

Chapter 2

CAN WE SEE OURSELVES IN HISTORY?

A well-known theologian pointed out some four decades ago that we do not have the luxury of undoing what our fathers have done even though our fathers had the freedom to take another course of action. Thus the past is present with us and has irrevocable finality. The less the past is known the greater the danger we will repeat what should not have been done previously.¹ As a church, can we see ourselves in history?

The Jews were content to perceive their whole existence in the light of a "nation" that was to make a temporal place for themselves and subdue all others. They hoped Messiah would do for the nation what the nation had not accomplished in many centuries. But their ears did not hear what Messiah said when He arrived.

Far too many Seventh-day Adventists are content to see their place as an ever larger church with increasing acceptance around the world. If institutions of fame can be built and maintained and if government sponsorship can be obtained in far-off countries, we hope our place can be assured. Sufficient recognition will certainly prevent us from being classified as a "cult."

But we forget Jesus was born in a stable. His humble beginnings would not please the norm of the world. There was a place in prophecy for Him to fill regardless of worldly reputation. His fame would not be built upon standards set by men. His credentials were to be found in His message.

In a similar way Adventists were born in poverty. We must fully appreciate our credentials. At a time when we were not yet conceived, even before we were embryonic, but according to God's plan, devout men in different lands simultaneously were quickened to search the Scriptures. Under conviction, they were constrained to study and know about the second advent of Christ.²

The most prominent spokesman in the Western hemisphere was the farmer/preacher, William Miller, who we must claim as our forefather in the Advent faith. He reasoned that if the prophecies which have been fulfilled in the past provide a key to understanding those yet to be fulfilled, there had to be a literal second advent of Christ. And that advent centered around the text in Daniel: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (8:14).

The zeal, love and devotion which attended the preaching of the return of Christ in the early 1840s present a picture to be copied and put us to shame. Men of ability, wealth, and educational attainment took their stand with the cause. All moved forward with the firm and definite conviction that on October 22, 1844, Jesus Christ would appear in the clouds, return to this earth and take the righteous saints unto Himself into heaven. But it didn't happen. However, with the bitter Disappointment the historical facts stood and nine years later, J. N. Andrews wrote in regard to the date of October 22: "The man does not live who can overthrow the chronological argument which terminates the 2300 days at that time."³

Before Miller took to the public platform, following fourteen years of study, he wrote in one of his many hundred letters his conviction which Adventists should appreciate today:

The 1st proof we have, as it respects Christ's 2nd coming as to time, is in Dan'l, 8.14. 'unto 2300 days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed'—by days we are to understand years, sanctuary we understand the church; cleansed we may reasonably suppose means that compleat redemption from sin, both soul and body, after the resurrection, when Christ comes the 2nd time 'without sin unto salvation.'⁴

We should note especially that he says, "by . . . sanctuary we understand the church." This is uniquely important in under-

standing the final atonement, a work for God's people, the church, the New Jerusalem. Miller's understanding of the "church" came to him out of his Bible study.

The Disappointment

Hundreds of thousands of tracts, pamphlets and broadsides had been published. The last sermon had been preached. Debts had been paid and all accounts settled. It was October 22, 1844, the day Christ was to return. The morning came, the afternoon, and then the dark night and finally the clock moved past midnight. He did not return. The despair of the believers knew no bounds. Tears flowed freely.

Hiram Edson, a leading believer of the time, passed through the experience. In a handwritten account he poured out his grief to be read with great sympathy by those who often glibly refer to the advent in our time. Can we appreciate their despair? Can we put ourselves in this history? Consider his account:

The day then passed and our disappointment became a certainty. Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept, and wept, till the day dawn.

I mused in my own heart, saying, my advent experience has been the richest and brightest of all my christian experience. If this had proved a failure, what was the rest of my christian experience worth? Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God,—no heaven,—no golden home city,—no paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hope and expectation of these things? And thus we had something to grieve and weep over, if all our fond hopes were lost. And as I said, we wept till the day dawn.⁵

After the Disappointment the believers turned with deepened study to what actually happened in 1844—how type and antitype were to be understood. The conviction could not be shaken that God had been with the movement. The evidence had been seen on every hand in the changed lives. On the following morning, October 23rd, Hiram Edson with others, probably Dr. F. B. Hahn and O. R. L. Crosier, were together in prayer asking for light in their distress. Edson portrays their experience with deep meaning:

