Issue # 3 ◆ Feb. / March 2014

"Watchman, what of the night ?"

" The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end!" *Ezekiel 7:6*

▶ THIS ISSUE'S READING

The Sanctuary Truth - Part 1 pg. 2

Editor's Preface

The topic of study in the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide for the Seventh-day Adventist Church last quarter (Oct. - Dec. 2013) was entitled "The Sanctuary." In the introduction, "The Picture of Salvation", the following was stated on page 3:

"As the key for a complete system of truth, the sanctuary and Christ's priestly ministry became the basis for the Seventh-day Adventist faith - *and still remains so. In fact, the sanctuary message is the Adventists' unique doctrine.* At the same time, no other doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (with the possible exception of the Sabbath) has faced so many challenges. Fortunately, throughout the years, *these challenges have not only been withstood, but they have increased our understanding of this crucial teaching* and have made us, as a people, stronger in our understanding of salvation." [1] (emphasis added).

If the sanctuary doctrine "became the basis" of our faith "and still remains so", then why the long wait between studies concerning the sanctuary? The last time the attention of the world denomination was focused primarily on this subject in Sabbath School was the third quarter of 2003 (Sanctuary Themes / The Book of Hebrews, July - Sept.). Considering the stated importance "of this crucial teaching", it seems puzzling that the last such disquisition was over

a decade ago! One wonders *how* the "many challenges...have not only been withstood, but...have increased our understanding" when we, as a church, have given so little consideration to such a vital truth in the central teaching, mission, and growth institution of the church which is the Sabbath School. Sadly, rosy rhetoric aside, we have a whole generation of professed Seventh-day Adventists who factually have little, if any, knowledge or understanding of our sanctuary message. For the last three decades, there has been a general, overall dearth of emphasis, discussion, and study of this pivotally "unique doctrine". And this is not just a problem within the denomination either. The same basic lack of interest is widely manifested in the Independent Adventist community as well. Everywhere, throughout the *entire* community, the focus is on just about anything except present truth. Agitation concerning the Godhead (trinity, semi-arian, etc.), observing the feasts according to the proper lunar calendar calculation, whether or not to ordain women pastors, the proper Hebraic pronunciation and use of the divine name (the Tetragrammaton and other titles of God), the Wednesday / Thursday crucifixion theories, etc., etc., are just a sampling of the issues many are concentrating on and in some cases actually promoting as 'present truth'. Add to this the growing apathy and complacency accompanying this confusion and the question naturally arises: how important do we as a people view the sanctuary truth? Is it still held as a vital, essential platform of our faith; or do we now understand it simply as a peripheral, non-essential tenet? Apart from the lofty lip service occasionally rendered, what place does it actually occupy in our current overall message, mission, and belief?

Beginning with this issue of "Watchman, what of the night?", we will examine these questions (and others) with a series of articles on the sanctuary and its relationship to the Seventh-day Adventist Movement. Elder William H. Grotheer, founder and former editor of this thought paper, wrote a veritable wealth of information on this subject in past years. Given the state of affairs in Adventism today, it is obvious that his work has been greatly overlooked and ignored. The Lord willing, as this series progresses, we plan on reprinting portions of his expositions on this topic from past issues of WWN along with our own commentary and added details. It is the sincere desire of the present editor that all who read these articles will prayerfully and seriously consider the presentations and in turn be led by the Holy Spirit to further search out the truth of this matter for themselves. ❖

THE SANCTUARY TRUTH

Part 1: Some History

The Seventh-day Adventist Church began as a successor movement to the Great Second Advent Awakening, which itself was a movement of the early to mid-19th Century. While more or less worldwide in scope, it was the most pronounced in America. Its

chief proponent was William Miller. Known as the Millerite Movement, it was characterized by two related, yet distinguished, stages. The first phase was taught, led, and controlled primarily by Miller himself. Through an extensive study of Bible prophecy, he came to the conclusion that the sanctuary to be cleansed spoken of in Daniel 8:14 would be the earth, purified by fire at the second coming of Christ. By applying the standard Historicist hermeneutic then used by practically all Protestants, he eventually in his calculations and understanding concluded:

> **"I believe that time can be known by all who desire to understand and to be ready for his [Christ's] coming. And I am fully convinced that some time between March 21st, 1843, and March 21st, 1844, according to the Jewish mode of computation of time, Christ will come." [2]**

