

**Omega III:**

**The Shaking Event  
of the**

**NECHERATSA**

(1844— )

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## **The 2300 Evenings and Mornings in the Light of an Old Jewish Experience**

Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a high priest of the pagan hierarchy. He was a worshiper of the sun god, after the rites of Greek paganism. As a prince of the Hellenes, the sun cult people, he considered himself to be a mediator between the solar deity Helios (equal to Ba'al) and his own subjects.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes hated the religious confession of the Jews. The doctrines and the customs of the Old Testament religion went severely against everything the sun worship stood for. Judaism gave glory to One Lord only, the Creator of heaven and earth. It prohibited every attempt to pay divine homage to any strange god, or any human tyrant, as the custom was in pagan religions. Greek kings considered themselves to be the representatives on earth of their sun god above. So they insisted on the divine right to be honored as gods themselves by their subjects.

At the time when Epiphanes had conquered Egypt, he was crowned with laurels, and in this style he made his triumphant procession homeward, through Palestine, toward Syria. On that occasion the Jews offended him most deeply. They refused to pay him any divine reverence. He had expected from them exactly the same respect that all other peoples were eager to extend to him. He wreaked vengeance on the Jews by desecrating the temple of the Almighty in Jerusalem. Above the

altar of the courtyard he placed a pagan altar for Jupiter. On that altar he laid swine. This was not an uncommon feature of the sun cult. For just as the lamb on the altar is a symbol of Jesus, our Saviour, who sacrificed Himself for us, the pig symbolizes the pagan sacrifice due to be offered to the sun god. Those among the Jews who refused to accept this desecration of the Lord's temple, and did not take part in the sacrificial meals, eating swine's flesh, were tortured to death in a most cruel way.

At a time like this the Jews were longing for a divine deliverance from the terrible persecution they had to suffer. Their attention was directed toward the prophecy contained in Daniel 8, announcing the terror regime of a certain "little horn," arising out of one of the states into which Alexander's kingdom was to be divided. Syria was one of these Greek part states. And the cruel persecutor Antiochus IV did come from that state. See 1 Maccabees 1:10–15, 20–34, 41–64, and also 2 Maccabees 6:18–32, and 7:1–41. The Apocrypha are here referred to as historical sources, not as Biblical proof material.

The unbearable pains suffered by the Jews at that time, may, in themselves, have been a pressure great enough, urging them to look for any opening that appeared to promise some kind of abbreviation of the time of trouble. What we do know is this: The old Jewish theologians divided the prophetic number of 2300 into two halves. Thus they arrived at the figure of 1150. The reasoning was that one day has both an evening

and a morning. They were not disturbed by the principle of "one day for a year." So they simply said: "1150 evenings and 1150 mornings makes 1150 days."

Now the pollution of the temple being said to have taken its beginning on the date of 12-26-168, B.C., the 1150 natural days would bring us down to the date of January 4, 164 B.C.

This way of reckoning gives a striking result. For at the latter date Epiphanes died. (See Menge's Bible translation, Appendix, p. 73). This would seem to settle the matter of the Jewish interpretation of Daniel 8. But something unexpected happened. The Jewish people, in their extreme distress, called upon God to cut short the time assigned, and God heard their plea. Just 25 days ahead of the time, on December 10, 165 B.C., the national hero of the Jews, Maccabee, succeeded in driving the Greeks out of Jerusalem, thus delivering the temple. The temple was now cleansed and could perform its usual service.

### **The Little Horn Viewed in the Kaleidoscope**

The Jewish version of an interpretation of the 2300 evenings and mornings was gradually accepted by all Christian churches. Mainstream Protestant theologians have not made any exception to the general rule. We should not then be astonished that those in our own church who insist on a line of theology as ecumenical as ever possible—even to the point of making a veritable return travel to Babylon; that is, throwing overboard the essential pillars of basic Seventh-day Adventist doctrines—would take the opportunity to

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favor an interpretation of the old Jewish kind as the ONLY believable one. They have evidently had serious doubts for a long time about the result our pioneers arrived at regarding the 2300 evenings and mornings. Now they think the moment has come when there seems to be no need any longer of keeping such doubts secret.

As everybody knows, the solution our brethren of old in the Advent movement arrived at, after an experience of painful trial and intensive prayer, was that the 2300 evenings and mornings started in 457 B.C. and ended in 1844 A.D.

