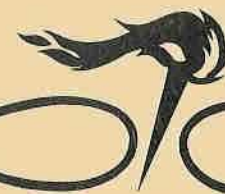
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*PRESENT  
TRUTH*

THE BLOTTING OUT OF SINS



# PRESENT TRUTH

A Seventh-day Adventist Lay Journal



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## PRESENT TRUTH

Editor . . . . . Norman Jarnes

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## THE PRIESTHOOD

O.R.L. Crosier

*Day Star Extra*, 1846

## EDITORIAL PREFACE

In this issue of **Present Truth**, a number of articles are presented as a review of the historic Adventist position on the blotting out of sins. The first article by O.R.L. Crosier (p. 3) first appeared in the *Day Star Extra* in 1846, and received the general endorsement of Mrs. Ellen G. White. With the unique position of Adventism on this vital subject so well defined, it was not surprising that the same view was adopted by the other early Seventh-day Adventist writers, such as Uriah Smith and F.C. Gilbert (pp. 5, 8).

A deeper concept of the blotting out of sins was perceived by Elders E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones (pp. 11, 14). Mrs. White herself made it evident that its significance was much broader than many had supposed. She clearly pointed out the existence of a record of sin *in the human mind* to be removed in the final atonement, no more to be remembered (pp. 16, 18, 19). It is interesting to note that Eugene W. Farnsworth apparently received an earnest of this wonderful experience, thereby recognizing the blotting out of sins to be much more than the eradication of a record in heaven (p. 15).

Standing upon this historic Adventist concept of the final blotting out of sins, the position of the current Awakening in God's church is clearly enunciated by Robert D. Brinsmead in the two concluding articles of this issue (pp. 22, 33). It is hoped that the reader will find this material to be a great blessing in clarifying the true stand of the Advent movement on this vitally important subject.

N.J.

The atonement is the great idea of the Law, as well as the Gospel; and as the design of that of the Law was to teach us that of the Gospel, it is very important to be understood. The atonement which the priests made for the people in connection with their daily ministrations was different from that made on the tenth day of the seventh month. In making the former, they went no further than in the Holy; but to make the latter they entered the Holy of Holies—the former was made for individual cases, the latter for the whole nation of Israel collectively—the former was made for the *forgiveness of sins*, the latter for *blotting them out*—the former could be made at any time, the latter only on the tenth day of the seventh month. Hence the former may be called the daily atonement and the latter the yearly, or the former the individual, and the latter the national atonement.

“Repent ye therefore; and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19). Here he [Peter] exhorts to repentance and conversion (turning away from sins); for what purpose? “*That your sins may be (future) blotted out.*” Every one can see that the blotting out of sins does not take place at repentance and conversion; but follows, and must of necessity be preceded by them. Repentance, conversion, and baptism had then become imperative duties in the present tense; and when performed, those doing them “washed away” (Acts 22:16) remitted or sent away from them their sins,—(Acts 2:38); and of course are forgiven and have “received the atonement;” but they had not received it entire at that time, because their sins were not yet blotted out. How far then had they advanced in the reconciling process? Just so far as the individual under the law had when he had confessed his sin, brought his victim to the door of the tabernacle, laid his hand upon it and slain it, and the priest had with its blood entered the Holy and sprinkled it before the vail and upon the altar and thus made an atonement for him, and he was forgiven. Only that was the type, and this

the reality. That prepared for the cleansing of the great day of atonement, this for the blotting out of sins "when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus." Hence, "by whom we have now received the atonement" is the same as "by whom we have received forgiveness of sin." At this point the man is "made free from sin." The Lamb on Calvary's cross is our victim slain; "Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant" "in the heavens" is our interceding High Priest, making atonement with His own blood, by and with which He entered there. The essence of the process is the same as in the "shadow." 1st, Convinced of sin; 2nd, Repentance and Confession; 3rd, Present the Divine Sacrifice bleeding. This done in faith and sincerity we can do no more, no more is required.

Then in the heavenly Sanctuary our High Priest with His own blood makes the atonement and we are forgiven. 1 Peter 2:24: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." See also Matthew 8:17; Isaiah 53:4-12. His body is the "one sacrifice" for repenting mortals, to which their sins are imputed, and through whose blood in the hands of the living active Priest they are conveyed to the heavenly Sanctuary. That was offered "once for all," "on the tree;" and all who would avail themselves of its merits must, *through faith*, there receive it as theirs, bleeding at the hands of sinful mortals like themselves. After thus obtaining the atonement of forgiveness we must "maintain good works," not the "*deeds of the law;*" but "being *dead to sin* should *live unto righteousness.*" This work we all understand to be peculiar to the Gospel Dispensation.

## TIMES OF REFRESHING

Uriah Smith

*Review and Herald*

As the firmament is studded with glittering stars, so the Word of God is resplendent with glorious promises. And there are places where these promises seem to cluster in profuse abundance, and form galaxies of surpassing glory. Such an instance is Acts 3:19-21:

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

What an assemblage of comforting words! What a concentration of cheering hope! What an array of life-giving promises! The hope of repentance, the privilege of conversion, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the restitution of all things, the grand climax of all human experiences and human destiny.

"Repent ye therefore." We may now do this. We are not absolutely fixed in the galling habits of sin; we may break from them. "And be converted." This is still our privilege. Our hearts may be changed; our affections may be unloosed from earthly and unworthy objects, and made to twine with a living grasp around heavenly things. And our sins may be blotted out. Yes, the wrinkles in our garments, the stains upon our raiment, the eating-leprosy upon our hands, and the hidden canker of our hearts, which we have no power to remove, and in ourselves no hope of redemption from,—this may all be removed. And this blotting out, contrary to all analogy, does not leave a deeper stain. Our sins are not blotted out by being covered with something of a darker dye; but the foul traces of sin, and that which blots them out, pass off together, and the record is left without a blemish or a stain. It was thus presented to one in a dream: He stood appalled before a parchment containing a long dark catalogue of his sins; but suddenly a being came forward, and poured a fluid upon the scroll. It rushed like a torrent over it, and rolled away a wave of inky blackness at his feet; but, lo! the parchment stood forth as pure, and clean, and bright, as

the driven snow. To one who feels the vileness of sin, and bows beneath its crushing load, and anticipates a little of its dire results, what promise could be sweeter than this?

And after the blotting out of sin, come the times of refreshing. Our version of the Bible reads, "When the times of refreshing shall come." The original rather demands the translation, "That the times of refreshing may come." The sense is not materially changed either way. It shows that it is subsequent to the blotting out of sins, that the refreshing comes from the presence of the Lord upon His people. And it is just before the coming of Christ; for immediately after, Christ is sent for His waiting ones. This refreshing is thus definitely located. It is between the blotting out of sins and the coming of Christ. The blotting out of sins is the conclusion of the work of our Lord in His priestly office as Mediator for man. Between that and the coming of the Lord, a little period intervenes; and at that time His people are refreshed from His heavenly presence.

What is the nature of this refreshing? It is something that cannot come till sins are blotted out.

