ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:
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• Zechariah’s Lampstand
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• Perfection In Christ
• The Resurrection: From the Book The Coming King By James Edson White
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"The Protestant churches are in great darkness, or they would discern the signs of the times."

The National Catholic Register is a key paper for the Roman Catholic Church. I have recently begun my subscription to that newspaper to keep up with what is taking place in the Catholic Church. So far I have received two newspapers, and both are filled with pleas for religious liberty for the Catholic Church in relation to the new health care act. Will copies of this newspaper be of value to Seventh-day Adventists when persecution comes in relation to Sunday laws that are predicted in prophecy?

In the latest edition of the ‘Register’, July 1-14, 2012, there are several stories that are worth saving for future reference. The headline is “Religious Liberty Dominates Bishops’ Meeting in Atlanta.” In the body of the article, we read, “Archbishop Lori delivered the opening statement June 13 at the bishops’ conference spring meeting. The address marked the start of a spirited interlude of speeches and discussions on domestic religious-liberty concerns, followed by two presentations on threats to international religious freedom abroad.”

There is a ‘Quote of the week’ also on the front page by Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, in a personal interview: “The better we live our Catholic faith, the better we serve our country. Love of God and love of Country go hand in hand…. You can’t sit back and allow injustice to have free reign. You have to be proactive and stand up for your beliefs and for the good of society.”

This seems to be excellent advice for Seventh-day Adventists, although directed at Catholics. Will it hold true when Sunday versus Saturday, the true Sabbath, becomes the issue?

On page three of this same newspaper, there is an article entitled, ‘Americans stand up for Religious Freedom’. The first paragraph reads, “On the 223rd anniversary of when James Madison introduced the Bill of Rights to the First Congress more than 75,000 Americans throughout the country gathered June 8 to protect, defend and exercise those rights at the nationwide Stand Up for Religious Freedom rallies.” Will those same, or any other, Americans stand up for the rights of Seventh-day Adventists when Sunday legislation becomes the issue?

In the book, Great Controversy, we read the following: “The papal church will never relinquish her claim to infallibility. All that she has done in her persecution of those who reject her dogmas she holds to be right; and would she not repeat the same acts, should the opportunity be presented? Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution.”

“Religious liberty is merely endured in the United States does not imply a change of heart. She is tolerant where she is helpless. Says Bishop O’Connor: ‘Religious liberty is merely endured until the opposite can be carried into effect without peril to the Catholic world.’ The archbishop of St. Louis once said: ‘Heresy and unbelief are crimes; and in Christian countries, as in Italy and Spain, for instance, where all the people are Catholics, and where the Catholic religion is an essential part of the law of the land, they are punished as other crimes.’

“Every cardinal, archbishop, and bishop in the Catholic Church takes an oath of allegiance to the pope, in which occur the following words: ‘Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our said lord (the pope), or his aforesaid successors, I will to my utmost persecute and oppose.’”--Josiah Strong, Our Country, ch. 5, pars. 2-4.

“But Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ now than at any former period in her history. The Protestant churches are in great darkness, or they would discern the signs of the times. The Roman Church is far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation. She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to regain control of the world, to re-establish persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done.” GC 564-565.
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ON THE PLAIN OF DURA

By Patricia J. Smith

By the immense image he set up on the plain of Dura, King Nebuchadnezzar issued a defiant challenge to the God of heaven and the truth he had been shown in his dream and in the interpretation thereof. The truth concerning the image was that only the head was to be made of gold, representing Babylon. The breast and arms were to be of silver, showing that another nation, Medo-Persia, would arise after Babylon and rule the world. The third world kingdom, symbolized by the belly and thighs of brass, was Greece. After Greece, the fourth world kingdom would rule, which was Rome in its two phases as shown by the legs of iron. After Rome passed off the scene of history, there would not be a fifth world kingdom, but the territory and power of Rome would be split between ten nations in Europe, represented by the 10 toes of the image, made of iron and clay. In the days of these kings, Christ’s kingdom, of which the stone cut out without hands was a symbol, would be set up, and smite the image on his feet, and so destroy the entire system of worldly rulers. The stone then would become a great mountain and fill the whole earth.

**Nebuchadnezzar’s Rebellion Was Like that of Lucifer**

After declaring all of this to the king, Daniel further told him regarding the kingdom of God that would be set up, “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” Daniel 2:44.

When he set up his gigantic image on Dura’s plain, Nebuchadnezzar emphatically declared, as did Lucifer in the heavenly courts, “I will be like the Most High.” Isaiah 14:14. He was saying by this action that it was his kingdom that would rule forever, not the kingdom of God. He was showing that Babylon would not pass away, as the God of heaven declared it would. Instead it would stand and rule forever, never being conquered by any other nation. All this was entailed in his setting up his golden image in Dura that day.

**God’s Authority Was Directly Challenged by Nebuchadnezzar**

King Nebuchadnezzar was also rebelling against another truth revealed to him in the lives of the four faithful Hebrew captives and in the God-given interpretation of his dream - images are not to be worshiped or bowed down to. Never once in the telling of the dream or in the interpretation was worship of the image ever mentioned.

By the golden image and the forceful decree that all the leaders of the provinces that were assembled there must fall down at the sound of music and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set
up, or perish in a fiery furnace, God’s authority was directly challenged and human kingly power was made supreme. He reinterpreted his dream and forced everyone to go along with the false interpretation. The king also forgot the stirring truth he had himself declared after Daniel had, by God’s power, interpreted his puzzling, impossible-to-recall dream. He had answered unto Daniel at that time, “Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou coudest reveal this secret.” Daniel 2:47. How soon was truth forgotten, and he returned to his pride and self-exaltation!

**The Plain of Dura will be an end-time experience for commandment keepers**

Serious Bible students recognize that the book of Daniel is a prophetic book for these last days, and see in the history that took place on the plain of Dura at the dedication of the image, a sobering foreshadowing of future events that are shortly to come to pass in the greatest testing of the loyalty of God’s commandment-keeping people.

As in every stage of the great controversy war with Satan and evil, God had His loyal subjects there that day on the plain of Dura. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were Hebrew captives who had already proven themselves faithful to God in the matter of diet, and along with Daniel, God had blessed them to be ten times better than all of Nebuchadnezzar’s magicians and astrologers. It was at Daniel’s request after he had interpreted the dream that his three friends were set over the affairs of the province of Babylon.

**The king’s image went directly against the truth of God**

Now, Daniel’s three companions faced the greatest challenge of their lives. They saw the dazzling 90 foot image of gold that the king had set up. They watched as it was eagerly received by the crowd, and heard the shouts and calls of admiration, but they knew that it was a daring symbol of rebellion against the God of heaven, and the secret He had revealed to the king and had interpreted through Daniel. They, along with the rest of the assembled rulers, heard the herald cry aloud, declaring that at the sound of the music, they must all fall down and worship the golden image that the king had set up.

That, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah knew they could not do, even though they had heard after this declaration, a threat of a fiery death in a burning furnace for anyone who disobeyed and did not bow down. Just as the king’s image went directly against the truth God had shown to him in the night vision, so his decree enforcing worship of his golden image was in direct violation of the second commandment given by the God of heaven which forbade the making and worship of any graven image by His faithful and loyal followers.

**The three young Hebrews knew their posture had to be distinctive from that of all the others in attendance**

At that moment, in the few minutes that lingered before the music played, the three Hebrews determined to remain obedient to the God of heaven and to the truthful interpretation of the king’s dream as given through Daniel, God’s prophet. They determined not to compromise in the least with the king’s demand, not even to bend down to tie a shoe
latchet, or to pick up something from the ground. They knew full well that in order for them to be clearly on the side of their God and His truth, there must be an obvious distinction between their posture and that of those who bowed low in obedience to the decree of Nebuchadnezzar. No one from the king himself to the last person in that vast throng, must be confused about whether or not they bowed down. So when the music played and the vast throng fell to their knees before the image and worshipped, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah remained upright, fearlessly and yet humbly obeying the King of heaven instead of the king of Babylon.

