

“Then Shall the Sanctuary Be Cleansed” (1991)
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Chapter 5

**CAN GOOD PEOPLE
HAVE UNKNOWN SINS?**

What would you have done had you been in the shoes of Caiaphas? Think a moment. He had a job to do. He was the chief executive officer. But more, he had logic on his side when he said it was expedient that one die for the nation rather than for all to die. To him, crucifying the Son of God was not sin; it was merely an administrative necessity. As administrative committees often work, he chose the lesser of two evils. This is a trap that Seventh-day Adventists fall into frequently. To choose the lesser of two evils is to cast a vote for continuing sin.

Does this indicate a problem that is not yet realized? Can a people be genuinely converted, living up to all the light they have and yet have unknown sin lurking beneath the surface? Can God seal a people in this condition? Is the final sealing work related to character development or is it mere ritual in heaven?

We have long talked of the time when God’s people would be sealed and live without a mediator or an intercessor as they faced the time of trouble in the end. The very fact that a mediator is needed at any time indicates there is a problem. That problem is sin and when the day comes that no mediator is required, it means the problem has been removed.

This group of people will be unique in all history. Their conversion, their understanding of sin, will also be unique. They will know the difference between the old covenant and the new. They will sense that the two promote opposing ideas of reconciliation. They will understand the old covenant idea of God being reconciled to man as perverted, whereas the new covenant provides for man to be reconciled to God. Man will understand that from the beginning it has been his own sin that separates. The whole point of the sanctuary truth is that Christ will not remain an Intercessor and Substitute forever; this work must come to an end. There must be a character development that no community of saints has ever previously experienced. They will overcome “even as [Christ] overcame.” The issue is not concerned with getting a people ready for death, but for translation.

The evangelical world does not see the distinction between forgiving sins and blotting them out. They are willing to have God reconciled to man whereas the

truth demands the reverse of this. They do not even believe that true cleansing is possible or necessary, for like a growing number of Adventists, they are content to make provision for sinning up to the moment of glorification. Along with doing away with the law they have adopted the Roman Catholic idea that sin cannot be overcome so long as human beings have a sinful nature. But there is a more serious problem. In the eternal balances of God's justice all sin must be judged, both known and unknown, conscious and unconscious. The old covenant must truly be replaced by the new in practical results manifest in the lives of God's people.

How Deep Is Sin Buried?

The medical profession now accepts psychoanalysis as a legitimate and respectable branch of medicine which provides therapeutic assistance for mental illness. Scientific methods have been used to discover the way the mind functions. This has led to the conclusion that there exists an unconscious mind which has a dynamic influence on the conscious mind. This premise comes to grips with the very motivating power in human life and conforms to the thoughts expressed in numerous Bible texts which assert that God is really interested in the heart, that is, the mind of man. This is in sharp contrast with the way humans evaluate by outward appearance.

This provides, in the cleansing-of-the-sanctuary teaching, answers to what conversion should really accomplish. It must reach more than outward appearance. More than three decades ago a practicing Christian psychiatrist put the question:

Seeing then that the unconscious processes play so large a part in our mental life and in our conduct, and realizing that so much evil lies in the depths, theologians have very naturally asked how far redemptive processes as preached in the Gospel of Christ can affect the unconscious. Does the acceptance of modern psychological theories lead to the conclusion that religious life is concerned only with the conscious mind, and that a very large part of human personality is left untouched and unchanged? Are we also to infer that the Christian must remain in a state where much of his being is in rebellion against God, or is alien to God?¹

The answer for a Seventh-day Adventist is that all rebellion and everything that is alien to God must be eradicated from the heart before anyone can stand in God's presence. This means that even the unconscious mind must be cleansed before the final generation is ready for translation. Therefore the only way to cleanse the unconscious mind is to make it conscious. This will prove the power of

¹ Ernest White, *Christian Life and the Unconscious*, New York, 1955, p. 20.

the gospel at the very time when sin has come to fruition and is fully manifested. How this will operate is outlined in the Bible and writings of Ellen G. White.

The convictions implanted in the heart, and the enlightenment of the understanding by the entrance of the word, work in perfect harmony. The truth brought before the mind, has power to arouse the *dormant energies of the soul*.²

When Jesus is comprehended by faith, and brought into the *inner sanctuary of the soul*, the Holy Spirit will mold and fashion the character after the likeness of Christ.³

The depth of insight here expressed needs to be understood. “Convictions implanted in the heart” may be unconscious while “the truth brought before the mind” is conscious. Likewise truth “comprehended by faith” is a conscious appreciation that will have an effect on the “inner sanctuary of the soul” which may be unconscious. The unconscious mind does have an influence upon the conscious and must be taken into account when consideration is given to the whole character.