And that which sin hinders is the full and complete communion of the Holy Spirit. The word contains the idea of refreshing coolness after heat, and rest and recreation after labor. It will be to the people of God, as a cooling shower to the dry and thirsty land, and a period of relaxation and rest to the worn and weary toiler. The heat and struggle of sin's conflict are then over. Their record is clear for an entrance to the heavenly land. They are accepted candidates for immortal glory. And as they thus stand upon the threshold of the celestial world, they are given to feel a little earnest of their approaching inheritance, a foretaste of the coming joy. Once God came unto His people as the former rain, and the glorious manifestations of the day of Pentecost were the outward record of the inward work. Again He is coming to His people as both the former and the latter rain together, and they will receive a refreshing adapted to their position as they are about to enter the immortal kingdom.

Then God sends Jesus Christ for them. Mark the love God is here represented as having for His people. Christ who gave His life for them, would of His own free will, come for them again. Winged with His own love, His care for His people would speed Him forward for their rescue. But here God is represented as sending Him. God so watches over and cares for His people that not even a hair can perish without His notice; and at last He sends His Son, who once came to suffer and die for them, to escort them in triumph and glory into His presence.

Then the restitution. Glorious promise, consoling hope! We travel

back in imagination to the world in its innocence and purity, as it came from the satisfied hand of its Creator. Sorely have the race, plunged in sin and misery, bewailed the loss of original innocence and Edenic joys; and for many weary and slow-revolving years have the church waited and longed for the day of deliverance and redemption to dawn upon them. And they have not waited in vain. That day will surely come. Again and again, to make assurance doubly sure, is it promised in the Word of God. The time of restitution is determined. The earth shall regain its lost position, and the worthy of its inhabitants shall recover the joys of paradise.

The accomplishment of all this is in the hands of our faithful God. The refreshing is His to bestow. The return of the Lord is one of the counsels of His will. The glorious restitution is one of His unalterable purposes. What belongs to us? Repent and be converted. Repent and be converted. This is our part. This is our duty. Have we done it? Are we doing it? May the words ring in our ears till every heart is fully aroused.

And when all have repented, and all who will receive the gracious provisions made for the penitent are converted, and when all sins are blotted out and put away from the righteous forever, then the refreshing will descend upon the waiting ones. Would you share it? Then remember, it will not come upon the sleepy, the careless, the proud, the worldly, the unrepentant, and the unconverted. And lo! These times of refreshing with their unalterable decisions are just upon us. What are we doing to prepare for them?

## CLEANSING OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

F.C. Gilbert  
Review and Herald Publishing  
Association, 1937

When Azazel was removed from the camp of Israel, what was the condition of the sanctuary and of the people of Israel? Leviticus 16:30, 33.

The condition of the sanctuary and the character of the people are thus described by the Scripture:

“He shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle for the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.” “On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord” (Leviticus 16:33, 30).

Nothing could be clearer than that the sanctuary and all the congregation of the people of Israel, including the priests, were cleansed during the time that the high priest ministered in the most holy place of the sanctuary on the day of atonement.

What would be the fate of those who did not conform to the commands of God upon the day of atonement? Leviticus 23:28-30.

For those who did not accept the provision of God's mercy on this “sabbath of sabbaths,” on this tenth day of the seventh month, on this day of atonement, there was no further probation. Mercy was no longer extended to them. They had had their day of opportunity, and when they failed to improve the final hour of mercy, they were cut off from among their people.

So when the day of atonement was finished, the congregation of Israel were cleansed, the sanctuary was cleansed, and the sins were carried away, in type, by Azazel into an uninhabited place in the wilderness. The obedient were sealed; the disobedient were cut off from the congregation of the Lord.

When the Saviour shall complete His work in the heavenly sanctuary, what will become of the original Azazel? Isaiah 14:5-17, 19, 20; Revelation 20:1, 2.

When our heavenly High Priest completes His work for sinners in the

most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, at the close of the antitypical day of atonement, the record of every individual whose sins have gone before him to judgment will have been investigated, and all sin will have been blotted out (1 Timothy 5:24). The people of God have accepted the final proffers of mercy; and in every land and among all peoples the obedient have been accepted and have been sealed.

The disobedient and unregenerate have stilled the appeals of mercy. Our Lord will soon leave the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, with the sins of those who have confessed and whose sins have been blotted out. These pardoned transgressions of the people of God are now placed upon the head of the original Azazel—Satan, the devil. Ancient peoples have believed that Azazel, the scapegoat, represents the devil. Doctor Gesenius, in his Hebrew Lexicon, on the word “Azazel,” says: “The name Azazel is also used by the Arabs for an evil demon.”

No longer will there be a record of sin remaining in the books of heaven against those who have accepted the merits of a Saviour's blood. The names of God's loyal, faithful people will be retained in the Lamb's book of life (Daniel 12:1; Luke 10:20; Revelation 21:27). They are God's precious chosen ones (Malachi 3:16, 17). The sanctuary in heaven will have been cleansed (Daniel 8:14). Intercession for man will be at an end. The dead line will have been reached. The church of God will have been sanctified, made clean (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Upon Satan, the originator of sin, will be rolled the sins which he caused the children of God to commit while they in their heart loved and followed their Lord.

The unrepentant, with the professed followers of the Master whose record did not stand the heavenly investigation, will be cut off from the congregation of God's people. Then Satan will be bound, and will never again be permitted to tempt the children of the Lord.

“Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed while He was in the most holy place, were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 280, 281.

To what place will Satan be consigned? Revelation 20:2, 3, 7; Isaiah 24:19-22.

Satan, bearing the sins of the righteous which have been placed upon him, will be a prisoner on this earth as it is returned to its original chaotic state at the coming of the Lord (Jeremiah 4:23-26). For one thousand years this earth, which has been Satan's prison house for those whom he has taken captive during the reign of sin, will become the devil's jail, from which he has no means of escape.

Bound by a chain of circumstances stronger than links forged by the most powerful brawn of man or of demons, Satan will be cast out into

the wilderness of this dark and disarranged earth, which will revert to the condition in which it was at creation, before the Lord made it beautiful and glorious. For a thousand years the originator of sin and sorrow will have opportunity to meditate upon his work of destruction and desolation. He will have ample time to consider the results of his disobedience to the commands of God. The advantages which he promised men if they would only follow him and disobey their Maker, are nowhere to be seen. The terrors of desolation and death face him in their enormity. Satan will observe the ruin caused by his career, as he considers his lot and the lot of those who enlisted under his banner. An outcast, an exile, abandoned, forsaken by God and by man, Satan for an entire millennium will reap the fruit of his sinful course, and of the "good time" he promised to his followers.

What has become of the records of those who have lived righteous lives? Jeremiah 31:33, 34; 50:20.

The righteous will enjoy to the full the promise of the new covenant:

"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 31:34).

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins" (Isaiah 44:22).

"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25).

"Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

In that day the sins of Israel cannot be found. Should any want to uncover or remember them, they cannot be found, for they will have been blotted out. The church of our Lord will have been made ready and prepared to meet her Lord.

*"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."*—Testimonies to Ministers, p. 91.