We should of course all be anxious to avoid Satan's attempts to undermine the basic principles of the three angels' messages. Some among us may have thought it most expedient to do this by simply ignoring the historical facts of both the terrible experience suffered by the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes and the interpretation those Jews made of Daniel's prophecy. But that might be too simplistic an attitude indeed. In the long run it might fail miserably. In fact, it can hardly be defended either before God or before men. We must recognize that the exposition made by the Jewish expositors of old appears to fit the prophecy just as well as that of the SDA pioneers.

A more thorough research will unveil that we are facing a case of discrepancy that is only apparent. Why should we be so perplexed? Is it the first time we experience that one and the same prophecy has a double set of applications? Why do so many of our good theologians

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refuse to accept any such possibility in the present case? Preoccupation is a very common occurrence of learned minds among us. There are many dangers lying in wait for those in our midst who have reached a pretty high point of erudition in the field of theology maybe more than

in any other field. Some seem to have proceeded more than half way into the realms of virtual atheism (or agnosticism). Then there is a particular danger that we may exclude definitely, and without even making the least attempt at a reconciliation, the idea of a double fulfillment. That kind of fulfillment of Biblical prophecies is sometimes, *a priori*, considered simply beneath the worthiness of "true scholarliness." Have you observed the reaction of some scholars to the undeniable doubleness implied in the prophecy made by Jesus Himself in Matthew 24?

Our pioneers were entirely familiar with that doubleness. They generally accepted it as a plain reality. In the tract *A Word to the Little Flock* Sister White also gave to the prophecy of Joel 2 a double interpretation. It predicted the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, an early rain experience granted to the disciples. Already the apostle Peter applied Joel's words to this event. But Ellen White informed us with conviction that the same prophecy will find a second fulfillment. And that certainly is not a less important one. In fact, the signs mentioned by Joel, the wonders manifesting themselves in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke, this had not yet

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come to its fulfillment at all in Peter's day. We who live in the age of the atom bomb, can appreciate the significance of the expression "pillars of smoke" even better than Ellen White could. And the pouring out of the Spirit at the time of the latter rain will be a fulfillment of Joel 2 far more spectacular than even you and I today can imagine.

In the same way we must be thankful for those who have helped us to see much farther than up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. They have been realistic seers. It was tremendously important to have a vision of a far more cruel and long-lasting chain of atrocities happening to Christian believers at the age of a persecuting Papacy. The two events we are concerned with show a striking similarity. That asserts itself already in their respective beginnings. The faithful Jews at the time of Epiphanes had the firmness of principle that characterized a man like Mordecai. They refused to pay divine homage of any kind to the pagan tyrant demanding it of them. And exactly the same attitude was that of the Christians in the middle ages. They declined categorically to extend divine veneration to a Pope in whom they could see no sign of divinity.

Epiphanes revenged himself on the faithful Jews, torturing them to death and burning them. And what did Leo the First do, the first Pope who publicly usurped the title *Pontifex Maximus Summus*? He punished 100 protesting Bishops by driving them into a barn filled with dry straw. Here they were burned alive. That "roasting

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mania" of the Popes lasted far beyond the middle ages. No wonder that suffering souls of both eras implored God to abbreviate the heavy time of trouble—cut it short for mercy's sake. See Matthew 24:21. In the case of the Jews the trial was shortened by a number of 25 days. In the case of the protesting martyrs the period of "cutting short" was 25 years. The cruel supremacy of the persecuting Papacy was supposed to come to its end only in the year of 1798. But as early as the year 1773 a decree issued by the Austrian Empress Mary Therese provided that people should no longer be tortured and put to death for their faith's sake.

We may sum up as follows: The "little horn" of Daniel 8 may easily be recognized as identical with Antiochus Epiphanes the Fourth. For he was the one who had had his "horn" growing up right out of the "four winds of heaven" (Daniel 8:8).

It is a fact remarkable enough that Antiochus simply took away the real high priest who was properly called to fill the important function of the temple service, in accordance with God's solemn ordinance regarding Aaron and his descendants. In that priest's place he boldly put his own person, without having received any call whatsoever from the Lord. That false high-priestly office was in fact the first beginning of the "little"—but rapidly developing—horn.

Later on, this false priesthood of Greece was transferred to pagan Rome. Speaking in the language of the prophetic images, one might say: It emerged among the

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"ten horns" of the monstrous ancient Roman beast, in the form of the great Pontifex Maximus (Daniel 7:7b, 8).

