jesus. It can be said of them, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God." It will be a fact not merely because God says it, but He will say it because it is a fact.

We know, of course, that they are sinful by nature, for "all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23); but in order for this pronouncement to make any sense, the faith of Jesus must have work as Gal. 5:6 says. It does work. They will have ceased giving in to temptation. And they have overcome even as Christ overcame. Rev. 3:21.

These people do not have holy flesh, but they do have, by the grace of God, a holy character. Rev. 3:21. Rev. 15:2 reveals this same group having gotten the victory before the close of human probation.

Previous generations have never clearly understood this truth of getting ready for the

judgment as our generation now today is to understand it. The hour for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary had not yet struck, but that time has come now. Ever since 1844 we have been living in the great antitypical Day of Atonement. And when we come to the days of the voice of the seventh angel (Rev. 10) when he shall begin to sound the mystery of God should be finished. Here is a special contribution that Seventh-day Adventists are to make for the completion of the Reformation that was begun by Martin Luther and John Calvin. It is here that we understand the clear significance of the heavenly sanctuary.

The message that is to go to the world, and first of all to the church today, is rooted in the cleansing of the sanctuary truth. The believer is called to consider the high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, in His work of the cleansing of the Heavenly sanctuary. And the reality of Christ's work is emphatic. To consider Christ continually just as He is, is to consider the truth of the New Testament teaching, that He is our substitute and our example. He took the nature of fallen man. He was tempted in all points like as we are tempted; yet without sin. Therefore, He is able to succor them that are tempted.

To have faith in such a Saviour as high priest, will transform God's people to be perfect Christians reflecting the beauty of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must distinguish between perfection of character and fanatical perfection of the flesh. Even Jesus, possibly, when He swung His hammer to

drive a nail, maybe sometime He missed the nail and dented the wood instead. Would that be a sin? No, perfection of the flesh is not the goal of Christ's work in the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. It's the perfection of the mind, of the character of the heaven. We must always have God's enabling grace. Even after probation closes, it will be impossible for God's people to live on earth unless they receive the grace of the Saviour to overcome even as He overcame.

Ellen White says the message that must go to the world today is to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice of the sins of the whole world. It presented the righteousness of Christ, the justification through faith in the surety. The message invites the people to receive the righteousness of Christ. And that righteousness is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. This is the third angel's message which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice and it is to be attended with the Holy Spirit in a large measure. TM 92.

Going back before the days of Seventh-day Adventists to the time of the great reformer, John Wesley, He clearly taught the possibility of sinless living in mortal flesh, but he did not understand the "how;" because he did not understand the cleansing of the sanctuary truth. He lived too soon to share in the benefits of that wonderful message. In his day he was not able to understand the problem of overcoming properly. But those of us who live in these last days will know that the dragon is wroth with the woman (Rev. 12:17); and he goes to make

war with the remnant of her seed. What makes Satan so uncontrollably angry is that there will be a people who do what he has always said is impossible to be done and that is, to keep the commandments of God truly. Satan has always said that is an utter impossibility. And sad to say, there have been many ministers who have echoed what he has said. Maybe they just want to comfort the people and let them just sleep in their sins and just assure them, Well, everybody sins, so don't worry if you keep on sinning.

God must put an end to sin. The law of God has always been the focus of Satan's warfare. He has always said it's impossible. And Ellen White says what we have to contend with is a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out. That strange power is mysterious active even in the church today.

A child can see this truth very clearly revealed. Perfection of character is not something that is merely a legal declaration. It is something that Christ will perfect in our human hearts in these last days. It has not yet been realized world-wide among God's people. There's a time element involved.

Ellen White has said, "Christ made an offering that through His grace every one may reach the standard of perfection. Of those who receive His grace and follow His example will be written in the book of life, complete in Him without spot of wrinkle. In word and deed Christ's followers are to be pure and true. In this world of iniquity and corruption we are to reveal the attributes of Christ. All that God's

people do and say is to be free from selfishness. Christ desires to present them to the Father without spot of wrinkle or any such thing, purified through His grace, bearing His likeness [Oh, that will bring honor and glory to Jesus. That will make it possible for the great controversy, at last, to be completed.] In His great love Christ surrendered Himself for us. We are to surrender ourselves to Him. [Just like that. It's that easy.] When our surrender is entire Christ can finish the work He began for us by the surrender of Himself. Then He can bring His people to complete restoration." RH (May 30, 1907).

And this is what I say a child can see. It will be done. This entire surrender must precede the complete restoration. It begins in our human hearts, which again, must include translation without seeing death. You can't break the progression.

And here is where the genuine truth of righteousness by faith at last comes into its own. It began to come in 1888. But it was hindered. It was resisted. It was kept away from our people. It was kept away from the world. Says Ellen White in her testimony 1 SM 234, 235. But it's got to come back. God's people will not always and forever resist and reject the Holy Spirit. There will come a repentance.

Thank you, you "seventh angel," for blowing your seventh trumpet! You have brought a message that the world must hear. Thank God we have begun to see it!

How could any Christian people oppose such a message? John Wesley, living in the time of the blowing of the sixth trumpet, tried and almost (not quite!) got his fingertips on this message. He said:

“There is scarce any expression in Holy Writ, which has given more offense than this. The word perfect is what many cannot bear. The very sound of it is an abomination to them; and whosoever . . . asserts that it is attainable in this life, runs great hazard of being accounted by them worse than a heathen man, or a publican” (*Works of Wesley*, vol. 6, p. 1; this remark was made regarding the teachings of Augustus Toplady, writer of beloved hymn “Rock of Ages”).

But God’s goal for His church on earth is for them to complete the message which the Wesleys would have loved to proclaim in their day.

“When, my Saviour,  
    shall I be Perfectly resigned to Thee?  
Poor and vile in my own eyes,  
    Only in Thy wisdom wise?  
Fully in my life express  
    All the heights of holiness;  
Sweetly let my spirit prove  
    All the depths of humble love.”

Charles Wesley, (1707-1788).