This means that even “good people” can have unknown sins. The work on the Day of Atonement involves the whole character. Those who sincerely consecrate their lives to God’s service are often surprised and disappointed to find themselves confronted by obstacles and beset by trials and perplexities. They pray for Christlikeness of character and then face circumstances that seem to call forth all the evil of their nature. “Faults are revealed, of which they did not even suspect the existence. ... In His providence He brings these persons into different positions ... that they may discover in their character the defects which have been concealed from their own knowledge.”⁴

This gives a new relevance to numerous pronouncements made by Jesus. When He said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10), we may understand that there was to be no repression, no guilt, but life as God planned it. When He said, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31), we may appreciate the healing power of the righteousness offered by Christ. When Jesus spoke the parable of the householder and his vineyard and the son being murdered, He laid bare the unconscious thinking of His hearers.

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 145; italics supplied.

³ Ellen G. White, *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 83; italics supplied.

⁴ See Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 470, 471.

The Gospel Can Reveal Buried Sin

John provides us with the assurance that Jesus perceived the hidden motives of man. He could see through the sham, the veneer and irresolution of society. He “needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man” (John 2:24). How did He get this knowledge? Only in recent times has medical science begun to catch up with the understanding that Christ displayed centuries ago.

A prophecy in Isaiah gives us a remarkable insight as to how Jesus perceived hidden motives and understood the sinfulness of sin. This record of the Messiah portrays the noble character He would have, how He would get it and what it would do for Him. Isaiah tells us the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon Him, He would have wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and He would not judge “after the sight of his eyes,” but with “righteousness shall he judge.” His righteousness would be so prevailing that it would serve as clothing—“righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins” (Isaiah 11:1-5).

This reference to “reins” is found frequently in the Bible, often-times in connection with “heart” or “mind.” Always it deals with deep mental faculties. The dictionary tells us that the biblical use of “reins” means the deep seat of the feelings or affections. One lexicon states that in the Old Testament the meaning of “reins” is, “seat of emotion and affection; ... [Jeremiah 12:2] *near art thou in their mouth, and far from their affections*; hence, as involving character, the obj[ect] of God’s examination.”⁵ This supports the idea that for want of a scientific term in Old Testament times which would amount to “unconscious mind,” the word “reins” was used and carried with it a similar meaning. It dealt with motives, the innermost character, that which must stand before the judgment and be compared with the written Word and the Word which became flesh and dwelt among us; God’s standard for the children of men.

The use and significance of “reins” is not isolated. It is mentioned at least fifteen times. The Psalmist gives insight: “I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons” (Psalm 16:7). Jeremiah, after virtually chiding the Lord for the way the wicked prosper, observes that they give only lip service: “Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins” (Jeremiah 12:2). He makes the well-known solemn pronouncement: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” He next says: “I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins” (Jeremiah 17:9, 10). The True Witness also refers to reins as He deals with the seven churches: “I am he which

⁵ Brown, Driver, and Biggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Oxford, 1955, p. 480.

searcheth the reins and hearts” (Revelation 2:23). In the judgment nothing will be hidden.

And so the prophet Isaiah describes Christ as standing before God by “faithfulness” and thus He was “righteous.” This is the description and foreshadowing of the kind of people that the third angel’s message will gather out, for they too will have “the faith of Jesus.” This is a faith that clings to God’s mercy when His justice unlocks our “reins” and to all appearances it seems that we are caught in the wrath of God. This unique condition provides for not merely faith “in” Jesus, but the very kind of faith which He had, the faith “of” Jesus (Revelation 14:12). Laodicea is called to this kind of a life built upon faith, spiritual discernment, and the righteousness of Christ, but it cannot happen until she “knows,” until her “reins” are unlocked, and her mouth and her affections are in harmony.

A century ago the Lord tried to win the affections of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and sent that “precious message” of 1888 that was the beginning of the final preparation for translation. While the church was assembled in General Conference session in 1893, A. T. Jones presented a long series of studies on “The Third Angel’s Message.” He made the point that the Lord will not take our sins without our permission. God’s people must decide whether they would rather have their sins or Christ. But with the sealing work pending, the Lord will probe and bring up “sins to us that we never thought of before, that only shows that he is going down to the depths, and he will reach the bottom at last. ... He cannot put the seal, the impress of his perfect character, upon us until he sees it there. And so he has got to dig down to the deep places we never dreamed of, because we cannot understand our hearts.”⁶

This speaker that Ellen White endorsed scores of times went on to say that this is the process of sanctification and we need to know what the Lord is doing. If He takes away our sins without our knowledge, it would do us no good. We would be “machines.” We need to know when sin goes so that we may know when His righteousness comes. In other words He must try our “reins” that our unconscious rebellion may be purged.

