

My Sanctification

While Americans and others around the world mourn loss of life and property sustained in the September 11th twin-towers catastrophe in New York City—and still others collide over the proposed building of a mosque near ground zero, I have chosen to write about a much more serious and relevant matter.

My opening text is:

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: [Heb. 12:14]

The word “holiness” in the above text is the Greek *hagiasmos*. It is used ten times in the New Testament and half of the verses render it *sanctification*. The others are translated *holiness*. Then, we conceive of the two words being the same in principle. Therefore, we might rightly conclude, “Without sanctification, no man shall see YAHWEH.”

In Adventism, and particularly Seventh Day Adventism, there may have been few subjects more debated than sanctification. And this relates intimately with the doctrine we espouse using the words “victory over sin.” In our generation, few are accepting the teaching. Some can admit that we *should* be sanctified before Christ returns. They give mental assent to the verse from Hebrews above. However, they know not how to attain to this holiness.

My Sanctification is to be taken very seriously. For, without that experience, I can never see my Maker in peace. That being the case, I must make this experience a priority in life. I dare not “neglect so great salvation,” [Heb. 2:3] “For this is the will of God, even [my] sanctification.” [1 Thess. 4:3]

There are several definitions that could be given for “sanctification.” “Entire conformity to the will of our Father which is in heaven is alone sanctification, and the will of God is expressed in His holy law. The keeping of all the commandments of God is sanctification. Proving yourselves obedient children to God's word is sanctification.” [Review and Herald, March 25, 1902] I think this word of inspiration suffices.

“**Ye shall know them by their fruits.**” [Matt. 7:16a] We need no other evidence in order to judge a man's sanctification; if he is fearful lest he disobey the whole will of God, if he is listening diligently to YAH's voice, trusting in His wisdom, and making His Word his constant counsel, then, while the person makes no boasts of superior goodness, we may be sure that they are seeking to attain to perfection of Christian character. But, what about the “testimony of YAHSHUA?” Will this man have a testimony?

“And they overcame [the accuser of our brethren] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” [Rev. 12:11] “It is your privilege to trust in the love of Jesus for salvation, in the fullest, surest, noblest manner; to say, He loves me, He receives me; I will trust Him, for He gave His life for me. Nothing so dispels doubt as coming in contact with the character of Christ. He declares, ‘Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;’ that is, there is no possibility of My casting him out, for I have pledged My word to receive him. Take Christ at His word, and let your lips declare that you have gained the victory.” [Testimonies to Ministers, page 517] And what was the testimony of Ellen G. White?

When I was called upon to speak, I arose, free in spirit, with a heart full of love and peace. I told the story of my great suffering under the conviction of sin, how *I had at length received the blessing* so long sought, *an entire conformity to the will of God*, and expressed my joy in the tidings of the soon coming of my Redeemer to take His children home. [Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, page 35; italics supplied]

My Sanctification must follow the model of Bible sanctification. “Here is Bible sanctification. It is not merely a show or outside work. It is sanctification received through the channel of truth. It is truth received in the heart, and practically carried out in the life.” [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, page 339]

The work of sanctification is the work of a lifetime; it must go on continually; but this work cannot go on in the heart while the light on any part of the truth is rejected or neglected. The sanctified soul will not be content to remain in ignorance, but will desire to walk in the light and to seek for greater light. As a miner digs for gold and silver, so the follower of Christ will seek for truth as for hidden treasures, and will press from light to a greater light, ever increasing in knowledge. He will continually grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Self must be overcome. Every defect of character must be discerned in God's great mirror. [*Selected Messages Book 1*, page 317]

As Creation Seventh Day Adventists, we need to know and understand the beauty of holiness in the sanctuary service that is now in the final phase of atonement for fallen humanity. This sacred activity is paramount to *My Sanctification*, and I know of no better authority on this subject than the pioneer Seventh-day Adventist, M. L. Andreasen. Allow me to quote from portions of his historic work *The Sanctuary Service*. This book is available online in PDF format.

The final demonstration of what the gospel can do in and for humanity is still in the future (written in 1947). Christ showed the way. He took a human body, and in that body demonstrated the power of God. Men are to follow His example and prove that what God did in Christ, He can do in every human being who submits to Him. The world is awaiting this demonstration. (Romans 8: 19) When it has been accomplished, the end will come. God will have fulfilled His plan. He will have shown Himself true and Satan a liar. His government will stand vindicated. [...]

That the Bible inculcates holiness is indisputable. “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14. “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.” 1 Thessalonians .4:3. The Greek word *hagios* in its various forms is translated “sanctify,” “holy,” “holiness,” “sanctified,” “sanctification.” It is the same word which is used for the two apartments of the sanctuary, and means that which is set apart for God. A sanctified person is one who is set apart for God, whose whole life is dedicated to Him.