Still later Constantine the First placed himself in God's temple as the Pontifex Maximus of the sun worship, depute of the sun god on earth (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4). At the Council of Nicea he was the one presiding. So in spite of the fact that he was a gentile, he had the necessary ecclesiastical power to force the bishops into a defensive position. In this respect also, the history of the Jews repeated itself in the new church. The specter of Epiphanes was reappearing. Pagan high priests took over the leadership of the church. They forced the believers into submission. Only a small number remained faithful, even unto death, thus winning the crown of eternal life.

In this way Epiphanes, Nero, Constantine, Leo the First, and Innocent the Third form a continuous line in one single development of evil. On its way from Epiphanes to Innocent the Third, however, the little horn grew conspicuously. Soon it could claim a more impressive name: the great horn of papal world rule.

What is, in reality, the relation between the "little horn" of Daniel 7 and the "little horn" of Daniel 8?

The 7th chapter of Daniel tells us mainly one story, namely that of the surging up of Papacy as a secular power, taking over the world rule after pagan Rome had given up her hegemony. At the end of the 2300 evenings and mornings the Ancient of days (Daniel 7:9–14) establishes, quite evidently, a particular judgment office

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of His own. By a most solemn juridical decree it has henceforth been provided, concerning the "rest of the beasts" (all world powers), that "their domain" is "taken away" (verse 12), although outwardly "their lives were prolonged for a season of time."

Daniel 8, however, leads us back to the time when Epiphanes had the audacity to falsify the Biblical priesthood and usurp its directorship. He shamefully merged that high office of the temple of the living God with the office of the solar *archiereus*, the pagan mediator between the people and the gods. But the first commandment of the decalogue is a thundering warning to us against such basic unfaithfulness to God, our Creator and Redeemer. Yielding to the temptations surrounding us, everywhere and at every moment, to pay homage to pagan customs and ecumenical devices of an adultery-like fellowship, this is tantamount to downright demon worship. The seriousness of such contamination is shown by Haggai 2:12,13.

Figuratively speaking, Epiphanes grew out of one of the four horns. The "little horn" took over the patronage of the pagan sun cult. The next ones taking over were the Roman emperors. These, in their turn, handed it over—with the very title of *pontifex maximus*, to the Catholic Popes.

Now Daniel did see that the year 1844 would bring something tremendously important for the world. That is the institution for which he has reserved the solemn word of NECHERATSA, a term we are to discuss

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in detail a little later. May it, for the time being, suffice to announce the significant fact that, in good English, this could hardly be translated by any more minutely accurate term than that of INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT. We assume that you have become quite familiar with that one already. And what is said about that great NECHERATSA event in human history? It was simply destined to establish an entirely new order of things in our world of a gigantic struggle between good and evil. The pagan supremacy of jurisdiction on this earth would solemnly be declared null and void. "The rest of the beasts" were going to have their dominion virtually taken away. Yet, "for a season," they are said to remain alive with their entire outward administration, the entire illusory setup of the pagan sun cult, including the spurious holy day, the prevailing Christmas (Yule) celebrations, the relic cult, and all the superstitions that form the abominable current features of the so-called Christian world—and please notice: pagan cult phenomena not just limited to Catholic environments; in fact, not even limited to mainstream Protestant churches, since much of it is symbols of pagan worship which even you and I seem to persist in venerating, making them part and parcel of our own lives.

The people who received the great light of Daniel 8 about the end of the 2300 evenings and mornings, realized that they had to give up all these features of heathen worship. Do you and I?

How soon will the day come when there is no more

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prolongation, not even of the mere "lives" of the pagan beasts? Second Thessalonians 2:7, 8 tells us about that fateful day. The Lord shall finish His service in the holy of holies. Then He shall make His personal appearance; and the wicked ones (the willful idolators of this present world) are to be consumed with "the spirit of His mouth."

This is not cruelty. It is the inevitable destruction taking place as the natural consequence of the brightness of His coming.

Let us sum up: Daniel 7 mainly informs us about the Satanic introduction of a papal supremacy in world history. Daniel 8, however, tells us about the entire development of the false priesthood, the rule of the antichrist. So we should know something most relevant about the Jews at the time of Epiphanes, compared to the pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism. The two groups are equally entitled to look at Daniel 8, each one from his special point of view. Exactly as the Jews had the right and the duty to appreciate the light emanating from the prophecy, as a word to them directly from God,—a God heartily concerned about their trying life experience—exactly so do Seventh-day Adventists have the right—and the duty—to derive enlightenment, hope and consolation, as well as a mighty admonition, from the message the eternal Spirit of Prophecy has handed out to the world, a message about God's firm determination to restore His sanctuary. Restoration in this case means exactly the same as cleansing. Let us not be quarrelsome. It means a decisive cleansing from all unrighteousness

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## **Daniel 8 Inseparable From Daniel 9—One Solid Vision—One Solid Interpretation**

We human beings are always most anxious to camouflage our apostasy. Trying to forget our heavy responsibility as teachers for the new generation, we endeavor to describe our criticism as a constructive and well-intentioned one in all parts. One common way of doing this is to pretend that Daniel 9 has no connection at all with Daniel 8.