**Trust in the Promises of God, They Stood Firm**

Because they had remained loyal to the God of heaven and His commandments, they knew they could claim His promises of protection given in the Holy Scriptures. As they were brought before King Nebuchadnezzar by the Chaldeans, perhaps the words of Isaiah 43:1, 2 flashed through their minds - “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

Emboldened by God’s Holy Word and the memory of His deliverance in the past, they did not hesitate to answer the king truthfully when he inquired of them if they would bow down if given a second chance. The fact that Nebuchadnezzar offered them another chance to obey and escape the threatened fiery furnace clearly indicates the godly witness of the three Hebrew captives. The king so valued the work they had done as rulers over the affairs of Babylon that he did not want to lose them, even though there was eyewitness evidence against them.

**The Love of God Casts Out All Fear**

The king’s offer was generous, but Daniel’s three friends recognized it for what it really was—a clever temptation designed by the enemy of all souls to play upon their natural fear of death and lead them to cave in to the threat of Nebuchadnezzar, thus compromising God’s truth.

What the king did not know was that the love of God had already cast out all fear from their hearts when they had first taken their bold stand. Now they did not fear the king or his renewed threat of death. In confidence of their God’s care for them, they declared to the king that they would not bow to his image, for if He so choose, their God could deliver them from the burning fiery furnace, But even if He allowed them to perish in the flames, they emphatically declared that they would not serve Nebuchadnezzar’s gods, nor worship the golden image which he had set up.

**Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah Chose to Obey God Rather Than Man**

The die was cast. Let the king do as he threatened. They would not budge from loyalty to the God of heaven under any circumstances, or for any consideration. They would not follow the majority, but would obey the word of the Lord as written. Because they had no fear of the people, the fact that the golden image was beautiful, well-liked and popular with that vast throng had no weight with them and no bearing on their decision. Standing on the word of God, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah knew that none of these considerations made it right in the sight of God to bow before the image. Like Peter and the other apostles centuries later, they chose to obey God rather than men.

**God Performed a Saving Miracle Because of Their Obedience**

Then the king’s fury burned against them and he commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than normal. The three Hebrews steadfastly refused to worship his golden image and scorned his kindness and generosity. They must die! Next, he ordered the strongest men in his army to throw the bound Hebrews into the furnace. Bound in their coats, hose, and hats along with their other garments, God’s loyal witnesses were
cast by these mighty soldiers into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. What then took place testified of just how mighty a miracle the God of the Hebrews performed when they later emerged untouched by the flames. Outside the fiery furnace, the flames were so exceedingly hot that the men who cast in Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were slain by its heat, even though they never set foot in the furnace!

With God, giants are conquered and foes are destroyed

Truly, as the Holy Scriptures declare, “With God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26. With God on their side, His obedient people rode safely through a world-wide flood that destroyed the world of the ungodly; they passed unscathed through Egypt’s ten horrific plagues and they walked on dry ground through the Red Sea to the other bank, while their enemies perished in the waves attempting to follow them. With God giants are conquered, cities are overthrown; fire falls from heaven and consumes sacrifices. Foes are destroyed while God’s faithful are untouched.

Conversely, without God, one is fighting a losing battle, for in the end, righteousness will prevail. Throughout the scriptures this truth is demonstrated time and again, and Gamaliel, a Pharisee, a doctor of the law and a member of the Jewish council, gave this advice acknowledging this truth to those who opposed the apostles, saying, “And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found to fight against God.” Acts 5:38, 39.

God’s purposes cannot be overthrown

Even before they were spoken, the truth of Gamaliel’s words was proven centuries before by King Nebuchadnezzar’s experience on the plain of Dura. God’s purposes cannot be overthrown, even by a furnace that is heated to the max. Before Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were thrown in the burning fiery furnace, the king thought they were his servants who should obey him and worship his golden image. But their escape from the power of the flame taught him whose servants they truly were. As they walked unharmed in the exceedingly hot furnace, accompanied by Christ, the pre-incarnate Son of God, King Nebuchadnezzar called them to come out, using the Babylonian names he had given them. “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came forth of the midst of the fire.” Daniel 3:26.

This miraculous deliverance of God’s faithful servants was seen and acknowledged by the king, his captains, princes, governors, and counselors, as the fire had no power over their bodies and not even the smell of fire had passed on to them. The history of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah closes in the Sacred Record with their triumph with God in His mighty victory of His truth over daring satanic rebellion and His delivering power over a cruel death decree.

God’s remnant people must all stand on their own Plain of Dura

In these last days, God’s people will once again experience a stupendous victory of truth over error and be rescued from a worldwide sentence of death. But before the close of this world’s history and deliverance of God’s faithful saints, His remnant people must stand on their own Plain of Dura. History will be repeated as they face another dazzling, popular, immense and well-received idol set up by secular and religious authorities in place of the truth of the God of heaven. Just as the worship of Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image transgressed the second commandment of the Decalogue, so this idol sabbath that will be set up will violate the fourth commandment of the same Decalogue given by God Himself. Here, in the greatest nation on earth, the popular “Lord’s Day” will be officially set up in the place of the true Biblical Sabbath. “History will be repeated. False religion will be exalted. The first day of the week, a common working day, possessing no sanctity whatever, will be set up as was the image at Babylon. All nations and tongues and peoples will be commanded to worship this spurious Sabbath. This is Satan’s plan to make of no account the day instituted by God, and given to the world as a memorial of creation. The decree enforcing the worship of this day is to go forth to all the world. In a limited degree, it has already gone forth. In several places the civil power is speaking
with the voice of a dragon, just as the heathen king spoke to the Hebrew captives.” ST May 6, 1897.

**Force is the last resort of every false religion**

“Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship this false sabbath. Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them. So it will be now. The papacy has exercised her power to compel men to obey her, and she will continue to do so. We need the same spirit that was manifested by God’s servants in the conflict with paganism.” ST May 6, 1897.

**There will be martyrs for Christ’s truths before the final death decree is issued**

All the Biblical evidence supporting the truth of God’s Holy Sabbath being the last day of the week will continue to be ignored, as was the dream of the king and the true interpretation given through Daniel, God’s prophet. Instead, the idol Sunday Sabbath, the child of the Universal church, will be set up as the day that all should go to church and honor. No scripture, no “thus saith the Lord” will be given to support this national law, for there is no Biblical evidence on the side of this heaven-defying rebellion. Instead of God’s word, like King Nebuchadnezzar, the leading authorities will use force and ungodly threats to compel all to obey. And as in the Dark Ages, some believers will be called upon to pay the ultimate price for their honoring and acknowledging only the Biblical Sabbath. Here the future diverges from the history on the Plain of Dura, for there will be martyrs for Christ’s truth before the final death decree. Christ foretold this Himself in John 16:2.

**Compromise breeds compromise**

All of God’s professed commandment-keeping people will then be placed on trial as were Hananiah, Michaeal and Azariah. As their prior faithfulness to God’s word in regard to diet enabled them to stand the greater test before the image, so faithfulness to God’s word now will enable all who believe His truth, especially present truth, to stand this future, more direct challenge on the truth and its practice. Compromising now with any belief or practice that is not clearly founded in scripture prepares the soul to accept the idol Sabbath when it is forced home to the conscience. Compromise breeds compromise, but obedience breeds obedience.

**Do we dare compromise the truth?**

Only the faithful people of God who firmly resist all popular compromise with evil now will be able to stand firmly during the future test. The choice is ours - will we obey God now in all things, letting His word alone be the man of our counsel, or shall we compromise the truth, obeying instead the voice of finite men and the will of the majority, disregarding what the word of God says? It is only in danger to our souls that we court the favor of any man in any church or organization who teaches contrary to the word of God.

Hananiah, Michaeal, and Azariah did not court the favor of any man above the God of heaven and His Holy Word. They did not even seek to compromise with the king of Babylon, the greatest king over the greatest nation on earth at that time, to save their lives. They stood as faithful witnesses to the truth of God’s word, in whatever circumstances they found themselves. And the God whom they served delivered them and preserved their lives.

**May we be found faithful**

In the future, intensified conflict with evil, God again will protect those who stand stiffly for His truth. To His tried and faithful believers, He gives this comforting promise, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” Isaiah 26:20. May you, dear reader, and may I, be counted among His faithful people who are found in the chambers of God’s protection in that time is my earnest prayer.

*Patricia is a second-generation SDA writer who loves to study and share the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. She enjoys biking, rock collecting, and spending time with family. She resides in Louisiana with her husband and two children.*
Out of the Depths

By Jessie Hocker
(College View, Washington)

“Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord” Ps. 130:1

“Out of the depths;” O weary heart,
While from sad eyes the tear drops start,
   Striving to hide its woe in part,
      “Out of the depths.”