The plan of salvation must of necessity include not only forgiveness of sin but complete restoration. Salvation from sin is more than forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness presupposes sin and is conditioned upon breaking with it; sanctification is separation from sin and indicates deliverance from its power and victory over it. The first is a means to neutralize the effect of sin; the second is a restoration of power for complete victory.

Sin, like some diseases, leaves man in a deplorable condition—weak, despondent, disheartened. He has little control of his mind, his will fails him, and with the best of intentions he is unable to do what he knows to be right. He feels that there is no hope. He knows that he has himself to blame, and remorse fills his soul. To his bodily ailments is added the torture of conscience. He knows that he has sinned and is to blame. Will no one take pity on him?

Then comes the gospel. The good news is preached to him. Though his sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. All is forgiven. He is “saved.” What a wonderful deliverance it is! His mind is at rest. No longer does his conscience torment him. He has been forgiven. His sins are cast into the depths of the sea. His heart wells with praise to God for His mercy and goodness to him.

As a disabled ship towed to port is safe but not sound, so the man is “saved” but not sound. Repairs need to be made on the ship before it is pronounced seaworthy, and the man needs reconstruction before he is fully restored. This process of restoration is called sanctification, and includes in its finished product body, soul, and spirit. When the work is finished, the man is “holy,” completely sanctified, and restored to the image of God. It is for this demonstration of what the gospel can do for a man that the world is looking.

In the Bible both the process and the finished work are spoken of as sanctification.' For this reason the “brethren” are spoken of as holy and sanctified, though they have not attained to perfection. (1 Corinthians 1: 2; 2 Corinthians 1: 1; Hebrews 3:1) A glance through the Epistles to the Corinthians will soon convince one that the saints there mentioned had their faults. Despite this, they are said to be “sanctified” and “called to be saints.” The reason is that complete sanctification is not the work of a day or of a year but of a lifetime.

It begins the moment a person is converted, and continues through life. Every victory hastens the process. [...] As he has been victorious over one besetment, so he is to become victorious over every sin. When the work is completed, when he has gained the victory over pride, ambition, love of the world—over all evil—he is ready for translation. He has been tried in all points. The evil one has come to him and found nothing. Satan has no more temptations for him. He has overcome them all. He stands without fault before the throne of God. Christ places His

seal upon him. He is safe, and he is sound. God has finished His work in him. The demonstration of what God can do with humanity is complete.

Thus it shall be with the last generation of men living on the earth. Through them God's final demonstration of what He can do with humanity will be given. He will take the weakest of the weak, those bearing the sins of their forefathers, and in them show the power of God. They will be subjected to every temptation, but they will not yield. They will demonstrate that it is possible to live without sin—the very demonstration for which the world has been looking and for which God has been preparing. It will become evident to all that the gospel really can save to the uttermost. God is found true in His sayings. The last year of the conflict brings the final test; but this only proves to angels and to the world 'that nothing that the evil one can do will shake God's Chosen ones. The plagues fall, destruction is on every hand, death stares them in the face, but like Job they hold fast their integrity. Nothing can make them sin. They "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

Throughout the history of the world God has had His faithful ones. They have endured affliction and great tribulation. But even in the midst of Satan's buffetings they have, as the apostle Paul says, through faith "wrought righteousness." "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Hebrews 11:37, 38.

And in addition to this galaxy of faithful witnesses, many of whom were martyrs for their faith, God will have in the last days a remnant, "a little flock," in and through whom He will give to the universe a demonstration of His love, His power, His justice. Which, if we exempt Christ's godly life on earth and His supreme sacrifice on Calvary, will be, the most sweeping and conclusive demonstration of all the ages of what God can do in men.

It is in the last generation of men living on the earth that God's power unto sanctification will stand fully revealed. The demonstration of that power is God's vindication. It clears Him of any and all charges which Satan has placed against Him. In the last generation God is vindicated and Satan defeated.
[...]

All this is closely connected with the work of the Day of Atonement. On that day the people of Israel, having confessed their sins, were completely cleansed. They had already been forgiven; now sin was separated from them. They were holy and without blame. The camp of Israel was clean.

We are now living in the great antitypical day of the cleansing of the sanctuary. Every sin must be confessed and by faith be sent beforehand to judgment. As the high priest enters into the most holy, so God's people now are to stand face to face with God. They must know that every sin is confessed, that no stain of evil remains. The cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven is dependent upon the cleansing of God's people on earth. How important, then, that God's people be holy and without blame! In them every sin must be burned out, so that they will be able to stand in the sight of a holy God and live with the devouring fire.
[...]