## THE BLOTTING OUT OF SIN

E.J. Waggoner

It is part of fallen human nature to make religion consist of forms and ceremonies, formulas and doctrines. Sacerdotalism is not peculiar to certain denominations; it is inherent in fallen human nature, and just to that extent that one loses sight of God, that formalism will manifest itself even in those who are most sincere. There are just as sincere souls among those whose religion consists of forms as among any people on earth. I have seen among Roman Catholics as much devout sincerity as among any people. Our danger lies in thinking that the truth consists of certain statements—of losing sight of the distinction between *truth* and the *statement* of truth. There is just as much difference between these two as there is between the law and the writing out of the law. The real law is living; the writing of it in the book is only a shadow. We are in danger of making a creed, and thinking that that is the truth.

No human words can express the truth of God. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" [1 Corinthians 2:9]. The fullness of the truth of God cannot be stated in human language; otherwise it could be heard by the ear. It cannot be framed in human thought; otherwise it could enter into the heart of man. Truth can be revealed to man only by the gift of the Spirit of truth.

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he

is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son *cleanseth us from all sin.*" (1 John 1:5-7).

Just forget the division of this epistle into chapters, with which John had nothing to do. This was a letter, containing but a few sentences, not so long as we ourselves have sometimes written. At the beginning of the letter he makes this statement of what his message is, and a little later he writes about the end of the world: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." This, then, is just the message for the last days, that which will make people stand when the world passes away.

Then the apostle speaks of "the anointing which ye have received of him," so that "ye need not that any man teach you." No man can teach you the truth; the things which God has prepared are revealed only by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. "And even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." So this is the message that will give people boldness at the coming of the Lord, so that they will look up and say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us."

This, then, is the message, that God is light; and if we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin,—blots out all iniquity. The proof of whether or not we have the truth is in the effect that that which we have has upon our lives. Does it cleanse us from unrighteousness? If we walk in the light, then the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us. Light is the flowing forth of God's life, which cleanses and blots out sin.

We need to be on our guard against the idea that the blotting out of sin is merely as the passing of a sponge over a slate, or an entry in a ledger to balance the account. This is not the blotting out of sin. An ignorant man who saw a thermometer for the first time thought to lessen the heat by breaking it. But how much effect did this have upon the weather?—Just as much as the wiping out of the record of his sin has upon the sinner. The tearing of a leaf out of a book, or even the burning of the book containing the record, does not blot out the sin. The sin is not blotted out by blotting out the account of it, any more than throwing my Bible into the fire abolishes the Word of God. There was a time when all the Bibles that could be found were destroyed; but the Word of God—the truth—remained just the same, because truth is God Himself; it is His life.

Truth is implanted in the heavens and earth; it fills the stars, and keeps them in their places; it is that by which the plants grow, and the

birds build their nests; it is that by which they know how to find their way across the sea. When Moses broke the tables of stone, the law was just as steadfast as it was before. Just so, though all the record of all our sin, even though written with the finger of God, were erased, the sin would remain, because the sin is in us. Though the record of our sin were graven in the rock, and the rock should be ground to powder,—even this would not blot out our sin.

The blotting out of sin is the erasing of it from the nature, the being, of man. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Our bodies are but the channel, the border, the sand upon the shore, of the river of life. Impressions have been made upon us by sin. At the seashore, when you see a smooth piece of sand, your first impulse is to make some mark on it, to write some characters upon it. Then the sea comes up, and each wave that passes over it helps to obliterate the impression until it is entirely blotted out. Even so the stream of life from the throne of God will wash away and blot out the impressions of sin upon us.

The erasing of sin is the blotting of it from our natures, so that we shall know it no more. "The worshipers once purged"—actually purged by the blood of Christ—have "no more conscience of sin," because the way of sin is gone from them. Their iniquity may be sought for, but it will not be found. It is forever gone from them,—it is foreign to their new natures, and even though they may be able to recall the fact that they have committed certain sins, they have forgotten the sin itself—they do not think of doing it any more. This is the work of Christ in the true sanctuary, which the Lord pitched, and not man,—the sanctuary not made with hands, but brought into existence by the thought of God.—(Complete article by E.J. Waggoner in *Review and Herald*, September 30, 1902).

## THE TIMES OF REFRESHING

Alonzo T. Jones  
Selected from  
*The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*

To-day, just now, "while it is called to-day," as never before, the word of God to all people is, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come ["that so there may come seasons of refreshing," RV] from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:19-21).

The time of the coming of the Lord and the restitution of all things is indeed at the very doors. And when Jesus comes, it is to take His people unto Himself. It is to present to Himself His glorious church, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," but that is "holy and without blemish." It is to see Himself perfectly reflected in all His saints.

And *before* He comes thus, His people must be in that condition. Before He comes we must have been brought to that state of perfection in the complete image of Jesus (Ephesians 4:7, 8, 11-13). And this state of perfection, this developing in each believer the complete image of Jesus—this is the finishing of the mystery of God, which is Christ in you the hope of glory. This consummation is accomplished in the cleansing of the sanctuary, which is the finishing of the mystery of God, which is the final finishing of transgression, the making of a complete end of sins, the making of reconciliation for iniquity, the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing up of the vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the most Holy.

The present time being the time when the coming of Jesus and the restitution of all things is at the very doors; and this final perfecting of the saints having necessarily to precede the coming of the Lord and the restitution of all things; we know by every evidence, that *now* we are in the times of refreshing—the time of the latter rain. And as certainly as that is so, we are also in the time of the utter blotting out of all sins that have ever been against us. And the blotting out of sins is exactly this thing of the cleansing of the sanctuary; it is the finishing of all transgression in our lives; it is the making an end of all sins in our character; it is the bringing in of the very righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, to abide alone everlastingly.

## A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Eugene W. Farnsworth  
Review and Herald Publishing  
Association, 1927

Lest I should forget I want to mention another thing that God has done for my soul. I cannot explain it, and it is not necessary that I should, but it is this: After I had that great infilling of the Spirit of God I became conscious, after a few days, that there were things that I had forgotten. I kept thinking it over, and wondering how it was. I went back in my memory. You, brethren and ministers, know that in our lives and experiences of the past, things have come up, and we have been in touch with other brethren, and it has been difficult for us to explain to ourselves how certain ones could do what they did and still be Christians; and there have been times when some unpleasant feelings that ought not to exist have come into our minds, and we have carried them along. You know what I mean.

I want to testify here this morning that the Holy Spirit has taken every one of them out of my recollection. I can't remember a single one—not a single one. I don't know when He did it, I don't know how He did it, and I don't care when nor how, but I have praised God from that day to this for that experience. It has helped me more than any other experience I ever had to know what God means when He tells us that He will blot out our transgressions. It means something more than simply blotting out a record up in heaven. It means blotting out of a man's mind the nightmare of sin, so that he will never remember it any more. That is what God is going to do for His blessed children, brethren, for all eternity, very soon.

I read two or three times over in the Bible that God will forget our transgressions, that He will remember our sins no more. Well, I tell you, brethren, when God forgets them and remembers them no more, it is a blessed thing for us to forget and remember them no more, too. I bless God for that experience. I tell you that kind of experience is worth going down into the valley of the shadow of death to obtain. It is worth it. I don't know as I would ever have had it if I had not gone down there. But I went.

(This testimony is from a booklet entitled *Divine Healing, A Personal Testimony and Experience*, by Eugene W. Farnsworth).