The failure of Christ to return between these dates and the attendant disappointment and perplexity which ensued afterward among the Millerite believers, gave rise to the next stage of the movement. Beginning about mid-summer, 1844, and continuing to October 22, 1844, this second phase was largely controlled by other Millerite leaders (most notably Samuel Snow and George Storrs) and was known as the Seventh-month Movement. The major revitalizing factor in this facet of the movement was the use of a horizontal (earth to earth) biblical typology added to the Historicist method used by Miller. The language of Daniel 8:14 was correlated with Leviticus chapter 16, where the annual Day of Atonement ceremony is outlined in detail. Since the cleansing of the Hebrew sanctuary was performed "in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month," (verse 29), which was always in the *autumn* of the year and not in the *spring,* it was determined that Christ would return to cleanse the anti-type of the sanctuary - the earth, on October 22, 1844 - which in that year, according to the Karaite Jewish calendar, was Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). This, and the additional adjustment of adding one year to the overall calculation (there is no 'zero' year between 1 B.C. and 1 A.D. - a factor which Miller had failed to incorporate in his original computation), created a new, more biblically progressive hermeneutic which both extended the original timeline and terminated it with definite precision. In turn, other prophetic passages of Scripture (most prominently the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25: 1-13) were interpreted more accurately and with an even greater sense of urgency than before. Despite the fact that: "Those who had formerly led in the cause were among the last to join in this movement". (GC, pg. 402) [3]; the unity and devotion among the Advent believers during this time was commented on with deep conviction by those who eyewitnessed it. [See *Life Incidents* by James White, pgs. 171-180].

October 22, 1844, came, passed, and Christ still did not return. This "Great Disappointment", in contrast to the earlier "First Disappointment, severely splintered

the Seventh-month Movement. Some totally renounced their faith in the Second Advent Awakening altogether; while others completely abandoned the calculations of the Seventh-month Movement and began setting new dates for the Lord's return based on different interpretative approaches. A third group however, upon further study, retained the basic hermeneutic of the movement. They were firmly convinced of the biblical soundness surrounding the October 22, 1844, date and its calculation. The failure was not the method used to determine the timing, but rather the nature of the *event* that was to transpire. In particular, the error centered in an incorrect understanding of what constituted the sanctuary. In the words of Ellen G. White (herself a participant and eyewitness of the events):

> **"They believed that they had adopted sound principles of interpretation [hermeneutics] in their study of the prophecies, and that it was their duty to hold fast the truths already gained, *and to continue the same course of Biblical research*. With earnest prayer they reviewed their position and studied the Scriptures to discover their mistake. As they could see no error in their reckoning of the prophetic periods, they were led to examine more closely the subject of the sanctuary.**
>
> **In their investigation they learned that there is no Scripture evidence sustaining the popular view that the earth is the sanctuary; but they found in the Bible a full explanation of the subject of the sanctuary, its nature, location, and services; the testimony of the sacred writers being so clear and ample as to place the matter beyond all question." (Ibid, pg. 411, emphasis added).[3]**

An extensive study of both Old and New Testaments clearly revealed the following core truths:

> **1. "Moses made the earthly sanctuary after a pattern which was shown him." (Ibid, pg. 415) [3] - see Exodus 25: 8-9, 40; compare with Hebrews 8: 5.**
>
> **2. "Paul teaches that that pattern was the true sanctuary which is in heaven." (Ibid, pg. 415) [3] - see Hebrews 8: 1-2; 9: 24.**
>
> **3. "And John testifies that he saw it in heaven." (Ibid, pg. 415) [3] - see Revelation 4: 5; 8: 3; 11: 19; 15: 5-8).**

Moreover, since the termination of the "two thousand and three hundred days" in Daniel 8: 14 had indeed reached its fulfillment on October 22, 1844; and since "the sanctuary" to "be cleansed" at the commencement of this date could not possibly be any *earthly* Hebrew tabernacle or temple as all such earthly structures lost any salvific efficacy when Jesus died on the cross centuries earlier in A.D. 31; they further deduced:

> **1. "The sanctuary in heaven, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf, is the great**

original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy...The holy places of the sanctuary in heaven are represented by the two apartments in the sanctuary on earth." (Ibid, pg. 414). [3]