What about the judgment of the righteous? It is evident that some kind of investigation must take place before they are permitted to enter into eternal bliss. It must be decided whether their life and attitude warrant entrusting them with eternal life; and this decision must be arrived at before the Lord comes to take them home. It is no more reasonable to save the righteous and afterward have a judgment than to damn the wicked and afterward place them before the bar. But there is one difference. The wicked are not destroyed until the end of the thousand years. (Revelation 20: 5) That gives abundant time to judge them after the Lord comes. But not so with the righteous. If they are to be judged at all, it any reward is to be meted out to them, their cases must be decided before the Lord comes. When He comes, His reward is with Him. (Revelation 22:12) Hence their status must be determined beforehand.
[...]

It seems eminently fitting that when the question of who are to be saved comes up, the angels should be present both to give their testimony and to follow the proceedings. (Daniel 7:9, 10) They have been vitally concerned in our welfare; they have been ministering spirits. Throughout the ages we are to associate and be with them, and they have a right to know who are to be admitted to the celestial abodes. This also is God's plan. The angels have experienced some of the results of sin. They have seen Lucifer apostatize. They have seen millions of angels go with him. They have seen the Savior suffer and die, and they know the misery which sin has caused. They are vitally interested in knowing who are to have eternal life. They have no desire to repeat the experience with sin through which they have passed. It is therefore God's wise plan that they have a part in the proceedings.

The Day of Atonement is a fit type of the day of judgment. It would be well for the reader to review the chapter on the Day of Atonement in the light of the present discussion. On that day there was a separation between the righteous and the wicked. The decision hinged entirely on who had confessed their sins and who had not. Those who had brought their offerings and complied with the ritual had their sins blotted out. The others were cut off.

We do not know of any record being kept in the sanctuary on earth as to who appeared during the year with a sacrifice. While possible, it is hardly likely that such a record was kept. We do know, however, that the blood placed on the horns of the altars (Jeremiah 17:1) in itself constituted a record. God had commanded sacrifices to be brought. We believe He respected His own command and took notice of those who served Him in truth and uprightness. In His book they were recorded as faithful.

Of the judgment of the last day is written this: "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:15. This text speaks definitely of the book of life, and says in effect that only those whose names are found in it are saved. Note the reading: "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life." This suggests an examination of the book to find which names are there recorded. "Whosoever was not found." What is this but an investigation? It is as though the command were given: "See whether this name is found in the book." The report comes back, "I have found it," or, "I have not found it." Either report indicates an investigation. The expression, "Whosoever was not found," justifies the contention that there is an examination of the record, resulting in a separation for salvation or condemnation.

[...]

God is ready for the challenge. He has bided His time. The supreme exhibition has been reserved until the final contest. Out of the last generation God will select His chosen ones. Not the strong or the mighty, not the honored or the rich, not the wise or the learned, but common, ordinary people will God take, and through and by them make His demonstration. Satan has claimed that those who in the past have served God have done so from mercenary motives--that God has pampered them, and that he, Satan, has not had free access to them. If he were given full permission to press his case, they also would be won over. But he charges that God is afraid to let him do this. "Give me a fair chance," Satan says, "and I will win out."

And so, to silence forever Satan's charges; to make it evident that His people are serving Him from motives of loyalty and right without reference to reward; to clear His own name and character of the charges of injustice and arbitrariness. And to show to angels and men that His law can be kept by the weakest of men under the most discouraging and most untoward circumstances, God permits Satan in the last generation to try His people to the utmost. They will be threatened, tortured, persecuted. They will stand face to face with death in the issuance of the decree to worship the beast and his image. (Revelation 13:15) But they will not yield. They are willing to die rather than to sin.

God removes His Spirit from the earth. Satan will have a greater measure of control than he has ever had before. True, he may not kill God's people, but that seems to be the only limitation. And he uses every permission he has. He knows what is at stake. It is now or never.

God, to make the demonstration complete, does one more thing. He hides Himself. The sanctuary in heaven is closed. The saints cry to God day and night for deliverance, but He appears not to hear. God's chosen ones are passing through Gethsemane. They are having a little taste of Christ's experience those three hours on the cross. Seemingly they must fight their battles alone. They must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor.

But though Christ has finished His intercession, the saints are still the object of God's love and care. Holy angels watch over them. God provides them shelter from their enemies; He provides them with food, shields them from destruction, and supplies grace and power for holy living. (See Psalms 91) Yet they are still in the world, still tempted, afflicted, and tormented.