## DAILY SANCTIFICATION IS NOT SINLESS PERFECTION

Ellen G. White

As Quoted In *Sanctuary*  
*Institute Syllabus* No. 3

“Every impure thought defiles the soul, impairs the moral sense, and tends to obliterate the impressions of the Holy Spirit. It dims the spiritual vision, so that men cannot behold God. The Lord may and does forgive the repenting sinner; but though forgiven, the soul is marred.”—*Desire of Ages*, p. 302.

“Now it may be you can repent. But even if pardon is written against your names, you will sustain terrible loss; for the scars you have made upon your souls will remain.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 447.

“Every mistake, every error, unimportant though it may be regarded, leaves a scar in this life and a blot on the heavenly records.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 227.

“The character of the thoughts leaves its imprint upon the soul, and all low conversation pollutes the mind. All evil works ruin to those who commit it. God may and will forgive the repenting sinner, but though forgiven, the soul is marred; the power of the elevated thought possible to the unimpaired mind is destroyed. Through all time the soul bears the scars.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 195.

“It is true that some may see their folly and repent. God may pardon them. But they have wounded their own souls, and brought upon themselves a life-long peril. The power of discernment, which ought ever to be kept keen and sensitive to distinguish between right and wrong, is in a great measure destroyed. They are not quick to recognize the guiding voice of the Holy Spirit, or to discern the devices of Satan. Too often in time of danger they fall under temptation, and are led away from God. The end of their pleasure-loving life is ruin for this world and for the world to come.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 55 (cf. *Ibid.*, p. 281).

“What the child sees and hears is drawing deep lines upon the tender mind, which no after circumstances in life can entirely efface.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 199.

“A wrong action, by frequent repetition, leaves a permanent impression upon the mind of the actor, and also on the minds of those who are connected with him in any relation, either spiritual or temporal.”—*Ibid.*, p. 201.

“. . . things which they see and hear in infancy and childhood

are deeply imprinted upon their minds.”—*Ibid.*, p. 202.

“Those who take the lead in these things [amusements] bring upon the cause a stain not easily effaced. They wound their own souls, and through their lifetime will carry the scars. The evildoer may see his sins and repent; God may pardon the transgressor; but the powers of discernment, which ought ever to be kept keen and sensitive to distinguish between the sacred and the common, are in a great measure destroyed.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 66.

“Every Christian will have a hard battle to fight with wrong habits. He must overcome his unbelief, his deformity of character, his inclination to self-indulgence. His long resistance of light, warnings, and appeals has left its mark upon his life; and although God has forgiven him, he feels that he cannot forgive himself.”—*Review and Herald*, January 13, 1891.

“David was a repentant man, and although he confessed and hated his sin, he could not forget it.”—*Ibid.*, May 24, 1887.

“He may be converted; he may see the wickedness of his injustice to his fellow-men, and as far as possible, make restitution; but the scars of a wounded conscience will ever remain.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, p. 1158.

“Everything leaves its impress upon the youthful mind. The countenance is studied, the voice has its influence, and the deportment is closely imitated by them.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 621.

“Little do parents consider that injurious impressions are far more readily received by the young than are divine impressions. . . . What havoc has this love for light reading wrought with the mind. . . . When a wrong impression is left upon the mind in youth, a mark is made, not on sand, but on enduring rock.”—*Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 544.

“Impressions made upon the minds of the young are hard to efface.”—*Adventist Home*, p. 201.

“The impressions received in childhood and youth are wrought in the texture of character, and become the principle of action in mature life.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 119.

“The impressions made upon the mind and character in early life are deep and abiding. Injudicious training or evil associations will often exert upon the young mind an influence for evil that all after effort is powerless to efface.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 330.

“. . . to subject the plastic minds and characters of the children to such discipline is to leave upon the mind scars and bruises that will never be removed.”—*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 193.

“It is during the first years of a child's life that his mind is most susceptible to impressions either good or evil.”—*Ibid.*, p. 132.

“All will have associates, and will influence and be influenced in their turn. The link is a mysterious one which binds human hearts together, so that the feelings, tastes, and principles of two individuals are closely blended. One catches the spirit, and copies the ways and acts, of the other. As wax retains the figure of the seal, so the mind retains the impressions produced by intercourse

and association. The influence may be unconscious, yet it is no less powerful."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 587.

"Our thoughts are to be strictly guarded; for one impure thought makes a deep impression on the soul. An evil thought leaves an evil impress on the mind."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 144.

"We are in great danger of looking upon sin as a small matter, unworthy of notice. Sins of unkindness, of impatience, of fault-finding, of unthankfulness, of pride in imitating the fashions of a doomed world, should not be lightly regarded. The channels of thought and action are worn deep and broad by repetition."—*Review and Herald*, June 3, 1880.

## PERFECTION THROUGH THE FINAL ATONEMENT

Ellen G. White

As Quoted In *Sanctuary*  
*Institute Syllabus* No. 3

"The righteous [in the time of trouble] will not cease their earnest agonizing cries for deliverance. They cannot bring to mind any particular sins, but in their whole life they can see but little good. Their sins had gone beforehand to judgment, and pardon had been written. Their sins had been borne away into the land of forgetfulness, and they could not bring them to remembrance."—*Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 3, p. 135.

"... while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they will have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins will have been blotted out by the atoning blood of Christ, and they cannot bring them to remembrance."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 202.

"... in the final atonement the sins of the truly penitent are to be blotted from the records of heaven, no more to be remembered or come into mind, ..."—*Ibid.*, p. 358.

"But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment, and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance."—*Great Controversy*, p. 620.

## JOSHUA AND THE ANGEL

Ellen G. White

(From *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 472-476)

Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects, he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. All will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law. Those who will be true to God and to duty will be menaced, denounced, and proscribed. They will be betrayed "both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends."

Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua was pleading before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and earnest faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness, and as they look upon themselves they are ready to despair. The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer. He endeavors to affright the soul with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes to so destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations, turn from their allegiance to God, and receive the mark of the beast.

Satan urges before God his accusations against them, declaring that they have by their sins forfeited the divine protection, and claiming the right to destroy them as transgressors. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God. "Are these,"

he says, "the people who are to take my place in Heaven, and the place of the angels who united with me? While they profess to obey the law of God, have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self more than of God? Have they not placed their own interests above his service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins which have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred toward one another."

The people of God have been in many respects very faulty. Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins which he has tempted them to commit, and he presents these in the most exaggerated light, declaring, "Will God banish me and my angels from his presence, and yet reward those who have been guilty of the same sins? Thou canst not do this, O Lord, in justice. Thy throne will not stand in righteousness and judgment. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them."

But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves to the control of evil. They have put away their sins, and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition, and the Divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin, and also their repentance, declares, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan." I gave my life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of my hands."

The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon his people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness must be removed that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected; unbelief must be overcome; faith, hope, and patience are to be developed.

The people of God are sighing and crying for the abominations done in the land. With tears they warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they humble themselves before the Lord on account of their own transgressions. The wicked mock their sorrow, ridicule their solemn appeals, and sneer at what they term their weakness. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, and their eyes are fixed upon his perfect purity, that they so clearly discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Their contrition and self-abasement are infinitely more acceptable in the sight of God than is the self-sufficient, haughty spirit of those who see no cause to lament, who scorn the humility of Christ, and who claim perfection while transgressing God's holy law. Meekness and lowliness of heart are the conditions for strength and victory. The crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross. Blessed are these

mourners; for they shall be comforted.

The faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut in with God. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could their eyes be opened, as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see the angels of God encamped about them, by their brightness and glory holding in check the hosts of darkness.

As the people of God afflict their souls before him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments from them," and the encouraging words are spoken, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, never more to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. And the remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honored. A "fair mitre" is set upon their heads. They are to be as kings and priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations, and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God."

Now is reached the complete fulfillment of those words of the Angel: "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men wondered at; for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch." Christ is revealed as the Redeemer and Deliverer of his people. Now indeed are the remnant "men wondered at," as the tears and humiliation of their pilgrimage give place to joy and honor in the presence of God and the Lamb. "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem."

## THE BLOTTING OUT OF SINS

Robert D. Brinsmead

If I were to select one text of Scripture to awaken and enlighten the people of God, Acts 3:19 would be the immediate choice:

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19, KJV).

“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, . . .” (RSV).

Let us observe Ellen G. White’s use of this text:

“Are we by repentance and confession sending our sins beforehand to Judgment, that they may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come?”—*Review and Herald*, August 28, 1883.

“The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel, are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are ‘the times of refreshing’ to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said, ‘repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out [in the investigative judgment], when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; . . .’—*Great Controversy*, p. 611 (brackets in original of 1888 edition; cf. also pp. 485, 486).

### An Important Sequence of Events

Acts 3:19 establishes an important sequence of events. As Adventists have always taught since 1844, the blotting out of sins points us to the work of the investigative judgment. The passage before us explicitly declares that there will be no latter rain apart from the blotting out of sins. That is to say, the investigative judgment must come to the people of God before they may receive the outpouring of the Spirit in the power of the latter rain. The latter rain constitutes God’s *seal* of approval bestowed upon those who receive the approbation of the judgment.

It is time that God’s people everywhere were awake to the truth about the reception of the latter rain. It is very dangerous to seek this blessing except in God’s appointed way. In the Sunday-keeping religious bodies it has become the fashion to receive startling spiritual manifestations

which many are calling the latter rain. It appears that the Holy Ghost is being poured out upon thousands. Speaking in tongues, miracles, healing, and a whole variety of spiritual phenomena are being manifested at the present time, and those involved in this movement are confident that this is the beginning of a mighty revival that will sweep the whole world in preparation for the coming of Christ. What we must realize is that the Spirit of Prophecy has warned us that this development in the fallen churches would take place prior to the true manifestation of the latter rain among God’s Sabbath-keeping people (cf. *Great Controversy*, p. 464; *Early Writings*, p. 261).

It is sad that many who profess to be in the faith of the third angel’s message are not prepared to withstand this great deception, and appear anxious that we experience some of this marvelous power in the Remnant Church. Certainly we must pray for the latter rain, but our prayers must be intelligent ones. They must be in harmony with the truth. And our works must be in harmony with our prayers. But often this is not so. What do all these appeals to seek the latter rain mean? Are they pointing us to the most holy place of the sanctuary as the only place to seek the blessing? (Cf. *Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56). Are they directing the people of God to the judgment, showing them that first there must be such a mighty awakening and putting away of sins as will fit a people to stand in the judgment? Are these appeals instructing God’s people that we must first come to the judgment to have our sins blotted out? If the answer is not “yes,” then Satan has more to do with these appeals than does God.

Oh, the blindness of the Laodicean state! Behold now the appeals for the power to finish the work by a people who have not obeyed the pre-requisite. *Laodicea* means *judging of the people*. All the light of the sanctuary has been given to Laodicea. There is no excuse for not knowing the relationship between judging the people and the latter rain. Yet the work of the judgment and blotting out of sins is scarcely ever mentioned.

This point must become crystal clear to our minds: The only way to receive the latter rain is to enter the judgment. This is the antitypical Day of Atonement. As Israel of old gathered about the sanctuary with putting away of sin, with prayer, fasting and deep searching of heart, so God’s people today must verily engage in this work. This is the message of Joel 2:

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between

the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? . . . And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:15-17, 28).

God's call to His people to come into the judgment is in order that He may grant them the blessing of the blotting out of sins and the latter rain. But Laodicea insists that God give her the latter rain while she despises and rejects the awakening message that calls her into the judgment.

Who knows whether God will not allow Satan to answer these demands for the latter rain? It is happening to thousands not of our faith. Remember, it is Satan's last deception!

We appeal to all our readers to become intelligent in regard to the present issues in the church. All that glitters is not gold. Next time, before you say "Amen" to these appeals for the latter rain, ask yourself: "Are these appeals in harmony with the instruction and light of Acts 3:19?" If not, be on your guard. Satan's last deception is a counterfeit of the latter rain. Do not try to evaluate by your senses. It is impossible to distinguish between the true and the false except by the testimony of the Scriptures. Therefore test the matter by Acts 3:19:

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

The doctrine of the blotting out of sins is a distinctive Advent doctrine. It is the great foundation teaching of the Advent Movement, being referred to in the prophecy, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Daniel 8:14). In the foregoing discussion we saw that the blotting out of sins took place in the investigative judgment and at the time of the outpouring of the Spirit under the latter rain.

We will now seek to comprehend the experience that God has in mind for us in the blotting out of sins.

### No More Remembrance of Sin

The blotting out of sins is the object of the New Covenant ministry of Jesus, our High Priest. In Hebrews, chapter 10, the apostle tells us that the ancient Day of Atonement could not perfect the worshippers and take away the conscience and remembrance of sin (vv. 1-3). For this reason, he tells us, Christ came to abolish the earthly shadows and to establish the heavenly reality (vv. 5-14). Then he says:

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:16, 17).

When the sins of God's people are blotted out they will realize the complete fulfillment of this new covenant promise (cf. *Great Controversy*, p. 485). Now what does God mean when He says "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"? When shall this be fulfilled? The object of the heavenly sanctuary service is to put God's law in the hearts and minds of His people. This law is His character of love. When this divine image is restored in the lives of His people God will forget something. What will He forget? Calvary is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that our sins bring to His heart (*Education*, p. 263). This work of restoring His image in His people is something which has caused God infinite suffering. But still He endures. Love never fails. It endures all things; it suffers long. When God finally sees that law written fully in the hearts of His people; when His name or seal is seen in their foreheads (Revelation 7:2; 14:1), His joy is so infinitely great that He forgets the pain and shame that their sins have brought Him. The Scriptures remind us how at the time of birth a woman has pain and sorrow, but immediately after the child is born her joy causes her to forget the pain and sorrow. So when God sees His moral image fully reflected in His saints (*Early Writings*, p. 71), His joy will be so great that He will also forget the pain that we have brought to Him. The servant of the Lord heard this divine joy in heavenly vision:

"Said the angel, 'List ye!' Soon I heard a voice like many musical instruments all sounding in perfect strains, sweet and harmonious. It surpassed any music I had ever heard, seeming to be full of mercy, compassion, and elevating, holy joy."—*Early Writings*, p. 270.