Out of a life all marred by sin,
Hardened to love by earth’s rude din.
Hearing no heavenly song within,
   “Out of the depths.”

Into the depths, God’s love divine
Striveth to ever the heart entwine,
Seeking to lift the souls that pine,
   “Out of the depths.”

Out from the noise of worldly things,
Into the peace God’s presence brings,
List to the song the glad heart sings,
   “Out of the depths.”

Out forever from Satan’s hold,
Into the peace of God’s pure fold.
Hark! far and near the story is told;
   “Out of the depths.”
Do they not know that idle talk and gossip are offensive to God?

In Numbers 12 is the account of Aaron’s and Miriam’s conduct when they spoke against Moses. “And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it.” Every envious feeling, every jealousy cherished, is known to the Lord; for he reads the heart, and he hears every word spoken against those upon whom he has laid the burden of the work. How much of evil speaking is done even by those who have had but little experience in the work, little knowledge of the things of God, little realization of the holy requirements of his cause. Those who have not drunk deeply at the fountain of truth, and have not obtained an experimental knowledge of holy things, feel at liberty to criticise those whom the Lord is using in a special manner to do his work. Even youth, young men and women, have but a small stock of respect and reverence, and they make flippant remarks in regard to God’s chosen messengers, and bring their names into their idle talk and gossip. They dissect their words, and pass judgment upon them while associating together. Do they not know that this is an offense to God? If they would remember that there is a Witness to every word spoken, and that “God heard it,” they would be less fluent in speaking of those whom God is using to do his work, and to carry the load of responsibilities that he has laid upon them. But respect and reverence may be cultivated. The Spirit of the Lord alone can work a reformation in those who do not respect sacred things, so that they shall have reverence for those whom God is using to do his work.

Miriam became leprous for speaking against God’s servant

“And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord

God’s people who had sinned were punished

Moses said to Israel, “Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, O, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord saith unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.” It will be well to read this history carefully, and take heed to the lessons taught on this particular occasion. (Read the 32d, 33d, and 34th chapters of Exodus.) The Lord did not destroy his people, but those who had sinned were punished. But he revealed himself to Moses, declaring his character.
will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.”

But God heard the prayer of Moses, whom they had criticised and envied, and Miriam was healed.

The exaggerated report of the unfaithful spies filled the people with discouragement. Shall not these lessons be of profit to those who are tempted to criticise, think evil of, speak evil of, and judge and condemn those whom God is leading and favoring? And how much worse it is to criticise and give judgment against the church that God has chosen to magnify his name and vindicate his honor, than to speak simply against an individual member. (Read carefully the history of the spies in Numbers 13 and 14.) A ruler from each of the twelve tribes of Israel was chosen to go up and spy out the land into which they were to come. Forty days were consumed in fulfilling their charge. God sent them into the land for a special purpose, but the spies brought back an evil report, full of unbelief and complaint. Before the congregation they exaggerated the difficulties to be met. But Caleb’s clear, ringing voice was heard before Moses and the people, saying, “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.” The exaggerated report of the unfaithful spies filled the people with discouragement, and they gave up in the abandonment of despair, and the leaven of murmuring spread throughout the camp of Israel.

And they said one to another: “Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.”

Moses did not want to leave them in their rebellion and sin

The people were ready to batter down the men who made their voices to be heard to change the current of feeling in the congregation of the children of Israel, and it was now time for God to work. “And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.”

Moses was then tested and proved of God. Forsake Israel! Come out from among them, and leave them in their rebellion and sin?—No, never.

Moses begged the Lord to pardon the iniquity of the people

“And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them); and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou art among this people, that thou art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by daytime in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all people as one man, then the nations that have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which ye sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great,
according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it.”

**There has never been a prophecy proclaiming the SDA Church to be Babylon**

Mark the whole tenor of this chapter, and learn the lesson it conveys to modern Israel. These things are written for our ensamples upon whom the ends of the world are come. We see the unbelief, and the stout resistance of some who have had great light, and although evidence has been piled upon evidence, they have kept themselves in stubborn resistance. The Lord has sent messages of warning and entreaty, messages of reproof and rebuke, and they have not been in vain. But we have never had a message that the Lord would disorganize the church. We have never had the prophecy concerning Babylon applied to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, or been informed that the “loud cry” consisted in calling God's people to come out of her; for this is not God's plan concerning Israel.

**The Lord has brought out a people from the quarry of the world**

In the example of Moses pleading for the children of Israel, is represented the position that we should take in regard to the people of God, however erring, or weak, or defective they may be. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the Lord has brought out a people from the quarry of the world, as he brought out of Egypt a people to keep his commandments, and at every step he has shown them that he is leading them in paths of truth and righteousness. He has sent his light and his counsels, instructing them to build institutions of learning, to provide sanitariums and publishing houses, and success has attended the carrying out of these plans.

**The world would be strengthened in iniquity if the church were designated as Babylon**

The money of the Seventh-day Adventists has not been hoarded in order that they might live delicately, but self-denial and self-sacrifice have marked their history, and still their work is to make progress, and to be aggressive. The world have a light constantly shining upon them, because this people honor God in keeping his commandments. Now can we expect that a message would be true that would designate as Babylon the people for whom God has done so much? Hell would triumph should such a message be received, and the world would be strengthened in iniquity. All the reproaches which Satan has cast upon the character of God, would appear as truth, and the conclusion would be made that God has no chosen or organized church in the world. O, what a triumph would this be to Satan and his confederacy of evil! God does not work in this way. He does just what he said he would do in the 58th chapter of Isaiah:—

“And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

**Ellen G. White, 1827–1915, received the spiritual gift of prophecy, and the fruits of her life and work accord with the biblical tests of a true messenger of God. To this day, her counsels are an incalculable blessing to God’s people around the world.**
Zechariah was one of the last Old Testament prophets to prophesy to the Jews before the coming of Jesus. He had several visions related to the Jews about what would happen, and what could happen; so today, I would like to look at just one of those visions. It is found in Zechariah 4:1-2 - “And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof.”.

Zechariah sees a lampstand.

Zechariah was a Levite born in Babylon (Neh. 12:1, 16), and he was both a prophet and a priest. His name means, “Yahweh remembers”. This was significant. The Jews were in captivity for a long time and they needed a reminder that they had not been forgotten by God. It would be very appropriate that the name of the prophet who has been sent by God would have a name that signifies that God has remembered them.

Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai, the prophet, Zerubbabel, the governor of the Jews, and Joshua, the high priest (Ezra 5:1-2; Zech. 3:1; 4:6; 6:11). As a young man, he returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with the first returnees, a small group of about 50,000 people. Because of Israel’s rebellion against the ways of God (Zech. 1:2-6), the Assyrians exiled the northern kingdom years earlier, and now the Babylonians took the southern kingdom of Judah captive. So there were very few Jews left in Jerusalem.

Now the people were allowed to return and rebuild the temple

But the second exile ended when the Babylonian Empire fell to the Medo-Persian Empire, and Cyrus the Great decreed that the Jews could return to Jerusalem to rebuild their Temple in 457 BC (Ezra 1:2-4). The Jews were now free to go and free to begin their worship services again. Shortly after their return, the Levitical sacrifices were reinstituted on a rebuilt altar of burnt offering (Ezra 3:1-6), and in the second year of the return, the foundation of the temple was laid (Ezra 3:8-13; 5:16). Remember, the first temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, and now the people were allowed to return and “rebuild” the temple and Jerusalem. However, because of external opposition and internal depression, the building of the Temple was halted for about 16 more years.

It was at this time that Haggai appeared and encouraged the Jews to continue rebuilding. Two months after Haggai delivered his first message, Zechariah began his prophetic
ministry (cf. Hag. 1:1 and Zech. 1:1). He encouraged the people to spiritual renewal and motivated them to rebuild the Temple by revealing to them God's plans for their future. With this encouragement, the Temple reconstruction was completed five years later.

**The people were encouraged to repent quickly so they could receive God's blessings**

Zechariah opened his book with an exhortation for Israel to repent quickly so that they could be in the position to receive God's blessing. Zechariah ended up receiving eight prophetic visions for Israel. This gives us an idea of where God is going and what He is trying to accomplish with these visions He has given to His people through Zechariah.

I'd like to look specifically at Zechariah's fourth vision - his "lampstand" vision. Let's read again the beginning of this vision: “And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:” Zech. 4:1-2.