Will they stand the test? To human eyes it seems impossible. If only God would come to their rescue, all would be well. They are determined to resist the evil one. If need be they will die, but they will not sin. Satan has no power--and never has had--to make any man sin. He can tempt, he can seduce, he can threaten; but he cannot compel. And now God demonstrates through the weakest of the weak that there is no excuse, and never has been any, for sinning. If men in the last generation can successfully repel Satan's attack; if they can do this with all the odds against them and the sanctuary closed, what excuse is there for men's ever sinning?

The 144,000

In the last generation God gives the final demonstration that men can keep the law of God and that they can live without sinning. God leaves nothing undone to make the demonstration complete. The only limitation put upon Satan is that he may not kill the saints of God. He may tempt them, he may harass and threaten them; and he does his best. But he fails. He cannot make them sin. They stand the test, and God puts His seal upon them.

Through the last generation of saints God stands finally vindicated. Through them He defeats Satan and wins His case. They form a vital part of the plan of God. They go through terrific struggles; they battle with unseen powers in high places. But they have put their trust in the Most High, and they will not be ashamed. They have suffered hunger and thirst, but now "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Revelation 7:16, 17.

They "follow the Lamb whither so ever He goes." Revelation 14:4. When at last the doors of the temple shall swing open, a voice will sound forth: "Only the 144,000 enter this place." - *Early Writings*, page 19. By faith they have followed the Lamb here. They have gone with Him into the holy place; they have followed Him into the most holy. And in the hereafter only those who have thus followed Him here will follow Him there. They will be kings and priests. They will follow Him into the most holy, where only the High Priest can ever enter. They will stand in the unveiled presence of God. They shall follow Him "whither so ever He goes." They will not only be "before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple," but they will sit with Him in His throne, even as He also overcame, and is set down with His Father in His throne. (Revelation 7:15; 3:21)

The matter of greatest importance in the universe is not the salvation of men, important as that may seem. The most important thing is the clearing of God's name from the false accusations made by Satan. The controversy is drawing to a close. God is preparing His people for the last great conflict. Satan is also getting ready. The issue is before us and will be decided in the lives of God's people. God is depending upon us as He did upon Job. Is His confidence well placed?

It is a wonderful privilege vouchsafed this people to help clear God's name by our testimony. It is wonderful that we are permitted to testify for Him. It must never be forgotten, however, that this testimony is a testimony of life, not merely of words. "In Him was life. And the life was the light of men." John 1:11. "The life was the light." It was so with Christ, it must also be so with us. Our life should be a light, as His life was. To give people the light is more than to hand them a tract. Our life is the light. As we live, we give light to others, Without life, without our living the light, our words abide alone. But as our life becomes light, our words become effective. It is our life that must testify for God.

May the church of God appreciate the exalted privilege given here "You are My witnesses, said the Lord." Isaiah 43: 10. There must be "no strange god among you: therefore you are My witnesses, said the Lord, that I am God." (Verse 12) May we be witnesses indeed, testifying what God has done for us!

It is wonderful to read such inspiring words from a Seventh-day Adventist, and that, coming from the year 1947. Will you find such a teaching published by the false shepherds of our day? There may be a few "old men" remaining who know and advocate the truth, but they are almost completely deceased. Surely, none of them remain as employees of the General Conference international organization.

During today's online CSDA Sabbath study, Bro. David Aguilar said, "Now, sanctification is a process of maintaining justification by the continued discovery and elimination of errors in our thinking and flaws in our spirits." I really appreciated this statement for its "comprehensive simplicity."

God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. [...] Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation. [*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, page 187]

In terms of a prophetic timeline, we are standing on the very "borders of the Heavenly Canaan." *My Sanctification* on planet earth will be completed upon receiving the most-desired "seal of the living God."

Those who think they are pleasing God by obeying some other law than his, and by performing works other than those the gospel has enjoined, are mocking God. They are insulting the Holy One of Israel. Warning after warning has been given. Appeal after appeal is made in the last message of mercy given to the world. Loath to give up, hoping, sorrowfully hoping, Christ knocks for the last time at the door of the heart. Men and women are given a final test. The worst of sinners are to hear the message of mercy. God will prove who will receive his seal or mark. [*The Kress Collection*, page 153]

Let us yoke up with Christ as He "knocks for the last time at the door of the heart." We are invited to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." [Rev. 14:4] Justification is available to all, and sanctification is awaiting its partakers. A short time remains in the grand plan of redemption for fallen humanity and the vindication of YAH's character.

My Sanctification and yours continue in process awaiting "the great final test." "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." [1Thess. 5:23; KJV]

Writing from Africa
Pastor "Chick" McGill
September 11, 2010