In this time of the judgment, the blotting out of sins, the sealing, the latter rain, let us see the great motivation that is to possess us as we seek for the final work of grace. Can we sense that we may bring such rejoicing to the heart of our Lord as will cause Him to forget, for eternity, the pain and shame that our sins have brought to Him? When we have allowed Him to put that law fully in our hearts, His joy will be such that He says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17).

Now if God will remember no more the sins of the sealed saints, will the saints themselves remember them? We think not. How could God forget if His own loved ones could not forget? Let us illustrate: There has been a terrible estrangement between a husband and wife. In true love the husband is willing to forget, even longs to forget. But if his partner will not forget, can he forget? Does he not suffer with his

partner? As long as one party remembers, the other is forced to remember. Even so, God cannot forget unless His people forget. It is written, “. . . his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.” “In all their affliction He was afflicted, . . .” (Judges 10:16; Isaiah 63:9). Therefore the promise, “I will remember no more” is an assurance that the saints will be one with the Lord, and all trace of the great estrangement will be at an end.

### The Perfecting of the Conscience

To the apostle Paul, this blotting out of sins is the perfecting of the conscience in the experience of the saints:

“Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; . . . For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? . . . For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year” (Hebrews 9:6-9, 13, 14; 10:1-3).

In these Scriptures the Holy Spirit is making a contrast between the earthly sanctuary service and the heavenly. He tells us that the earthly service could not perfect the conscience; could not make the comers thereunto perfect as pertaining to the conscience; could not purge the worshippers so that they would have no more conscience of sins. But His message is that the heavenly ministry of Christ can verily do it:

“Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:15-17).

We must remember that there are two divisions to the ministration of the sanctuary, illustrated by the daily service in the first apartment and the yearly service in the second apartment. It takes the whole minis-

tration of the sanctuary to complete the work of grace and to make the comers thereunto perfect (having no more conscience of sin). The blotting out of sins takes place in the most holy place.

The writer of Hebrews is expounding on the subject of perfection—the moral and spiritual perfection of the worshippers. He shows what such perfection involves. It means the perfecting of the conscience, having no more conscience of sins. Such perfection does not take place when one is converted to Christ. The one who has his sins forgiven stands where the repentant sinner stood in the daily service of the ancient ministration—the sins were transferred to the sanctuary, but final atonement (blotting out of sins) had not taken place. It was in the yearly service that the worshipper received the final cleansing which pointed forward to the blotting out of sins:

“For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord” (Leviticus 16:30).

We cannot say that one who has his sins forgiven is perfected in conscience:

“He may be converted; he may see the wickedness of his injustice to his fellow-men, and, as far as possible, make restitution; but the scars of a wounded conscience will ever remain.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, p. 1158.

Adam and Eve repented after their sin; but though forgiven, they were unable to look upon God face to face as they had before their experience in sin. Sin had caused them to lose their state of holiness. This lost state of holiness, this loss of a perfect conscience, is not restored immediately. Final restoration takes place on the Day of Atonement when sins are blotted out.

### Perfect Love Casts Out All Fear

“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4:16-18).

Perfect love casts out fear. Jesus was never afraid. He slept during the terrible storm while His disciples were fearful and afraid. No fear could be found in the heart of Christ because there was no sin there. He had no experience in disobedience. He had no conscience of sin.

“He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” To be made perfect in love is to have the image of the divine, the seal of the living God. It is true that in conversion the power of the Spirit of God transforms

the believer into a new creature. Love takes possession of the heart. Fear is driven out. Yet the work of grace is not completed. The latter rain, which is the baptism of divine love in all its fulness, is needed to bring the believer to perfection (cf. *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 506). It is the baptism of divine love in the latter rain that perfects the conscience, seals the believer, and blots out sin. Those who have this final covering will be able to live in the sight of a holy God without a mediator during the period of the seven last plagues. Those without the seal of God will be tormented day and night by their own consciences in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb (Revelation 14:10, 11). How thankful we should be that God has promised the perfecting latter rain to prepare a people for the great day of God (cf. *Early Writings*, p. 71; *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 506).

### Love Thinks No Evil

The apostle Paul tells us in his great chapter on love that love “thinketh no evil,” “keeps no score of wrongs” (NEB) (1 Corinthians 13:5). Do we imagine that God is arbitrarily writing all our sins down in His book, keeping the score of wrongs? “God is love,” and love keeps no score of wrongs. We often fail to recognize that in Scriptural expressions God is represented as doing those things that His providence must permit. Thus He is said to have hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Let us not imagine that it is our God of infinite love Who is keeping the score of wrongs. On the contrary, it is the mind which sins that keeps the record of wrongs.

“The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, . . .” (Jeremiah 17:1).

The one who has sinned retains the conscience of sin. Even the converted man still has a conscience of sin. “David was a repentant man, and although he confessed and hated his sin, he could not forget it.”—*Review and Herald*, May 24, 1887. God does not arbitrarily keep the record of sin until the final atonement. The record in the books of heaven is only the photograph of the mind which carries the record of wrongs (cf. *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1085; Vol. 7, p. 987).

Now what will happen when the saints receive the latter rain? They will be made perfect in love. Love thinks no evil. This will mean that the sealed saints will think no evil again. The thoughts and feelings of their past sins will not be found in their minds again, for such thoughts and feelings will be foreign to their new natures.

“In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon

them whom I reserve” (Jeremiah 50:20).

“Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. . . . This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.”—*Great Controversy*, p. 623. Not even by a thought will the sealed saints defile their minds. Love thinks no evil.

“Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment, and have been blotted out; and they cannot bring them to remembrance.”—*Ibid.*, p. 620. This does not mean an amnesia to past events, but as the context of the statement shows, as God’s people review the events of their lives, they have no more conscience of sins. They cannot bring their past sins (their wrong thoughts and feelings) to remembrance. Love thinks no evil. Those who are made perfect in love by the anointing of the latter rain will not bring to mind any past thought or feeling of sin. This is what our High Priest promises to do for us while He ministers in the most holy place:

“For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord” (Leviticus 16:30).

### The Blotting Out of the Evil Heart of Unbelief

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12).

In divine love, God has already redeemed humanity in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, the work of redemption is complete (Isaiah 40:2; Colossians 2:10; Ephesians 1:3-12; 2:14-16; Hebrews 9:11, 12, etc.). God has not only forgiven our sins in Christ, but He has blotted them out. To His estranged people, He says:

“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel” (Isaiah 44:22, 23).

The new covenant has already been sealed by Jesus’ precious blood, and made complete in Him. The only thing left to be done is to blot out man’s evil heart of unbelief. God’s people have not yet *realized* the complete fulfillment of the new covenant promise. They have yet to realize the full glory of redemption which God has accomplished for them in Christ.

It is clear from the Bible that unbelief is at the foundation of every sin (Romans 14:23). It was unbelief that made our first parents transgressors. Man is by nature suspicious of God. Israel in the wilderness

had every cause to love and trust God, but how suspicious of Him they were! "He has brought us out in the wilderness to kill us" they often surmised. Love thinks no evil, but sin is caused by thinking evil of God. The only remedy for our disposition to think evil of Him is to behold His character of love. The gospel of Jesus Christ must remove from our minds the darkness of misapprehension of His character. When the glory of His character of love is beheld, when His love shines into our hearts in all its fulness, then every pocket of unbelief, of mistrust, of fear, will be swept away. Then sin will be blotted out of the heart's experience forever.