**Angels are messengers of God**

First we see that an angel is the one directed to lead Zechariah in his vision and be his interpreter. Angels are God's messengers. Angels are God's diplomats, if you will, and are sent from one person and one situation to the next to attend to the affairs of men. They are God's spokesmen. The devil and the angels that fell with him hate the remaining good angels and there is a lot of jealousy here. I'm confident that that is one of the reasons that you see pictures today of little cherubic angels that look like fat little kids. These angels are not portrayed like adult, working, intelligent beings. They are shown as tiny, little flying imps that run around having fun, but not doing anything of any particular note or importance. This is the furthest from the truth, as is evidenced here in Zechariah. This theme will play out further as we continue in his vision.

**In this vision, the oil did not have to be replenished by human hands**

The angel wakes Zechariah up and asks him what he sees. Zechariah responds and tells the angel that he sees a golden lampstand. This lampstand looks a lot like the seven-branched menorah that was made for the first temple built by Moses in the wilderness. And he notices something else about this particular lampstand. There were the seven lamps, or the seven lights on the candlestick, but there was a bowl on top of it as well. The bowl was the receptacle where the oil poured into, and from there went out to the seven lamps by way of golden pipes. In other words, what we are seeing here is a very specific method of providing oil to these lamps. In the tabernacles built by men, the oil had to be replenished each day by the priest. The oil could have run out had the priest not been doing his job correctly and timely. But in this vision, there is no human providing the oil. It is seen as a perpetual light that needs no tending to by man. This is a very important aspect of the vision. God's light will continue to shine, in spite of what man does or does not do. God is always there, no matter what happens. No matter how dark things appear, God and His light are always shining. The Jews needed
to hear that, especially after all the dark days of captivity. You know how many people struggle when something terrible happens, and they question if God is there? This shows God is always there... constantly, enduringly, everlastingly there, never-endingly there.

**God never leaves us alone**

You have heard the quasi-evolutionists, who teach that God might have made the planet, but then He left and everything “evolved” into what things are today. This vision is a refutation of that idea. God never left. God never leaves us alone. God is always, perpetually involved in showing us the way and giving us light. The oil goes into the bowl and into the pipes and into the lamps and burns forever and ever. This should bring us great comfort, even if we are imprisoned or living in captivity, as the Jews were.

As a pilot friend of mine says, even in the darkest and stormiest days, when there appears to be no sun in the sky, if you fly high enough, the sun is always there... we just might not see it from our vantage point. There is great symbolism in the oil, too. “The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.” COL 408. Why would God use oil as a representation of the Holy Spirit?

**Here are a few uses for oil in their day and in ours:**

Oil lubricates - there is little friction among those filled with the Spirit of God.

Oil heals and was used as a medicinal treatment in Biblical times (Luke 10:34) - the Spirit of God brings healing and restoration.

Oil lights when it is burned in a lamp - where the Spirit of God is there is light.

Oil warms when it is used as fuel for a flame - where the Spirit of God is there is warmth and comfort.

Oil invigorates when used to massage - the Holy Spirit invigorates us for His service.

Oil adorns when applied as a perfume - the Holy Spirit adorns us and makes us more pleasant to be around.

Oil polishes when used to shine things - the Holy Spirit wipes away our grime and smoothes out our rough edges.

And these are just a few of the examples of what oil does for humanity.

**This oil represents God’s grace to mankind**

Here is yet another emblem of the oil... “The Word itself must be as represented, the golden oil, emptied from the two olive trees that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” RH, Feb. 3, 1903.

The word of God is considered the oil that flows from these trees as well, because God’s word in the heart produces all these effects we just talked about.

And one more thing that the oil represents... “The golden oil represents the grace with which God keeps the lamps of believers supplied.” RH, Feb. 3, 1903. This oil, that flows from God, that He then gives to the trees to empty into the golden bowl atop the lampstand, which then flows through the pipes to each lamp, represents God’s grace given to mankind. This oil was the same oil that the 10 virgins had and five ran out of in the parable Jesus referenced. “Here is the explanation of the olive trees. They take of the Holy Spirit of God, and empty the holy oil out of themselves into the clean, pure, sanctified souls that are prepared to receive it. This is the kind of oil that the wise virgins had, oil that one could not communicate to another.” 2 SAT 132. You cannot give the effects of the grace of God in your heart to another. It is an individual work. This indicates that no one can be the back on which someone else is carried to heaven. It has to be the work of the Holy Spirit, the grace that He imparts, that changes you and makes your character fit for heaven. This cannot be done by one person for another person.

**There is no stopping to the building of character**

Each builds his or her own character for heaven. “It is the little things of life that develop the spirit and determine
the character. Those who neglect the little things will not be prepared to endure severe tests when they are brought to bear upon them. Remember that the character building is not finished till life ends. Every day a good or a bad brick is placed in the structure. You are either building crookedly or with the exactness and correctness that will make a beautiful temple for God.” RH, Dec. 29, 1910. Remember that Paul said we are the temple of God! Every day, or in other words… continuously, we are building.

Whether we want to, or plan to, or refuse to… we continue to build.

And since there is no way to stop the building, and what we build by the grace and power of God will determine our destiny, then this vision Zechariah had of the lampstand, with perpetually running oil should be very, very important to us. No man has any say in it. Its flow does not depend upon man. And the flow never, ever stops.

**The oil flows on, no matter how we feel**

This vision is full of encouragement and glory. God never quits working for us… ever! No matter how dark things get for us, no matter how apart we may feel from God, no matter what evil forebodings the devil puts upon us… God never quits trying to reach us.

Do you feel lost? The oil is still flowing. Do you think you have gone too far? The oil is still flowing. Has the devil convinced you that you can’t be saved? The oil is still flowing… for you! We are the lamps that continually receive the oil! “The golden oil represents the grace with which God keeps the lamps of believers supplied.” RH, Feb. 3, 1903. The grace of God is supplied to each one of us continually. Meditating upon this theme should bring praise to our lips continually as well. “These [the olive trees] empty themselves into the golden bowls, which represent the hearts of the living messengers of God, who bear the Word of the Lord to the people in warnings and entreaties.” 4 SDABC 1180. This is important too.

**The grace given to us is to be shared**

This grace that God provides to each one of us is not for us alone. We are to share what we get from God. We are to communicate what He does for us. We are to cry aloud not only about what God has done for us, but also what is getting ready to happen to this world. The people need to know what is actually going on in this world. And it is our job to tell them. The devil keeps us so busy that we do not have time to “warn” and “entreat” others. Most people are simply unaware that all of this here on earth is going to burn up, and that it is going to happen very, very soon. Who will tell them if we don’t? Who will warn them of the impending doom? Who will explain to them how much God loves them and wants to take them home with Him? Who will share this message with their friends and loved ones and co-workers?

This vision is about the power we need from God

And finally, I’d like to address who or what the two olive trees represent. “And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?” Zech. 4:3-4. Zechariah has no idea, according to his question, about who or what these trees represented. And the angel seems surprised that Zechariah did not know. He was either surprised, or he was indicating that Zechariah should have known. That will become apparent in a minute.

“Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these
be? And I said, No, my lord.” Zech. 4:5. The angel then continues… “Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” Zech. 4:6.

Zerubbabel? What does he have to do with the explanation of who or what these olive trees represent? This is actually very cool. Remember, the angel is the one communicating with Zechariah. Zechariah wants to know about the olive trees… specifically who or what they are. But the angel does not inform him about who they are, but what they do. The whole vision is about God's Spirit, represented by the holy oil, working and flowing and enabling the people to do the work that needs to be done.

At the beginning of this message I referred to Zechariah and about 50,000 other Jews that were leaving Babylon to go back and rebuild the temple and Jerusalem. God was trying to convey that in order to do this, in order to be successful, they needed the Holy Spirit's power. That's what this vision is about. Don't try to do good things on your own. “You need My help,” God is saying, “And I am more than willing to provide it.”

Glorifying God is the object

And then the angel goes on in the next few verses to indicate that Zerubbabel, the governor, would be successful in his building endeavors. The angel didn’t really answer Zechariah’s question about the olive trees because it was not about the olive trees. It was about successfully doing God's will. It's not about the person, or the tree in this case… it is about the task. You see, we often get caught up in the “who” rather than the “what”. We tend to glorify the person rather than what was done for the Lord. When something great is accomplished, or even something small, we tend to focus on who did it. In heaven, it is not about who did it, but that they glorified God by doing it. It's not about who is important, or what position they have, but how obedient they are to God's commands. The more obedient, the more praiseworthy. The more obedient, the more intelligent!