It is high time both we and our docile students obtain perfect clearness about the significance of a meaningful interpretation of the 2300 evenings and mornings of chapter 8. To that end we desperately need the 9th chapter. The reason for our desperate need is simple: The two chapters form one monolithic totality.

Daniel tells us about a dialogue between two angels. One of them asks the following question:

How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice [This last word is not to be found in the original text] and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? (Daniel 8:13)

The other angel answers:

Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. (8:14)

In purely linguistic respect it may be argued that "cleansed" is not an accurate rendering of the original. But as far as the spiritual sense is concerned, it is excellent. True, something like "restored to its right

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place" would—linguistically—have rendered the Hebrew text in a more impeccable way. But theologically nothing could be either more reasonable or more inspiring than the tacit implication that there is an absolutely inseparable union between those two concepts. So to make as if it were almost a tragic misfortune that the word "cleansed" should have been used here in the KJV, instead of "restored," is an incredible position on the part some critics.

And now the next question: Does that famous Old Testament text do justice to what the Lord quite evidently wanted to predict to those eagerly searching children of His, who, in the future, would be looking for meaning and vital consolation in it?

To be sure, how could cruelly suffering Jews, at a certain moment of their history, fail to find meaningfulness in it? For what is it that has been foretold here in a most striking way? Precisely the act of polluting the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and of desecrating the priestly office, as this spectacularly happened at the time of Antiochus IV.

The original text eloquently qualifies as abominable the act of offering pigs on the altar of the Holy God. And now what about the other side of the question? Was the trans-substantiation dogma of the Catholic Church, invented by faithless theologians, going to be a lesser abomination? Please consider seriously this arch-pagan idea that has wound its way into the hearts of certain men of the church, as they have gradually come to consider

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themselves some sort of super-human elite. It is almost unbelievable that they could, by and by,

have the audacity to look upon themselves as actually able to perform, whenever they please, the spectacular sorcerer's trick of changing a piece of bread into Christ's literal body, or a cupful of simple wine into Christ's literal blood! What is this? Is it merely a matter of foolish pagan superstition? No, no. It is a matter of titanic human pride, of boundless megalomania. Could anything Epiphanes committed in the Jewish temple of old be more audacious, more disgraceful, than what the so-called Christian church was one day going to perpetrate?

Think also of the barbarian idea of despoiling dead bodies. Well, nothing less abominable than that was destined to be put into general practice by the priesthood of fallen Christendom. A soon quite booming relic cult was to be the source of inspiration for that ugly desecration of human graves. The church invented an institution she called the "Sepulchrum Mass." Gradually a whole series of crude customs, inherited from a purely pagan environment, were simply taken over by nominal Christians. How could those customs in their new environment avoid becoming downright blasphemous? But of course nothing better than this could be expected, could it, at the moment when the sacred priestly office of Jesus Christ and His disciples was simply transferred to one with whom Satan had left his bastard throne in Rome.

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### **The "Daily" and Its Falsification**

The priests of the Old Testament, after the order of Aaron, were supposed to offer the sacrifice of a lamb every day. That lamb pointed forward to the coming of the Redeemer. Thus it constituted the temporary symbol of God's realistic atonement. This was the only way He could save His fallen people. There had to be an active demonstration, on their part, of their willingness to accept God's salvation. The symbol was repeated every day. But Jesus, the true Victim (or divine Sacrifice) for the sins of mankind could be sacrificed only once. By means of that unique historic event of the supreme act Jesus secured for every sinful human being the opportunity of an everlasting grace. This was a salvation plan of permanent validity. As a most realistic High Priest and mediator in our behalf, He represents each one of us in front of the throne of grace in heaven. In that capacity He constantly refers to His death on the cross. This took place once. But its effect is that of an everlasting sacrifice (Hebrews 7:27 and 9:12, 25–28). Therefore this sacrifice of Christ on Calvary is briefly expressed in Daniel's prophecy simply as the DAILY, or the PERMANENT.