The natural heart thinks evil of God. It looks upon Him as stern and exacting, severe and unbending. When a man sins, his conscience smites him, and viewing God as angry and vindictive, he imagines that God is about to pounce upon him and punish him for his wrongdoing. He conjures up in his mind the thought of this Holy Being, so aloof and distant, writing his misdeeds down in His ledger, keeping the score of wrongs against him. He pictures God as demanding, "Love Me or else!" Satan tells him that the Lord demands his obedience for His own glory, and being selfish, would withhold everything that would minister to his happiness.

Let us turn from this dismal being who is the creation of the devil and our carnal minds, and behold the God Who has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ. Since God is love, 1 Corinthians 13 is a revelation of Him. God suffers long and is kind. He envieth not, nor is rash or vainglorious. He is not puffed up, but is meek and lowly in heart. He does not act unbecomingly; is never selfish; is not easily provoked. God thinks no evil; keeps no score of wrongs; takes no account of the evil done to Him; pays no attention to a suffered wrong. He does not gloat over our sins, but delights in the truth. God beareth all things, believeth all things—is ever ready to believe the best of every person; hopeth all things, endureth all things. He never fails (paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

Now when we were full of sin and rebellion, fleeing from Him more and more, thinking and imagining evil of Him, what did He think of us? Did He think, "Those miserable sinners: I will punish them shortly . . ."? Even the angels did not fathom the mystery of divine love. For when the world was sunken in corruption at the time of Christ's first advent, they "watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. . . . But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. . . . And when the fulness of the time had come; the Deity was glorified

by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled." —*Desire of Ages*, p. 37.

When we were thinking evil of Him, full of pride and self-will, what did He think of us? While our thoughts were dark toward Him, what were His thoughts toward us? Love thinketh no evil. He thought the very best of us. His were thoughts of peace, and not of evil. Rather than think evil of us who were miserable sinners, He continued to believe the very best of us, and hope the very best of us; for love "believeth all things, hopeth all things." Rather than think evil of us, He put Himself in our place.

That is the way of love. He imputed not our trespasses unto us (2 Corinthians 5:19), but He put Himself in our place, and in the person of His Son He bore our burden of sin and shame. Thus he can say to all, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). He does not ask us to do anything which He has not done. Love beareth all things. Rather than blame us and think evil of us, He put Himself in our place, keeping no score of wrongs, but Himself bore our burden of shame and sin. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). He did all this for us because love "believeth all things, hopeth all things." Love looked beyond the darkness of our sins, and could believe and hope the very best of us. God comes along to the sinner and says: "I have great faith in you."

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain rich man who had one son. But that son was murdered. The rich man said, "I will search the earth until I find this man who has killed my son." At last he found the man. What did he say to him? "I want you to be my son." Impossible? No! That is what God has done. Although Calvary proves us all guilty of the murder of the Son of God, divine love is so great that it keeps no record of wrongs. It does not seek friends, but it makes friends. All the accumulated love of eternity is freely given to unworthy sinful man. Man is invited to sit with the Lord on the throne of the universe. When God gave us His Son—for eternity—did He not demonstrate that love has great faith? There is no limit to love's faith.

Love begets love, and faith begets faith. When God's people see the everlasting gospel in its purity and power, they will think no evil of God henceforth and forever. That God could so love them and think no evil of them, that He could so put His faith in them, will be such a revelation of divine love that all unbelief will be blotted out of the human heart. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; . . . Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:1, 4).

When God indeed has such a people, who are settled in their faith in Him, who will no longer think evil of Him, then He will rejoice over a people who will be like Him. Sin will have been blotted out of their hearts' experience. Such saints will never sin again, for they would not distrust God sufficiently to sin again. Such people will not fail in the great day of test and trial, for love never faileth. The thoughts and feelings of sin, so long associated with the events of life, will not come into mind. This is the experience that God has for His children in the cleansing of the sanctuary brought to view in Daniel 8:14. This is what the apostle Peter calls the blotting out of sins. This is what the apostle Paul calls the perfecting of the conscience. This is what John the beloved calls being made perfect in the love which casts out all doubt and fear. This is what the Revelator calls the seal of the living God. This is what the prophet Joel calls the latter rain. This is what Ellen G. White calls the final atonement. It is the everlasting gospel, fully unfolded, fully experienced by those who live in this hour of His judgment.

## THE ESCHATOLOGY OF ACTS 3:19

Robert D. Brinsmead

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).

Since the first full treatise on the cleansing of the sanctuary by O.R.L. Crosier in the *Day Star Extra* of 1846, Seventh-day Adventist writers have consistently applied the blotting out of sins and the refreshing of Acts 3:19 to the judgment and the latter rain. This is found in many Adventist books, whether by Haskell, Smith, Jones, Gilbert, Branson, Andreason, or *Questions on Doctrine*. A perusal of the E.G. White index shows the same general application. In other words, Acts 3:19 has generally been given an eschatological (last-day) meaning.

It seems we would be unwise to exclude a limited, primary application to the text—meaning that Peter’s hearers could have their sins forgiven and their guilt removed immediately, and then be prepared to receive the refreshing impartation of the Holy Spirit. Interpreted this way, Acts 3:19 would be parallel to Acts 2:38: “. . . Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

The *S.D.A. Bible Commentary* recognizes that it would be legitimate to interpret Acts 3:19 both as having an immediate application and an eschatological application:

“The immediate result to those who accepted Peter’s call to repentance was the forgiveness of their sins. In this sense the blotting out of their sins may be regarded as having occurred immediately. In the ultimate sense, however, the final blotting out of sin takes place just before the second advent of Christ in connection with the close of Christ’s work as High Priest. Guilt for specific sins is canceled when they are confessed and forgiven; they are expunged from the record in the day of judgment.

“But in the perspective of God’s unfolding plans, particularly fulfilling prophecy, we can now see that in the most literal and

complete sense 'the last days' are our present days and that it is now we may rightly expect the coming of Christ. Likewise, we see that the great outpouring of God's Spirit, the mighty 'times of refreshing,' belong most particularly to our days, the days of 'the latter rain' (see on Joel 2:23). With equal propriety we may—and indeed, should—view the blotting out of sins as belonging to our time. Why separate it widely from the other two events that Peter said would take place? Indeed, when we study this subject of the blotting out of sins in the setting of Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary (see on Dan. 8:14), we discover that the actual blotting out of sins takes place in the last days of earth's history, immediately preceding Christ's coming. That these three events are tied together is made more evident by the RSV: 'Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ' (Acts 3:19, 20).”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, on Acts 3:19; Vol. 6, pp. 158-160.

We must remember that many prophetic passages of Scripture have a primary and a secondary application. Malachi 3:1-3 is applied in the New Testament to John the Baptist's preaching and Jesus coming to cleanse the temple. But the Spirit of Prophecy also applies it to the Advent Awakening and Christ's coming to the most holy place in 1844 (cf. *Great Controversy*, pp. 424-426).