The Gospel in the Sanctuary

For centuries the sanctuary service had been carried on in the most exacting manner. But the real purpose of the sanctuary had been forgotten, if it was ever really understood. Israel had been told to build the tabernacle that the Lord “may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8). But they had come to consider that what really

⁶ *General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, pp. 404, 405.

counted was the *doing* of the sundry services. This same mind-set of the Jews can be our peril. If we merely transfer what they did on earth to a similar routine carried out in heaven and forget that sin is the problem, we remain under the old covenant without hope. They failed to understand that the services had been given because of the sin problem. God and sin could not abide together. One or the other had to go. Thus there was war in heaven and thus it became evident that real sin is the will to exterminate God.

The Lord made a plan to explain this and provided that even the illiterate could understand. Different kinds of offerings were ordained, each with a specific application to the overall plan. None of this ever would have come into existence, except for the rebellion of God's children and His desire to make provision that they have another opportunity to live. In other words, "religion" is the result of sin. The original plan called for face-to-face communication, a family environment of mutual respect. The services were to bring back the Edenic circumstances. The unconscious mind was to be revealed and the hidden enmity in man's heart was to be removed.

To restore the original plan Christ became "a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:2). He is the "mediator of a better covenant" (verse 6). And these two provisions establish a "true tabernacle" in contrast to that which is just a "shadow." This provides a reason for the entire service, a "better covenant" or the new covenant in place of the old. This means that the sanctuary wherein Christ ministers is the sanctuary of the new covenant which has been created by God. This understanding was plain to Crosier as he first set the matter out for the believers following the Disappointment.

In harmony with the type, Christ as High Priest could not enter the sanctuary to minister until He had some blood to offer. Thus Adventism's position is logical and correct and conforms to the entire Hebrew service. Christ began His ministration after the crucifixion when He had blood to offer. At this time the sin of the human race was recorded in a way that all could fully understand. God's children could see themselves in what happened at the cross. If the realization of their act of killing the Son of Man did not convict their hearts, nothing could reach them. The whole universe stood witness to what had happened. After Calvary the gospel was imbued with its power to recreate human hearts.

This sanctuary service inaugurated at the cross is the new covenant in essence and is connected with the New Jerusalem as the old covenant was connected with the Old Jerusalem. The "true" was pitched by the Lord whereas the old was made and pitched by man. And what has the Lord pitched? "A city ... whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Likewise "we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with

hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1). But a city without people is only a ghost town. It is the people that make a city. Each individual as a “house” is the thing in which God is interested and so it was in the beginning when He said, “let us make man.” This “house,” this “tabernacle,” remains the object of God’s interest and the ultimate purpose of the entire sanctuary service and its final cleansing. In this final work the whole universe is to see the power of the gospel displayed.

The church on earth will also understand the whole truth. The old covenant dealt with the external rituals and ceremonial cleansing but the new must deal with internal cleansing, having the law put in the mind and written in the heart.

In the Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary, known sins were to be confessed every day. On the yearly Day of Atonement the service in the Most Holy Place was to blot out sin. These symbols can have meaning only as they point to the real thing for which they stood. Therefore the entire ritual must stand for a display in working out the mystery of godliness with all of its ultimate meaning in contrast to the mystery of iniquity.

This means that from the cross to 1844 there was a work for the conscious mind of man in the first apartment. This was a work to precede the final Day of Atonement and to the exclusion of the deeper work for the unconscious mind. The world was to hear the message of hope. The gospel proclaimed to all mankind that through faith there was salvation in Christ. Every known sin, when confessed, could and would be forgiven. The blood of Christ provided this.

However, from 1844 onward a different work was to be done as verily as the yearly Day of Atonement was different from the daily ministrations. After 1844 a new work was to be accomplished. The universe was to see a re-creation in the children of God when the unconscious enmity against Him was revealed and man was to know his sin for what it really was. This means that in type and antitype the Holy Place has to do with a work for the conscious mind while the Most Holy Place, the holy of holies, must deal with cleansing the unconscious mind. This brings the old covenant into contrast with the new, and thousands of years of symbols and typology are brought into focus and made vital to the seventh church. Thus when Laodicea comes to understand her alienation, her subtle pride and unconscious sin, then she will “know” her wretchedness, her enmity against her Saviour, and she will repent and be healed.