2. "The ministration of the earthly sanctuary consisted of two divisions; the priests ministered daily in the holy place, while once a year the high priest performed a special work of atonement in the most holy, for the cleansing of the sanctuary...on the great Day of Atonement...The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministration." (Ibid, pgs. 418-419). [3]

3. "Such was the service performed 'unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.' [Hebrews 8:5a] And what was done in type in the ministration of the earthly sanctuary is done in reality in the ministration of the heavenly sanctuary." (Ibid, pg. 420). [3]

These basic conclusions are what formed the cornerstone of what became the Seventh-day Adventist Movement and later, the Church. It can clearly and objectively be seen that the 'pioneers' of the movement built upon and advanced the basic hermeneutical platform of the Seventh-month Movement in a similar, progressive manner as the leaders of that movement had advanced the basic principles of the original Millerite Movement. While holding fast the core truths, they rigorously discarded those errors that had been built upon the essential foundation, but could not be sustained by a more thorough re-study of the Scriptures. This, in turn, involved another adjustment of their overall thinking and theology. The key factor with the Seventh-day Adventist Movement involved the additional merging of a vertical (earth to heaven) typology to the horizontal typology from the previous movement. By so doing, they were able to correct the error concerning the event that was to take place in Daniel 8: 14:

"Thus those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to His coming." (Ibid, pg. 422). [3]

"The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844." (Ibid, pg. 423). [3]

In light of the historical and theological facts, Seventh-day Adventism came into being as an eschatological (end time) Christian movement which based its existence on progressive understanding of apocalyptic Bible prophecy. A horizontal and vertical typological hermeneutic was developed and advanced forward within the framework of the Historicist method of biblical interpretation. The central component in this approach was the biblical teaching on the sanctuary; which involved a study of the entire Hebrew ceremonial

system in the Old Testament and its corresponding relationship to the mission and work of the Lord Jesus Christ - particularly His sacrificial death on the cross and His high priestly ministry in heaven, as revealed and interpreted in the New Testament. As a result:

> **"It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God's hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people." (Ibid, pg. 423).** [3]

This brought the doctrinal truths of the Bible together in a manner which the Protestant Reformation had not been able to achieve. The sanctuary truth opened up a fuller, greater knowledge of the "everlasting gospel" and the entire plan of salvation. The age long struggle between God and Satan was, therefore, understood in a much broader context than usual (The Great Controversy theme). Moreover, it not only corrected former prophetic errors, it restored biblical truths that had been misinterpreted, obscured, or neglected for centuries - the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment, the unconscious state of the dead, the non-immortality of the wicked, the body temple (health message), to name a few. All this gave them the biblical authority, duty, and impetus to carry forward the Second Advent Movement by uniting the First and Second Angels' messages together with the Third Angel's message of Revelation 14: 6-12. Therefore, when Jesus completes His final act of atonement as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, it will be in preparation of a people ready to meet Jesus when He returns the second time (Luke 12: 35-38; Hebrews 9:28). Their "present duty...position and work" in relation to their past experience had also been prophesied in Revelation, chapter 10:

> **"And I took the little book [of Daniel] out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; [understood the unsealed time prophecies] and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: [expecting the return of Christ in 1844] and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. [the Great Disappointment] And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy *again* before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." [Seventh-day Adventists giving all Three Angels' messages]. (Revelation 10: 10-11, emph. added).**

Plainly put, at least from a historical and eschatological perspective, separate the sanctuary hermeneutic from the Seventh-day Adventist Movement / Church / individual member, and there will be no theological reason to justify our existence! Not only is it our "unique" contribution to Christian theology, it is the very basis of our faith. Again, from the Writings:

> **"*Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid*. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, [Stephen] Pierce, Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble,**

and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, 'We can do nothing more,' the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. *Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood*. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me." (1SM, pgs. 206-207, emph. added). [4] - from Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2 (1904), pgs. 56-57.

"The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary *is the foundation of our faith*." (EV, pg. 221, emph. added). [5] - from Letter 208 (to G.C. Tenney, June 29, 1906), pg. 2. ❖

GLP

1. Martin Probstle, *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2013), 3.

2. William Miller, *Synopsis of Miller's Views* (Signs of the Times: January 25, 1843), 147.

3. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy, Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), 402, 411, 415, 414, 418-419, 420, 422, 423.

4. White, *Selected Messages, Book One* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 206-207.

5. White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1974), 221.

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