It is here suggested that we should not dispute the right of any to give a local "daily" application to Acts 3:19. Only let us remember that it certainly has a vital eschatological message. Acts 3:19 applies with peculiar force to this time of judgment, latter rain, and the end of all things. Here we are on solid ground. The Spirit of Prophecy applies Acts 3:19 to the judgment and latter rain repeatedly (cf. *Great Controversy*, pp. 485, 611, 612). It has special meaning for us today, and we must be diligent to understand its eschatological message.

### The Order of Events

“. . . that your sins may be blotted out, *when* the times of refreshing shall come . . .”

The King James Version is almost alone in translating the Greek *hopōs an* as *when*. The *S.D.A. Bible Commentary* says:

“Lexicographers and grammarians are unanimous that *hopōs an* indicates purpose rather than time. *Hopōs*, with or without *an* (the meaning is not distinguished), occurs 56 times in the NT, and only here is it translated 'when.' Elsewhere it is translated 'how' (Matt. 22:15; Luke 24:20), 'so that' (Luke 16:26), 'because' (Acts 20:16), but most frequently it is translated 'that,' or by some other expression of purpose (Acts 8:15, 9:12, 17, 24; Rom. 3:4; etc.). Nowhere do the translators of the KJV introduce a time element except in Acts 3:19. Thus the present passage should read 'so that,' rather than 'when.' . . . the Greek should be translated, 'that your

sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord' (RSV).”—Vol. 6, pp. 158, 159.

Did the translators of the King James Version of the Bible render a completely false translation in this choice of *when* instead of *so that*, *that*, and *then*, etc.? We think not! In a fine article called *Thoughts on Acts 3:19*, Jerry Beadon makes these comments:

“This is the only time 'hopos' is translated 'when' in the A.V. 'When' can be understood in two ways: 'on the occasion that' or 'and then.' Some have sought to use the first meaning and to make the 'times of refreshing' an indefinite period after which the 'blotting out' takes place. But they would find it difficult to insist on this meaning.

“*The Oxford Dictionary*, giving the alternative meanings, 'in which case' 'whereupon' and 'then,' follows with this example from a medical journal of 1803: 'It may be opened with a needle *when* the fluid will run out.' Sometimes we are told that suddenness is implied so that we could understand 'when' to mean 'and just then,' 'and at that moment.' Another illustration is given: 'an inspector . . . tested the drain, *when* he found that the joints of the pipes were not properly cemented.'

“It would be unreasonable in the face of the Greek original and this adequate translation by 'when' to insist that the 'refreshing' did not follow the 'blotting out.' ”

“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19, RSV).

Is this Scripture setting forth a 1-2-3 order—i.e., conversion, blotting out of sins, latter rain? It is certainly possible and not unreasonable to read the passage in this direct way. However, a more exact and simple exposition may be suggested by asking, What is the antecedent of *hopōs an*? There is good evidence that the result clause introduced by *hopōs an* refers back to “repent ye therefore and be converted.” This being the case, Peter's words do not establish a 1-2-3 order, but simply a 1-2 order:

1. Repent ye therefore and be converted.
2. a. *That* your sins may be blotted out.
- b. *That* times of refreshing may come . . .

This means that we could alter the order of (a) and (b) without altering the meaning of the text:

1. Repent ye therefore and be converted
2. a. That times of refreshing may come
- b. That your sins may be blotted out.

Ellen G. White sometimes reversed the order of the clauses when citing Acts 3:19. Some examples are as follows:

### Orthodox Order

“Are we by repentance and confession sending our sins beforehand to Judgment, that they may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come?”—*Review and Herald*, August 28, 1883.

“Here are the ‘times of refreshing’ to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said, ‘Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out [in the investigative judgment], when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus.’” —*Great Controversy*, p. 612, 1888 edition (E.G. White’s insertions in brackets).

Therefore, it is clear that there is no point in disputing as to which comes first—the blotting out of sins or the latter rain. The preparation for one is the preparation for the other. When the sins of God’s people are sent to the judgment, the blotting out of sins and the latter rain will fall. They are unseparable blessings of the judgment.

### Conclusion

1. Acts 3:19 has an eschatological meaning.
2. In its eschatological meaning it points us to the judgment in the most holy place.
3. Our preparation for the blotting out of sin in the judgment is to repent and to be converted. Any man who is *converted* and remains in a state of conversion will stand in the judgment and receive the blotting out of sins.
4. Our preparation for the latter rain is to repent and to be converted, and those who remain converted will receive the perfecting latter rain.
5. Acts 3:19 certainly shows that the latter rain is *not* given to prepare for the judgment. Along with the blotting out of sins, it is the blessing of the judgment. The Spirit of Prophecy says that the latter rain empowers the saints to give the loud cry, fits them to live through the time of trouble, and prepares them for the Advent of Christ (*Early Writings*, pp. 71, 85, 86; *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 506). But no where does it suggest that the latter rain prepares us for the judgment. Those who expect the latter rain to prepare them for the judgment wait

### Reverse Order

“. . . that when the times of refreshing shall come, his sins may be blotted out, and his name retained in the book of life.”—*Review and Herald*, April 29, 1884.

“An effort was made to arouse them by presenting our true position in the antitypical day of atonement, when every man should afflict his soul before God, when sins should be confessed and go beforehand to Judgment, that when the times of refreshing shall come they may be blotted out.”—*Review and Herald*, October 21, 1884.

in vain. Rather, the latter rain is the blessing of the judgment (Joel 2; *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, pp. 179-183; Vol. 5, pp. 473-475).

6. Since the blotting out of sins is inseparably linked to the latter rain, and since the latter rain is a great final work of grace in the lives of the saints (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 506), it is forever certain that the blotting out of sins is a mighty experience. It is more than a judicial cleansing of a record of sin in heaven. It will blot out the record of sin from the minds of the saints (*Great Controversy*, p. 670; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 538, 202; *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 3, p. 135; Hebrews 10:1-31; Jeremiah 50:20).

7. John the Revelator calls this final work of grace the seal of the living God (Revelation 7:2-4). It will be the saints’ protection for the time when they must live without a Mediator in the heavenly sanctuary.

8. As surely as we live in the hour when His judgment is come (Revelation 14:7), just so surely do we live in the time when Jesus is waiting to blot out our sins and to give us the latter rain. The door to the most holy place is open (Revelation 3:8); we are invited to enter the sanctuary by faith to claim the benefit of His judgment ministrations. What is holding up the reception of these mighty blessings upon the church?

Just as soon as we thoroughly repent and turn to God, sending all our sins beforehand to the judgment, the High Priest can blot out our sins and give us the latter rain. In Acts 3:19 the purpose clause introduced by *hopōs an* implies suddenness. When God’s people make the needful preparation, the latter rain will come suddenly. Our High Priest will come suddenly with the blessing of the final atonement (Malachi 3:1-3). The Lord will come suddenly to reveal the closing glory of the gospel dispensation (Isaiah 40:2-9). The High Priest will not delay when the congregation repents and turns to Him with all their heart (Joel 2:15-28). Christ will answer suddenly with the abundant showers of the latter rain. What a promise! What a warning to be ready! Oh, for repentant hearts and converted lives in readiness for His sudden coming in judgment! The end of all things is surely upon us. To the sanctuary, O Israel (Joel 2:15-17)!