Now at the time when the Pope, in the course of the Roman apostasy, put himself in the place of the divine High Priest, thus obscuring the image of the true function of Jesus in heaven, he did commit an abominable act (a "transgression of desolation"). He introduced the rite of the catholic mass. The transubstantiation

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falsehood, contained in that mass, finds its original basis in just the pagan cult of relics. As a natural consequence of that cult, a regular business was destined to grow up. Its plain goal was just sordid lucre, and nothing seemed too base for its attainments. We may again remind of the violating of graveyards and the despoiling of its putrefying bodies. We have already mentioned, also, the downright blasphemy implied in the bold contention that the priest—a sort of actual magician, or shrewd expert in a religiously flavored witchcraft—could manage to change bread (the host) into the authentic body of Jesus, and wine into the authentic blood of that same divine

Person.

This whole sordid business of black magic, or Satanic sorcery, corresponds exactly to what Daniel predicted in his famous chapter 8 (verses 13 and 14). And the same abomination is described eloquently by the apostle John, as he gives some essential features of the great apostasy.

And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY; BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATION OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her I wondered with great admiration. (Revelation 17:4–6)

Who is that mysterious woman? She is also described as the "woman arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, holding a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication." She is the same who is finally condemned together with the "great men of the earth whom she has seduced by her sorceries" (Revelation 18:23).

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Notice the main viewpoint of the first angel formulating his question in Daniel 8:13: How long, indeed, will God bear the pain of His righteous character being maligned, and His holy name being polluted by the violators of all holiness? Can we have some kind of demarcation date for pinpointing the time of the end? In other words, how many years after some date already given as a firm point of departure, will we have to count in order to know the end of such a terrible desecration of a thing all that sacred?

The answer given by the other angel comes spontaneously:

Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.  
(Daniel 8:14)

The final point of that longest chain of prophetic time to be found in the Bible was correctly computed by our pioneers. It was the year of the Lord 1844. That computation and the convincing arguments given for its correctness is a story told with great detail in some of our most decisive Seventh-day Adventist publications. So it is not the task of this little tract to go into all that.

There are, however, certain most important facts the truth-seeker should never lose sight of in connection with the controversy over this theme. Something here is becoming more marked than ever before. In the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 24, verse 15, Jesus Himself refers to that same "abomination of desolation," foretold in Daniel 8:13; 9:26; and 11:31. Jesus makes His disciples aware of a most important practical fact: They can derive great personal benefit, for their lives

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on this earth, from certain fulfillments of the prophecy WHICH STILL LIE IN THE FUTURE!

One thing then is indisputable: To look for the fulfillment of the prophecy exclusively in the Jewish history prior to Christ, would be most inconsistent. The "abomination" must evidently extend further than that. The definitive end of the 2300 evenings and mornings must, of

necessity, lie in the New Testament era. In fact, the desecration which that time period is supposed to bring to an end, is the very evil on earth which heaven has been fighting during 6000 years now. Putting finally straight what was tragically crooked, and making clean what was abominably polluted, precisely that is the capital concern of Jesus Christ, the Anointed One, in world history. And evidently that implies the existence of a people who are radically willing to have all things put straight in their own midst, including the cleaning of their own hearts. Such a people must have in their hearts the sincere desire to ban, in a most practical and realistic way, from their every-day lives, everything that would retain the remotest suspicion of pagan desecration.

So please tell me, if you can: Should it seem such an unreasonable assumption to think that a vision like that of Daniel about a restoration (re-establishment) as thorough as this would tend to be a long term one?

Fortunately, however,—God be praised eternally—there is no question here about a matter basing itself on nothing more than reasonable assumption. By no means. The evidence is just overwhelming. Already the

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angel Gabriel had made Daniel aware of the fact that the complete fulfillment of the vision of the eighth chapter would protract itself all the way down to the very end-time of our world's history.

Understand, O son of man, for at the time of the end shall be the vision. (Daniel 8:17)

Here the German scholar Menge's translation is still clearer:

The vision reaches all the way down to the time of the end.

This fact is repeated in the 19th verse with specific emphasis:

It goes further on all the way to the definite time of the end.

And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true; wherefore shut thou up the vision, for it shall be for many days. (8:26)

The vision was actually sealed and committed to writing in a form rather difficult to understand. Daniel himself certainly did NOT understand it. The Jews at the time of the Maccabees managed to appropriate fragments of it, a little portion making sense to them, and serving their purpose as a persecuted people. The rest of it—as Jesus, the King of the prophets, expressly declared—was destined to be fulfilled only a long time after the new era had begun (Matthew 24:15). For what special reason did the angel Gabriel put off his explanation of the vision, and particularly the part of it dealing with the 2300 evenings and mornings?