But Zechariah just couldn’t let it go. Not too different from us, is it? “Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?” Zech. 4:11-12. He can’t stand it. He just has to know. He has already asked the angel once, and the angel responded that it is really about God and the success He will give us. But that was not enough for Zechariah. He asks two more times! “What about these olive trees?”

The angel finally answers Zechariah's question

Finally, seeing that Zechariah won't leave it alone… the angel responds: “And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.” Zech. 4:13. Again the angel answers Zechariah’s question with a question, indicating that Zechariah should already know what he’s asking about. Remember, Zechariah is a priest. He is a Levite, and therefore of the priestly ministry. He is familiar with the sanctuary. He recognizes, or at least should recognize all of the furniture and symbols in the sanctuary, including both the holy and the most holy places.

Finally the angel answers his question… “Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” Zech. 4:14. The Hebrew for the words “anointed ones” is also translated, “appointed ones”. In other words, these beings have been “ordained” or “assigned” or “commissioned”. And they “stand by” the Lord. Now, related to the priestly ministry and the sanctuary, are there two “beings” that “stand by” the Lord anywhere? Yes, there are two angels, or cherubims, that stand next to where the
Shekinah glory sits over the mercy seat, on either side.

The cherubims were always facing Jesus over the mercy seat

The Shekinah glory, or the cloud over the mercy seat, represents Christ, right? Please remember that the Jews are tasked to rebuild the temple. It was destroyed and they have to make another one. They also have to make all of the furniture for the sanctuary again. In the original sanctuary, in the wilderness, Bezaleel made the first two cherubims... “And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat; One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side: out of the mercy seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims.” Ex. 37:7-9. The cherubims faced each other, with the Shekinah glory in between, or in other words, they continually faced Jesus.

Nothing God does is ever coincidental

One other thing to make the point about what the olive trees symbolized...In the original sanctuary, the angels, or cherubims, were made of solid gold. But in the full-sized, magnificent temple that Solomon built for God, do you remember what the cherubims were made of? They were 15 feet tall! They were covered in gold, but they were made of a certain type of tree. Any idea what kind of tree they might have been made of? “And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high.” 1 Kings 6:23. Do you think that was an accident? Do you think that was coincidence? Nothing God does is ever accidental or coincidental... nothing. These olive trees that stand next to God, the “anointed” ones, are the angels that excel in glory and do God's bidding. They are the “covering cherubs”. This was once Lucifer's, or Satan's, job. He was one of the anointed cherubs.

Satan had been one of the covering angels

In Ezekiel chapter 28, Lucifer is addressed, and what happened to him when he sinned. And then this is said... “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.” Ez. 28:14. Sister White says this... “The anointed ones standing by the Lord of the whole earth have the position once given to Satan as covering cherub.” RH, July 20, 1897.

All of this helps to explain Satan's hatred for us, for God, and for those who took his place. He had a wonderful, glorious job, and he threw it all away. He was the direct communicant or avenue of blessing from God Almighty! These angels that stand in God's immediate presence are there to receive blessings from God to give them to us. “The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate light and power to God's people. It is to receive blessing for us that they stand in God's presence. As the olive trees empty themselves into the golden pipes, so the heavenly messengers seek to communicate all that they receive from God.” TM 510.

YOU are the most important person in the world to God

This lampstand vision that Zechariah was given is a powerful explanation of the workings of heaven and how much effort is expended upon our behalf. Whenever you are discouraged, whenever you have a daunting task in front of you, whenever you feel you are not up to that task, go back to Zechariah and read again this vision he was given. Glory and revel in the fact that God is pouring out blessings for you continually and that there are heavenly angels constantly communicating light and power to you! YOU are the most important person in the world to God. Doesn't that make you want to love and serve Him forever?

Joe Olson serves as the executive director and chairman of the board of Hope International. He also travels as an international speaker.
The Rainy Day

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary:
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the moldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the moldering past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

--Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
The Temptation of Christ

By Mrs. E G. White

Christ was our example in all things. As we see his humiliation in the long trial and fast in the wilderness to overcome the temptations of appetite in our behalf, we are to take this lesson home to ourselves when we are tempted. If the power of appetite is so strong upon the human family, and its indulgence so fearful that the Son of God subjected himself to such a test, how important that we feel the necessity of having appetite under the control of reason. Our Saviour fasted nearly six weeks, that he might gain for man the victory upon the point of appetite. How can professed Christians with an enlightened conscience, and Christ before them as their pattern, yield to the indulgence of those appetites which have an enervating influence upon the mind and heart? It is a painful fact that habits of self-gratification at the expense of health, and the weakening of moral power, is holding in the bonds of slavery at the present time a large share of the Christian world.

Appetite stands directly in the way of our salvation.

Many who profess godliness do not inquire into the reason of Christ's long period of fasting and suffering in the wilderness. His anguish was not so much from enduring the pangs of hunger as from his sense of the fearful result of the indulgence of appetite and passion upon the race. He knew that appetite would be man's idol, and would lead him to forget God, and would stand directly in the way of his salvation.

The goal of Satan is to benumb our perceptive faculties.

Satan comes to man with his temptations as an angel of light, as he came to Christ. He has been working to bring man into a condition of physical and moral weakness, that he may overcome him with his temptations, and then triumph over his ruin. And he has been successful in tempting man to indulge appetite, regardless of the result. He well knows that it is impossible for man to discharge his obligations to God, and to his fellow-men, while he impairs the faculties God has given him. The brain is the capital of the body. If the perceptive faculties become benumbed through intemperance of any kind, eternal things are not discerned.

When appetite is indulged, we surrender to the control of Satan.

God gives no permission to man to violate the laws of his being. But man, through yielding to Satan's temptations to indulge intemperance, brings the higher faculties in subjection to the animal appetites and passions. When these gain the ascendency, man, who was created a little lower than the angels, with faculties susceptible of the highest cultivation, surrenders to be controlled by Satan. And he gains easy access to those who are in bondage to appetite. Through intemperance, some sacrifice one-half, and others two-thirds, of their physical, mental, and moral powers, and become playthings for the enemy. Those who would have clear minds to discern Satan's devices, must have their physical appetites under the control of reason and conscience.

Sin is made attractive by the covering of light which Satan throws over it.

The moral and vigorous action of the higher powers...
of the mind are essential to the perfection of Christian character. And the strength or weakness of the mind has very much to do with our usefulness in this world, and with our final salvation. The ignorance that has prevailed in regard to God's law in our physical nature is deplorable. Intemperance of any kind is a violation of the laws of our being. Imbecility is prevailing to a fearful extent. Sin is made attractive by the covering of light which Satan throws over it, and he is well pleased when he can hold the Christian world in their daily habits under the tyranny of custom, like the heathen, and allow appetite to govern them.

If Satan has control of the appetite, he has control of the mind and our destiny

If men and women of intelligence have their moral powers benumbed through intemperance of any kind, they are, in many of their habits, elevated but little above the heathen. Satan is constantly drawing the people from saving light, to custom and fashion, irrespective of physical, mental, and moral health. The great enemy knows that if appetite and passion predominate, health of body and strength of intellect are sacrificed upon the altar of self-gratification, and man is brought to speedy ruin. If enlightened intellect holds the reins, controlling the animal propensities, keeping them in subjection to the moral powers, Satan well knows that his power to overcome with his temptations is very small.

We are in violation of physical law when we indulge appetite

A large share of the Christian world have no right to call themselves Christians. Their habits, their extravagance, and general treatment of their own bodies, are in violation of physical law, and contrary to the Bible standard. They are working out for themselves, in their course of life, physical suffering, mental and mortal feebleness.

Men and women indulge appetite at the expense of health and the enfeebling of the intellect, so that they cannot appreciate the plan of salvation. What appreciation can such have of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, and the victory he gained upon the point of appetite? It is impossible for them to have exalted views of God, and to realize the claims of his law. The proposed followers of Christ are forgetful of the great sacrifice made by him on their account.

Through Christ it is possible for us to overcome

Christ was firm. Oh! where would now be the salvation of the race if Christ had been as weak in moral power as man? No wonder that joy filled Heaven as the fallen chief (Satan) left the wilderness of temptation a conquered foe.