After breakfast I said to one of my brethren, "Let us go and see, and encourage some of the br[ethre]n." We started and while passing through a large field I was stopped about midway of the field. Heaven seemed open to my

view, and I saw distinctly, and clearly, that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth-day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, that he for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary; and that he had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth, that he came to the marriage at that time; in other words, to the Ancient of days, to receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory; and we must wait for his return *from the wedding*; and my mind was directed to the tenth ch[apter] of Rev. where I could see the vision had spoken and did not lie; the seventh angel had begun to sound; we had eaten the little book, it had been sweet in our mouth, it had become bitter in our belly, embittering our whole being. That we must prophecy again &c., and that when the seventh angel began to sound, the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament, &c.

While I was thus standing in the midst of the field, my comrade passed on almost beyond speaking distance before missing me. He inquired, Why I was stopping so long? I replied, "The Lord was answering our morning prayer by giving light with regard to our disappointment." I talked these things to my br[ethre]n.⁶

It is this testimony of a man who went through the Disappointment that turns the Evangelicals off. They call this a "face saving" proposition. But is it reasonable that people who had wept all night because of sanctified grief at not seeing the Lord return should make up a hoax to foist off on their own friends and fellow-believers? Such a charge is illogical, heartless and unjustified. It will not stand up in the face of sacred history and the symbology given to the Jews and confirmed by the True Lamb on Calvary.

Their disappointment did not prevent their further study. Fifteen months later, O. R. L. Crosier published in *The Day-Star Extra* of February 7, 1846, a full treatment of the sanctuary services and their meaning. It was to this article that Ellen White made reference on April 21, 1847. She clearly endorsed Crosier's presentation with these words:

The Lord shew[ed] me in vision, more than a year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, &c; and that it was his will, that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in the *Day-Star Extra*, February 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that Extra, to every saint.⁷

Today Crosier's presentation is known by only a few Adventists. It remains primarily a document in the archives, but it was

based soundly upon the Scriptures and the pattern ancient Israel had understood for centuries. It contains a number of deep insights that Adventists need today.

How Crosier Saw the Light

If every Adventist would study and grasp the importance of what Crosier said, there would be a revival in the church today. His presentation would cancel the doubt many seem to have about the unique place our church has to fill. Time has only enhanced the value of what he said. His article was over seven pages long, three columns wide and set in small type. Some of his key thoughts are listed here and numbered for easy reference:⁸

1. "The Sanctuary was the heart of the typical system." The Lord did not tell "Daniel *what* sanctuary was to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days, but called it THE SANCTUARY."

2. In contradistinction to this sanctuary was the sanctuary of the Old Testament. "This, Paul calls the Sanctuary of the first covenant, 'which was a figure for the time then present'" (Hebrews 9:1, 9).

3. When Christ ascended He became "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:2). This is the sanctuary of the "better covenant" or the new covenant (vs. 6). "The Sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days is also *the Sanctuary* of the new covenant." "The true tabernacle which forms a part of the new covenant Sanctuary, was made and pitched by the Lord, in contradistinction to that of the first covenant which was made and pitched by man." And what is it that the Lord pitched? "A city which hath foundation whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). "What is its name? 'The heavenly Jerusalem.'" "The Sanctuary of the new covenant is connected with the New Jerusalem, like the Sanctuary of the first covenant was with Old Jerusalem."

4. The priesthood of the worldly sanctuary or first covenant belonged to the sons of Levi, but that of the heavenly sanctuary to the better covenant of the Son of God. Christ fulfills the priesthood of both Melchizedek and Aaron. He took upon Himself flesh

and blood, and was the seed of Abraham. He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," and He was made "perfect through suffering," and "it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest."

5. The ceremonies of the Levitical priesthood did not perfect those for whom they were performed. These ceremonies were divided between the daily service and the yearly service. The daily service did not atone for the sins either individually or collectively, but was a continual intercession. The making of atonement was a special work for which special directions were given. Christ was to "purge our conscience" and to "perfect for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 9:13, 14; 10:14).

6. The daily ministrations were different from the yearly made on the 10th day of the 7th month. In making the former, the priest went into the Holy Place, but for the latter he went into the holy of holies. The former was for the individual cases; the latter was for the entire nation, the corporate body. "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." Thus the latter was for Israel the most important day of the year, when by blood the sanctuary was cleansed within. Likewise the new covenant sanctuary is cleansed.