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And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick certain days. Afterward I rose up, and did the King's business, and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it. (Daniel 8:27)

Daniel commits himself entirely to God and His wisdom. He pleads on his knees for further enlightenment. And the special object of his request is a fuller understanding of the 70 years

during which the Jews, according to Jeremiah, were to remain in captivity. Then God considered the moment appropriate to send the angel Gabriel once more. The purpose was to make the remaining part of the vision of Daniel 8 understandable. At this new visit there was no new vision given, no new symbols demanding new explanations. Accordingly, the commentaries the angel Gabriel now provided for Daniel could have reference to one thing only, namely the vision of the 8th chapter. Otherwise the following verses of the 9th chapter would appear pretty unintelligible:

While I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being cause to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee, for thou art greatly beloved: Therefore understand the matter and consider the vision: Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city, to finish and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. (Daniel 9:21–24. See also Acts 10:38 and Matthew 3:16)

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The 490 years (70 prophetic weeks) could be CUT OFF (as Gesenius translates what the KJV has rendered as "determined") from one thing only, namely from the chain of years called "2300 evenings and mornings" in the 8th chapter. That part of the whole was allotted to the Jewish nation, the people of God in the Old Testament. It was their time of grace, lasting until the stoning of Stephen in the year of 34 A.D. At this date the special favor granted to the Jews came to an end. Their role in the plan of salvation had been completed.

### **The Beginning of the Great Event of an Investigative Judgment in 1844**

Here it must be stressed that the following 3 verses, Daniel 9:25–27, have been generally considered by the Biblical translators as extremely difficult to translate, in fact, almost impossible. Menge, for instance, in the famous version of the Holy Scriptures, revised by himself, writes as follows in a footnote to Daniel 9:27:

The verses 25 to 27 do not permit any sure translation.

As a non-Adventist, even the most learned theologian Menge just did not have any way of knowing what to do with the Hebrew word NECHERATSA.

The best you could expect was the mediocre result which that scholar arrived at in this case. For here even a thorough knowledge of OT Hebrew alone would hardly do. This would still have to be supplemented by an equally profound knowledge of Seventh-day Adventist theology. Evidently nothing less than that would be required in order

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to be able to translate the text in a correct and meaningful way.

The word "necheratsa" is so important to us for the simple reason that it happens to be the

only term in the Bible which renders exactly the idea contained in the English word introduced by our pioneers, and consecrated as the key term par excellence of the three angels' messages:

### **The Investigative Judgment**

To engage in translating Daniel 9:25–27 is tantamount to start tilling new land, theologically speaking. Therefore a solemn reminder has to go out to those among our theologians who assume the responsibility of being leaders within God's vineyard on earth in the last days, called by Him to provide enlightenment for His end-time people. A thorough and comprehensive study, coupled with a most serious consecration, is indispensable in order to arrive at a safe conclusion regarding what God has in store for you and me through the words left for our scrutiny in the problematic text of Daniel 9:25–27.

Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. (Daniel 9:25)

A prophetic week, according to the principle of one day for a year, is seven years (Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6). The total period of time here indicated by the angel would then be  $69 \times 7 = 483$  years. And the point of departure would be the year 457 B.C., when Artaxerxes

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issued his decree. Now 483 years from that point takes us down to the year 27 A.D. That was the year when our Saviour, at the age of 30, was baptized in the Jordan River and appointed by the Holy Spirit to be the Messiah of the Most High.

The angel Gabriel now tells us what is going to take place from that moment on:

And after threescore and two be cut off (killed as a sacrificial victim), but not for himself (not because of his own guilt), and the people (the Romans) of the prince (Titus) that shall come (in the year 70 A.D.) shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. And the end thereof (i.e. of the Romans) shall be with a flood (the great Germanic migrations), and unto the end war and desolations are determined (all the way down to the end, war, judgment, crisis over the abominations of desolations are determined). (Daniel 9:26; insertions supplied)

We understand from this part of the text quite clearly that the 2300 evenings and mornings extend far beyond the crucifixion of Christ, the destruction of Jerusalem, and even beyond the great migrations which caused the Roman Empire to come to its end. In reality the period comprises not only the downfall of the old Roman Empire, but also the rise of a "new" Rome, a "Christian" Rome. That new power in world history was destined to represent a travesty of Christianity. It was to resume the persecutions of the old Roman emperors. The history of the crusades and of the inquisition cruelties would go on right through the middle ages. The term of "desolation" further includes the blasphemous rites of the Catholic Mass with its transubstantiation sorcery, its relic trade, implying the savage violation of dead body

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parts of alleged saints. In front of the atrocious courts of the inquisition, the faithful followers of

Jesus would have to pass through the indescribable trials, a baptism of fire, mostly ending with the death of the martyr in question.