Christ has power from his Father to give his divine grace and strength to man--making it possible for him through his name, to overcome. There are but few professed followers of Christ who choose to engage with him in the work of resisting Satan's temptation as he resisted and overcame.

RH, September 8, 1874

Editor's Note—This is a compilation of the parts of two articles from September 1, 1874, and September 8, 1874.

Ellen G. White, 1827–1915, received the spiritual gift of prophecy, and the fruits of her life and work accord with the biblical tests of a true messenger of God. To this day, her counsels are an incalculable blessing to God's people around the world.
Editor's Note: This will be the final article on perfection in Christ.

And What if We Err Again and Again?
However ardent our desire to reflect the lovely character of Jesus, however sincere our intentions, and however persevering our efforts to translate these desires and intentions into action, it is a simple fact of life that we still make mistakes. Sometimes we become discouraged because of our all-too-human defects and frailties. Does the Saviour also eventually become discouraged with us, and take back the priceless robe of His righteousness? Listen—

“When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit.” MLT 250. He “will do each day for us who are repenting, believing sinners just as much as He did when we first surrendered our hearts to Him.” Notebook Leaflets, vol. 1, “Christian Experience”, No. 11. Or, as John the beloved expressed it, “I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” 1 John 2:1. “Christ looks at the spirit, and when He sees us carrying our burden with faith, His perfect holiness atones for our shortcomings. When we do our best, He becomes our righteousness.” 1 SM 368. We have His assurance, “The Father beholds not your faulty character, but He sees you as clothed in My perfection.” DA 357.

Sure Progress Toward Perfection
“The steps of a Christian may at times appear feeble and faltering, yet in his conscious weakness he leans upon the mighty One for support. He is sustained, and makes sure progress onward and upward toward perfection. He gains new victories daily, and comes nearer and nearer to the standard of perfect holiness.” DA 228. We may, at times, be disappointed with our slow progress toward perfection in Christ. But the Saviour does not become discouraged with us, and He does not want us to become discouraged with ourselves. Encouragement comes as we keep our eyes fixed, not upon ourselves, but upon Him. His sustaining power enables us to make “sure progress onward and upward toward perfection”, despite our feeble and sometimes faltering steps.

The devil is not strong enough to snatch us out of the Saviour’s hand
No, we do not forfeit the love and mercy of God when we fall repeatedly into Satan’s traps. With infinite patience the Saviour takes us by the hand, sets us free, lifts us up, and bids us try again. How thankful we should be that even the devil is not strong enough to snatch us out of His hand! (See John 10:28, 29.) What gracious provision God has made to compensate for our human
frailties and defects while the process of sanctification is going on apace in our lives! Let us be grateful and take courage.

Conclusion
We have found that the word “perfect”, as used in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy writings to describe a committed follower of Christ in this life, denotes his relationship to Christ. This relationship is based on a soul-consuming dedication to the ideal of eventual, absolute, sinless perfection, but without implying the present attainment of that ideal. A “perfect” Christian is one who has accepted the complete restoration of the divine image in his life as his own personal goal, and who is conscientiously working toward that goal. His perfection does not consist of absolute immunity to temptation and sin, but of the absolute and unqualified repudiation of sin as a controlling principle in his life.

God credits us with Christ’s perfect righteousness
The perfection of which we speak is relative, or vicarious, inasmuch as it depends on a right relationship to Christ. It is attained instantly by an intelligent act of the will accepting Christ’s imputed righteousness, and is retained throughout life unless a person repudiates his relationship to Christ by lapsing into a state of careless unconcern. He is accounted perfect in heaven, not because he never makes mistakes, but because, despite his mistakes, God credits him with Christ’s perfect righteousness. Unconditional dedication to the goal, and uncompromising pursuit of it, are God’s only requirements. “The tempter’s agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character, these excuses that lead to sinning.” DA 311. The key to present perfection is—Christ “at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure”. It consists in living by the fixed principle to think and act in harmony with God’s will. “Christ in you” is the Christian’s “hope of glory”.

The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at our command
No finer description of the experience of being perfect in Christ—of Christ’s dwelling within—has ever been penned than this: “All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to the deeds of Omnipotence.” DA 827.

God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach
Thus, “at every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God’s purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement” (COL 65) until, eventually, “the religion of Christ in the heart will gain for its possessor a complete victory over those passions that are seeking for the mastery” (4 T 610). “God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach.” DA 311.

“Linked to the Infinite One, man is made partaker of the divine nature. Upon him the shafts of evil have no effect; for he is clothed with the panoply of Christ’s righteousness.”

Be grateful, take courage, press onward and upward!
What gracious provision God has made to compensate for our human frailties while the process of sanctification goes forward in our lives! Yes, let us pause to be grateful, and take courage. Then, with eyes of faith fixed upon the Saviour, let us press courageously onward and upward, toward the mark of ultimate perfection in Christ at His coming. “Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His own people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” COL 69.

Hasten on, glad day!
**STRESS AND YOU**

- Stress symptoms may be affecting your health, even if you don’t realize it. You may think illness is to blame for that nagging headache, your frequent sleepless nights, your mood swings or your decreased productivity at work. But stress may actually be the culprit.
- In fact, stress symptoms can affect your body, your thoughts and feelings, and your behavior. Being able to recognize common stress symptoms can give you a jump-start on managing them. Stress, left unchecked, can contribute to health problems and can affect things like cardiovascular health, weight management, blood sugar, digestive health and more.
- It also appears that the impact of stress on people’s brain health is affected by other behaviors that can also harm the brain. Overeating, drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes are among the common “stress relievers” people use, but all of them increase the risk of damage to the brain and can cause long term or life-threatening damage. So if you suffer from stress and its related symptoms try Hope for Health’s RelaxaDrops! You will be amazed at the calming affect this herbal blend will have on your body and your mind.

**Price:**
2 oz. liquid* ............................................................ $9.99

**Suggested Adult Dosage:**
- 6-12 drops (about 1/2 - full dropperful) two to three times a day as needed.

*contains alcohol

**To Order Call Today:**
1-800-468-7884

or Visit us on the web at:
www.hopeforhealthusa.com

*Prices listed above do not include shipping and handling or sales tax

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**CATNIP**

Catnip, the herb that cats love, is also an effective herbal remedy for stress. It helps to relieve nervous tension, anxiety and sleeplessness and has uses for many other stress-related health issues. An exceptional sleep-inducing agent, its chemical structure is similar to that of the herb valerian, which is a mild central nervous system sedative. Also a traditional cold and flu herb, catnip is an excellent diaphoretic, producing perspiration without increasing the temperature of the body, which is great for helping break a fever.

**HOPS**

Hops have been used by herbalists for centuries as a central nervous system relaxant and a natural sedative to help calm the nerves and reduce stress, anxiety and mental agitation. They are particularly helpful for sleeplessness and the stressful state caused by not getting enough sleep. Hops also contain strong muscle-relaxing properties that aid in reducing muscle tension, restlessness and pain. If being stressed gives you headaches, indigestion, stomach pains, palpitations or a nervous cough, then hops may be particularly helpful for you!

**PASSIONFLOWER**

Passionflower is another gentle sedative herb that is recommended for the relief of nervousness, nervous tension or anxiety; irritability or mild to moderate mood swings caused by everyday stress; restlessness and trouble sleeping. It provides mild sedation and a general tranquilizing effect, which helps promote relaxation and emotional balance without the addictive properties of many pharmaceuticals. It has a long history of safe use. In fact, the British Herbal Compendium indicates its use for sleep disorders, restlessness, nervous stress and anxiety. Also, the German Commission E approved the use of passionflower for nervous restlessness. The German Commission E is a governmental regulatory agency (similar to our FDA) that was established in 1978 and is composed of scientists, toxicologists, physicians, and pharmacists.

Not only does it help with mental relaxation, but because of its antispasmodic properties, it helps relax both skeletal muscles (the ones you control by moving) and smooth muscles (the ones that are controlled automatically by the body). For this reason, passionflower is often used to relieve nerve and muscle pain, twitching and muscle spasms, and other physical problems due to stress.

**SKULLCAP**

Skullcap increases the supply of blood to the brain and is particularly effective in calming or tranquilizing the nervous system, especially in cases of mental or physical stress and strain. Skullcap is of particular value for its ability to relieve the physical problems and pains that come from an over-active nervous system, and is specifically beneficial for nerve pain, tremors, painful tingling and burning sensations, jerking or twitching muscles and heart palpitations. In addition, skullcap is very beneficial for various disrupted mental states, including: tension, anxiety, difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, headaches, fatigue, and melancholy.