7. The work on the tenth day of the seventh month was for the blotting out of sins and this could not take place until the end of the 2300 days. Men have taught that the atonement "was made and finished on Calvary, when the Lamb of God expired." The churches and the world believe this, but "it is none the more true or sacred on that account, if unsupported by Divine authority."

(1) "If the atonement was made on Calvary, by whom was it made? The making of the atonement is the work of a Priest; but who officiated at Calvary?"

(2) "The slaying of the victim was not making the atonement; the sinner slew the victim, Lev. 4:1-4, 13-15, &c., after that the Priest took the blood and made atonement. Lev. 4:5-15, 16-21.

(3) "Christ was the appointed High Priest to make atonement, and he certainly could not have acted in that capacity till after his resurrection, and we have no record of his doing anything on earth after his resurrection, which could be called the atonement.

(4) "The atonement was made in the Sanctuary, but Calvary was not such a place.

(5) "He could not, according to Heb. 8:4, make the atonement while on earth, 'If he were on earth, he should not be a Priest.' The Levitical was the

earthly priesthood; the Divine, the heavenly.

(6) "Therefore, he did not begin the work of making atonement, whatever the nature of the work may be, till after his ascension, when by his own blood he entered his heavenly Sanctuary for us."

8. "In the heavenly Sanctuary our High Priest makes atonement with his own blood and we are forgiven" (1 Peter 2:24). The object of the atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month, was "to *cleanse* the people, that they might be *clean* from all their sins 'before the Lord'" (Leviticus 16:30). "The people were themselves freed from their sins by the atonement previously made for them individually in the Holy, to prepare them for the yearly cleansing." It is clear that it was "moral rather than physical uncleanness that defiled the sanctuary in the sight of the Lord."

9. Under the daily ministrations of the priests, it was the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; but under the new covenant it is the blood of Christ that purges the conscience. There, "the necessity of cleansing the heavenly things is induced by the atonement being made therein by the blood of Christ for the remission or forgiveness of sins and the purifying of our conscience" (Hebrews 9:22, 25).

10. After the sanctuary was cleansed the sins were put on the head of the scapegoat. This does not represent Christ, but rather Satan because, (a) the goat was not sent away until after the High Priest had made an end of cleansing the sanctuary (Leviticus 16:20, 21); (b) it was sent into a land not inhabited and thus could not be heaven wherein Christ entered; (c) the goat received and retained all the iniquities of Israel but when Christ appears the second time He will be "without sin;" (d) the goat received the iniquities from the hands of the priest and he sent it away and so the goat must be something other than Himself which is sent away; (e) this goat was not sacrificed; its only office was to receive the iniquities and take them into a land not inhabited leaving the sanctuary, the priest and people free from their iniquities after the sanctuary was cleansed (Leviticus 16:7-10, 22); (f) the Hebrew name of the scapegoat is Azazel which is the name of the devil; (g) at the appearance of Christ and the beginning of the millennium, Satan is bound which is symbolized by the goat being sent into a land uninhabited.

11. The sanctuary must be cleansed before Christ can return because His last "action bearing the sins of many is to bear them from the Sanctuary after he has cleansed it." Likewise another

event must take place, that of the marriage of the Bridegroom, which accounts for the cry in 1844, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh."

This article, although published nearly two decades before the Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized in 1863, continues to be of great importance. The increasingly aberrant theology in our church today cannot stand before the well-reasoned, Bible supported view of Crosier and endorsed by Ellen White. There is reason to believe when these fundamentals are understood by the church, it will be able to fill its appointed place—the Bride will "make herself ready" to be married.

¹ See: Reinhold Niebuhr, *Faith and History*, (New York, 1949) pp. 19, 20.

² See: Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*, (Washington, D.C., 1944) pp. 9, *et. seq.*

³ J. N. Andrews, *The Sanctuary and Twenty-three Hundred Days*, (Battle Creek, Michigan, second ed. 1872) p. 29; original ed. 1853.

⁴ Manuscript, "A Few Evidences of the Time of the 2nd Coming of Christ to Eldr. Andrus by Wm. Miller," February 15, 1831.

⁵ Hiram Edson, handwritten manuscript relative to the Disappointment.

⁶ Edson, *ibid.*

⁷ James and Ellen White, *A Word to the "Little Flock."* (Brunswick, Maine, 1847) p. 12.

⁸ O. R. L. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," *The Day-Star Extra*, (Cincinnati, Ohio) February 7, 1846, pp. 37-44.