The angel standing before God—Gabriel, the covering cherub who took Lucifer's place in heaven—goes on to say:

And he (Jesus) shall confirm the covenant with many (Jews) for one week; and in the midst of the week (one prophetic week, that is, 7 years from 27 A.D. to 34 A.D.) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. (Daniel 9:27a; insertions supplied. Compare with Matthew 27:5 and Colossians 2:14.)

After the prophecy has taken us far down into the Middle Ages, it once more comes back to the theme of Jesus, the Son of Man. Daniel was told by the angel how the coming Messiah, for seven years, would dedicate Himself to the redemption of the old covenant people. His atoning sacrifice would procure for the faithful ones of the Old Testament the full grace of the Almighty.

The place of the old earthly priesthood would now be taken over by the heavenly one. None but the Son of God could be the High Priest in this case. The shadow of the terrestrial tabernacle had no value any longer. This was clearly indicated by the tearing asunder of the veil in the temple of Jerusalem at the moment when Jesus died. The celestial reality was taking the place of its terrestrial shadow.

As Jesus, our Saviour, had gone back to His Father after His resurrection, to dedicate Himself to His great office, things happened on earth which the angel likewise

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gave Daniel the charge of writing down for us to study.

On the wings of the altar (Kittel and Menge both translate in this way) there will be terrible abomination, but by and by a gradual clearing up (restoration, reformation) and an investigative judgment will come over the abominable desolation. (Daniel 9:27b; insertions supplied. Compare Matthew 24:15.)

The angel here makes a prediction regarding the time when Christendom would suffer such a lack of the gospel light and of the power of the Holy Spirit that it would lose sight of essential things, namely the reality of the true High Priest, Jesus Christ, and His indispensable service in the heavenly sanctuary. Therefore "Christians" would proceed to establish a sanctuary of their own, a sanctuary suiting their own terrestrial trends. They would introduce rites they themselves had invented. There would be a high priest subject to the spirit of sin. On the altar, and on its "wings," according to the prevailing pagan customs of the Catholic "Sepulchrum" and the Catholic "Monstrance," the most abominable things would be displayed, symbolizing in a most blasphemous way exactly that shamelessly open desecration which Jesus had described to His disciples as the "desolation" of ultra-pagan worship forms, first established by the secular Roman empire. That secular Rome, however, was to be outwitted completely by a new Rome, a would-be Christian one.

Within the realm of the Christian churches it is almost exclusively in the Catholic church those peculiar Altar "Wings" are to be found. It should not be so difficult to recognize their unique features. During Mass they usually stand wide open. On the shelves of those wings

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the monstrances may be standing with their consecrated offerings, allegedly containing the authentic and living body of Jesus Christ. In neatly constructed cassettes pieces of dead bodies collected as relics have been displayed. Above the "Sepulchrum" of the altar the Chaplain exercises his office, transforming the wine into the blood of Jesus. He does this by means of a cross which is supposed to contain in it a tiny piece of the genuine cross of Christ. (See Revelation 17:4 and 18:4, 23).

That transformation wonder is said to be successful for one reason only. In the "sepulchrum" a relic has been introduced. The saint from whose body that relic was torn, is said to be capable of radiating, even now after hundreds of years, a wonderful life-spending power. Buchberger says in his *Kirchenlexikon*: "What looks like bread, is in reality no bread at all after the consecration (the process of essential change) has taken place, although it may appear so to the taste. On the contrary, it is the authentic body of Christ."

And further: "The same applies to the transformation of the wine. It henceforth constitutes the authentic and living blood. And still it does have, after the transformation, the same specific weight, the same smell and the same color as wine."

Can anyone still wonder, after these doctrinal teachings, why the priest's classical solemn formula "Hoc est corpus meum" ("This is my body") has changed, by and by, in the minds of common people, and accordingly also in the phraseology of popular linguistic, into HOCUS POCUS?

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To the man in the street the impression could hardly be a different one. What the priest performed could not be anything short of black magic. And that is of course just what it is. It is the great master magician of the demon world who has managed the real master stroke making ecclesiastical leaders boast that they, at any moment they may choose to do so, can perform the HOCUS POCUS TRICK of producing the blood and the body of the Lord of the world on a tray of communion service. If that is not megalomania, then megalomania does not exist.