**VALERIAN**

The main benefit of valerian root is that it produces a calming effect on the central nervous system. By helping the nervous system to relax, valerian can reduce stress and anxiety. The herb also has sedative properties, for which it could prove immensely helpful for enhancing sleep. If you: suffer from tension and anxiety, have a tendency to get easily over-excited and/or hysterical, or if your body gets so tense that you experience pain, taking valerian can help to relieve the discomfort. An excellent sleep and relaxation herb, valerian helps relax smooth and skeletal muscles, while acting as a sedative to help combat anxiety, stress and difficulty sleeping.

*These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure any disease.*

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Hope for Health's RelaxaDrops is a relaxing natural blend of passion flower, valerian root, skullcap, hops, and catnip. This product relaxes the body, relieves pain, soothes the mind and promotes sleep!
Christian Crossword

ACROSS
2. Leader of the tribe of Asher whose son was one of the twelve spies
5. A devout Jew and an exile from Jerusalem who adopted his orphaned cousin
8. Sixteenth king of Israel after the monarchy split
9. A High Priest in the time of King David
12. A priest, the son of Uriah, who returned after the exile
13. The chief god of the Canaanites
14. The Philistine king of Gath with whom David twice took refuge
15. An Israelite who became the most powerful man at the court of the Egyptian Pharaoh
17. The son of Beor who was a noted magician
21. The mother of Samuel
23. He stole loot from Jericho
24. Mehujael was the father of ____
26. A prophet called of jointly by King Jehoshaphat and King Ahab
27. 12th century judge of Israel and military commander
28. The eldest son of Zilpah, the maid of Jacob’s wife Leah
29. Eighteenth king of Judah after the monarchy split
30. The blind beggar healed by Jesus

DOWN
1. One in authority
2. The father of Miriam
3. A deity of the Canaanites
4. The grandson of Saul who was crippled in both feet
5. Prophet fed by the ravens
6. A concubine of King Saul
7. He was warned by a dream to return Sarah to Abraham
9. A High Priest in the time of King David
10. False stories
11. Tekoa was six miles south of what city?
12. An Israeli spy that became a leader
13. Egypt’s king
14. A group of giants who frightened the spies of Moses by their size
15. “The scepter shall not depart from ____...”
16. He shall be a “serpent by the way”
17. One who comes between [MEDIATOR]
18. Site of Ezekiel’s visions
19. A silver cup was planted in his sack at the order of Joseph
20. A group of giants who frightened the spies of Moses by their size
21. She put a scarlet cord outside her window
22. A silver cup was planted in his sack at the order of Joseph
23. The second son of Jesse and a brother of David
24. A disciple from Cyprus who gave his property to the cause of the early church
25. An angel who appeared to the prophet Daniel
26. A prophet called of jointly by King Jehoshaphat and King Ahab
27. 12th century judge of Israel and military commander
28. The eldest son of Zilpah, the maid of Jacob’s wife Leah
29. Eighteenth king of Judah after the monarchy split
30. The blind beggar healed by Jesus

Answers from Christian Crossword published in the July 2012 issue of Our Firm Foundation
From the Book *The Coming King*
By James Edson White

The Resurrection

Joseph had great influence with Pilate, and begged from him permission to take the body from the cross to give it an honorable burial. Pilate, who, in condemning the Lord, became conscience-stricken, readily gave him the desired permission.

**Prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus was laid in the tomb**

Tender, loving hands took the Saviour from the cruel cross, and bore His body to the new tomb which had never before been used, and there He was laid, thus literally fulfilling the statement of the prophet. Although poor while in life, His body at death was laid in the new, rockhewn tomb of the wealthy ruler of Israel. No greater honor could have been shown to the dead than was accorded to Jesus by Joseph and Nicodemus. Of His rest in the tomb we read in the beautiful language of David in the Psalms: “Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth; My flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell [the grave]; neither wilt thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” Psalms 16:9, 10.

In the hour of death the faith of Christ clung to the promises of God. He laid down His life in the full assurance that He would soon hear the summons, “Jesus, Thou Son of God, Thy Father calls Thee.” Solomon had said, “The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him.” 2 Chronicles 2:6. Peter, speaking of His death, said: “It was not possible that He should be holden of it.” Acts 2:24.

**The Saviour came forth a mighty conqueror**

Early on the first day of the week a bright and powerful angel appeared at the tomb; the Roman guard fell as dead men before His glorious brightness; the stone was rolled away, and at the command of the heavenly messenger the bands of death were broken, and the Saviour came forth a mighty conqueror. Henceforth the resurrection of the dead was a reality.

It was to this resurrection scene that the apostles looked as the evidence of fulfillment of the promise of the future reward of all the faithful. Said Christ: “I am the resurrection and the life; He that believeth in Me, though he was dead, yet shall he live.” John 11:25.

“**I am the Resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”** John 11:25

Seven hundred years before the crucifixion, Isaiah testified that the Saviour would make His grave “with the rich in His death”. Isaiah 53:9.

To “make His grave with the wicked”, would have been to cast Him out without burial, with criminals. But they were foiled in this design by one of their own wealthy rulers, Joseph of Arimathea, who, in this darkest hour for the followers of Christ, stepped out boldly and took his stand for the crucified Saviour.
The resurrection of Christ broke the power of death

Christ died “that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Heb. 2:14. Satan claimed all who had fallen in death as his subjects. The resurrection of Christ broke the power of death. From that time Satan knew that his hold on the human family would sometime be broken, and that his days were numbered.

Paul, looking forward to the general resurrection which is to take place at the second coming of Christ, describes it in the following words: “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” 1 Thes. 4:16-18.

Death came through sinful man, but deliverance from death came through sinless Jesus

The future reward of the righteous is placed at the time of the resurrection, for the Saviour says: “Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” Luke 14:14.

Paul bases his entire hope of a future life on the resurrection of the dead. He says that if there is no resurrection, “then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” But this is not possible; “for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” “For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-22, 52.

Isaiah looked beyond the grave when he testified:

“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” Isaiah 26:19.

Job was willing to rest his future hope on the resurrection. “If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change comes. Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands.” Job 14:14, 15. Where was Job to wait? Here is his own answer: “If I wait, the grave is mine house; I have made my bed in the darkness.” Job 17:13.

Jesus will come again

He that conquered the grave will come to this earth again, and at that time “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” John 5:25. Then “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.” Isaiah 35:1, 2.
Apricot Seed simply refers to the seed of the apricot fruit, and is one of the richest sources of a glycoside known as amygdalin, sometimes called laetrile or “vitamin” B17. This nutrient encourages healthy cell growth, enhances immune response, and strengthens the cardiovascular system. Also known as bitter almonds, they provide abundant nutrition and support for the immune system!

**OMEGA-6 FATTY ACIDS**
Omega-6 fatty acids are considered essential fatty acids. Meaning, they are necessary for human health, but the body can’t make them - you have to get them through food. Along with omega-3s, omega-6s play a crucial role in brain function, normal growth and development, and help the immune system recognize healthy tissue versus non-healthy tissue and foreign invaders (which is particularly important for people dealing with auto-immune responses, where the immune system is malfunctioning and attacks healthy tissue). Essential fatty acids are also needed by the immune system to help manufacture anti-inflammatory prostaglandins, which kill germs and invaders. As invaluable nutrients, essential fatty acids also:
- Stimulate healthy skin and hair growth
- Maintain bone health
- Regulate metabolism
- Reduce aches and pains
- Protect the nervous system
- Maintain a healthy reproductive system

**PLANT STEROLS**
Plant sterols are healthy cholesterol-like compounds found in plant-based foods best known for their ability to help regulate healthy cholesterol levels. However, they provide a host of other benefits, including: bolstering the immune system, supporting healthy lung function, and helping to relieve menopausal symptoms.
- According to scientific studies, a synergistic relationship seems to exist between plant sterols and the immune system, meaning they complement each other and work together for enhanced performance.
- Important immune system cells, called T-Cells, exhibit increased effectiveness in the presence of plant sterols.
- Sterols may help normalize the immune system and reduce the likelihood of autoimmune responses.
- Plant sterols have shown to improve immune cell activity.

**VITAMIN E**
This important antioxidant and immune booster doesn’t get as much press as vitamin C, yet it’s critical for a healthy immune system! Vitamin E stimulates the production of the immune cells that seek out and destroy germs and unhealthy cells. It also enhances the production of immune cell antibodies that protect against foreign invaders. Maintaining a proper level of vitamin E may help reverse some of the decline in immune response commonly seen in aging and also help protect from free radicals that damage the body and lead to chronic illness. In addition, it is particularly important for keeping your skin, heart, brain, nerves, muscles, and red blood cells healthy!

**VITAMIN B17**
Apricot kernels contain a glycoside known as vitamin B17, which is also known by the names laetrile and amygladin. It is found in the seeds of apples, peaches, cherries, grapes, and apricots (among many other foods), however it appears that Apricot Seed has one of the highest levels found naturally on earth! But ‘vitamin’ B17 isn’t really a vitamin at all. It’s a compound of healthy substances that occur in nature and are beneficial to the human body (so you can see why it’s referred to as a ‘vitamin’). Studies have shown that B17 helps to increase the body’s ability to fight illness and unwanted or unhealthy cells. One of the exciting things about this nutrient is it seems to target the unhealthy cells for destruction while actually nourishing the normal and healthy cells! It may also help to balance the pH of the body. Abnormal pH levels, caused by poor diet, stress, or a number of other factors, can result in a toxic internal environment, ultimately paving the way for a variety of health conditions. According to “Foundations and Clinical Applications of Nutrition,” consuming adequate levels of B17 assists the body in regulating the pH level, which is vitally important in maintaining health.

**VITAMIN B15**
Another nutrient found in abundance in Apricot Seed is commonly called vitamin B15, although the proper names are dimethylglycine and pangamic acid. It has been proven to help a variety of health issues and/or bodily functions, including:
- Promoting normal cholesterol levels
- Stimulating growth of healthy cells & tissues
- Improving blood circulation and oxygenation
- Enhancing immune response
- Reducing cravings
- Aiding hair growth/regrowth
- Absorbing and utilizing protein

**Price:**
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**Suggested Adult Dosage:**
- 2-4 capsules daily or as otherwise directed by your health care professional.

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*These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure any disease.

“Drops in the Bucket—A helicopter dumps water on a wildfire raging west of Colorado Springs. The blaze—whipped by gusting winds—has forced some 35,000 people to evacuate their homes.”

END TIME PERSPECTIVE:
“In the visions of the night a very impressive scene passed before me. I saw an immense ball of fire fall among some beautiful mansions, causing their instant destruction. I heard someone say: ‘We knew that the judgments of God were coming upon the earth, but we did not know that they would come so soon.’ Others, with agonized voices, said: ‘You knew! Why then did you not tell us? We did not know.’ On every side I heard similar words of reproach spoken.” 9T 28.

Editor's note: Are we warning our neighbors of the end of all things, including some of the end time events?


Chicago. “A year after taking the reins of his hometown, Mayor Rahm Emanuel is grappling with a killing spree that has Chicago on pace for its bloodiest year since the 1990s. Fueled by gang warfare, Chicago’s murder rate has spiked 38% in 2012. …the homicides—at least 240 so far this year.”

END TIME PERSPECTIVE: “Light has been given me that the cities will be filled with confusion, violence, and crime, and that these things will increase till the end of this earth’s history.” 7T 84.
The Sanctuary

I was shown the grievous disappointment of the people of God that they did not see Jesus at the expected time. They knew not why their Saviour did not come; for they could see no evidence that prophetic time had not ended. Said the angel, “Has God’s word failed? Has God failed to fulfill His promises? No; He has fulfilled all that He promised. Jesus has risen up and shut the door of the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and has opened a door into the most holy place and entered in to cleanse the sanctuary. All who wait patiently shall understand the mystery. Man has erred; but there has been no failure on the part of God. All was accomplished that God promised; but man erroneously believed the earth to be the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the prophetic periods. It is man’s expectation, not the promise of God, that has failed.”

Jesus made a special atonement for Israel

Jesus sent His angels to direct the minds of the disappointed ones to the most holy place, where He had gone to cleanse the sanctuary and make a special atonement for Israel. Jesus told the angels that all who found Him would understand the work which He was to perform. I saw that while Jesus was in the most holy place He would be married to the New Jerusalem; and after His work should be accomplished in the holiest, He would descend to the earth in kingly power and take to Himself the precious ones who had patiently waited His return.

A great darkness settled on those who rejected the message of His coming

I was shown what did take place in heaven at the close of the prophetic periods in 1844. As Jesus ended His ministration in the holy place and closed the door of that apartment, a great darkness settled upon those who had heard and rejected the message of His coming, and they lost sight of Him. Jesus then clothed Himself with precious garments. Around the bottom of His robe was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. A breastplate of curious work was suspended from His shoulders. As He moved, this glittered like diamonds, magnifying letters which looked like names written or engraved upon the breastplate. Upon His head was something which had the appearance of a crown. When fully attired, He was surrounded by angels, and in a flaming chariot He passed within the second veil.

I was then bidden to take notice of the two apartments of the heavenly sanctuary

The curtain, or door, was opened, and I was permitted to enter. In the first apartment I saw the candlestick with seven lamps, the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, and the censer. All the furniture of this apartment looked like purest gold and reflected the image of the one who entered the place. The curtain which separated the two apartments was of different colors and material, with a beautiful border, in which were figures wrought of gold to represent angels. The veil was lifted, and I looked into the second apartment. I saw there an ark which had the appearance of being of the finest gold. As a border around the top of the ark, was most beautiful work representing crowns. In the ark were tables of stone containing the ten commandments.

No language can describe the surpassing brightness

Two lovely cherubs, one on each end of the ark, stood with their wings outstretched above it, and touching each other above the head of Jesus as He stood before the mercy seat. Their faces were turned toward each other, and they looked downward to the ark, representing all the angelic
host looking with interest at the law of God. Between the cherubim was a golden censer, and as the prayers of the saints, offered in faith, came up to Jesus, and He presented them to His father, a cloud of fragrance arose from the incense, looking like smoke of most beautiful colors. Above the place where Jesus stood, before the ark, was exceedingly bright glory that I could not look upon; it appeared like the throne of God. As the incense ascended to the Father, the excellent glory came from the throne to Jesus, and from Him it was shed upon those whose prayers had come up like sweet incense. Light poured upon Jesus in rich abundance and overshadowed the mercy seat, and the train of glory filled the temple. I could not long look upon the surpassing brightness. No language can describe it. I was overwhelmed and turned from the majesty and glory of the scene.

**The earthly sanctuary was a figure of the heavenly.**

I was also shown a sanctuary upon the earth containing two apartments. It resembled the one in heaven, and I was told that it was a figure of the heavenly. The furniture of the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary was like that in the first apartment of the heavenly. The veil was lifted, and I looked into the holy of holies and saw that the furniture was the same as in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. The priests ministered in both apartments of the earthly. He went daily into the first apartment, but entered the most holy only once a year, to cleanse it from the sins which had been conveyed there. I saw that Jesus ministered in both apartments of the heavenly sanctuary. The priests entered into the earthly with the blood of an animal as an offering for sin. Christ entered into the heavenly sanctuary by the offering of His own blood. The earthly priests were removed by death; therefore they could not continue long; but Jesus was a priest forever. Through the sacrifices and offerings brought to the earthly sanctuary, the children of Israel were to lay hold of the merits of a Saviour to come. And in the wisdom of God the particulars of this work were given us that we might, by looking to them, understand the work of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary.

As the veil was rent, the earthly services were forever finished.

As Jesus died on Calvary, He cried, “It is finished,” and the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. This was to show that the services of the earthly sanctuary were forever finished, and that God would no more meet with the priests in their earthly temple, to accept their sacrifices. The blood of Jesus was then shed, which was to be offered by Himself in the heavenly sanctuary. As the priest entered the most holy once a year to cleanse the earthly sanctuary, so Jesus entered the most holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a final atonement for all who could be benefited by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary.

**EW 253**

Editor’s note: This vision came soon after the great disappointment in 1844 to encourage the people of God and help them understand the true purpose of the 2300 year message.
“Our words evidence the manner of food upon which the soul feeds.” - 3BC 1160 –

“He that hath knowledge spareth his words.” - Proverbs 17:27 -