Of course, it is not megalomania of the common type, the one we come across in the insane asylum, and recognize as such. Oh, no, this one is worse, to be sure, in the eyes of God. For it is simple blasphemy, and the ugliest kind of it ever invented by devils or by men. Small wonder that faith in the Christian religion is dying out in what has come to be known as the "Christian" world. The faith in Jesus Christ as a realistic person is being destroyed. We certainly can appreciate what the angel has pronounced about the ongoing DESOLATION.

But then follows a brighter part of the vision. A progressive enlightenment is predicted to be taking place. A partial rehabilitation and reform is described as bearing sway. The medieval gloom of a spiritual night, enveloping human minds and human hearts, is gradually being dissipated. The blasphemous lies about Jesus are courageously fought by a band of faithful believers in the Bible as the Word of God. The wicked deceptions of the false high-priestly office are being unveiled.

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Now do not imagine that the light-dispensing Reformation here portrayed ended with John Hus or Martin Luther. Nor did it come to its final conclusion with Zinzendorf, Wesley or the pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism. The Adventist today who is not even far better qualified for defending the truth of the 2300 evenings and mornings than Miller or Bates used to be, is

tragically backward. If, in spite of such backwardness, he happens to be among those heavily responsible ones who have taken upon themselves the charge of leading the Lord's flock—be it in the capacity of administrators, be it in the capacity of preachers or teachers of the Word—then the tragedy is complete. The spiritual retardation of which we suffer in that case places the entire congregation in jeopardy. For then we are not the only ones suffering the consequences of our guilty ignorance. We will as leaders have, as our co-sufferers, all those who do not, in due course, raise a loud protest against such guilt-ridden light-mindedness in our administration. It does not help the case of the individual one bit that the whole culture he belongs to is pervaded by the same type of criminal superficiality.

Note down what the angel Gabriel says to Daniel at the conclusion of his interpretations and enlightenments regarding the 2300 evenings and mornings. It is something ominously significant to your life and mine. It has to do with the terminal happenings due to take place, as the last globules of sand, still belonging to that mighty long period of time granted to our favored Judeo-Christian world history, drop noiselessly down

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into the hourglass of eternity. Let us repeat in simple English, as well as we can, what the angel is saying:

Enlightenment and investigative judgment will come over the abominable desolation.

It was the abominable desolation of a so-called Christian church's mystifying "holy mass" rites and the deceptive trade of indulgences that finally aroused the protest of some true Christians at the dawn of our modern era. This was a stirring event indeed. It was a mighty transformation taking place in the very hearts of living human individuals as the marvelous result of that belated dawn, causing waves of new light to spread over the earth. The terrible apostasy was, to some extent, kept in check. At least a partial restoration could be realized. (See Matthew 17:11.)

As history was continuing its weird trail, with tidal waves of reformation and counter-reformation, there was something unique preparing to have its day in the very heavens. A special judgment seat was coming closer and ever closer to its great realization.

The living God is of course the incomparable Judge of that heavenly court. But besides the Father there is also another divine Person coming up and assuming the functions of Co-Judge and equal Partner. He is, in fact, unique by virtue of a capacity in which no one can vie with Him. He is the historical Jesus, the Son of the living God. See Daniel 7:9–13, and Revelation 14:14.

In that tribunal it is decided that the cruel supremacy of the usurpers shall be cut down in a juridically decisive way.

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**The Great Event in Heaven which was Received with Moderate Enthusiasm by Most Men on Earth, Including Men in Leading Positions within the Church:  
The Incomparable NECHERATSA!**

This unique concept, or the Hebrew term standing for it, appears to have been the most

difficult of all to translate, not only in Daniel's vocabulary, but even in the entire Old Testament. At least the result of the translator's efforts, so far, does not appear too impressive. Linguistically two possibilities present themselves:

1) According to Cassel and Gesenius, the word must be considered as a Niph. pt., containing the idea of a formidable, in fact, most heart-rending and destiny-laden SIFTING process. Gesenius compares it to what happens in the threshing machine, as it separates the grain from the useless material. Or it reminds us of the inexorable action of separating the good sheaves from the evil weeds attached to them. Thus the same idea is often rendered by verbs such as "sever," "separate," "divorce," or the corresponding nouns.

But besides the concept of a general separation, NECHERATSA also assumes the specific meaning of a preparatory investigation in court ("eine Voruntersuchung im Gericht"). See by way of reference I Kings 20:40, Isaiah 28:27, and Joel 3:14 on the one hand, and Matthew 25:32 on the other. By and large the word "necheratsa" may be rendered in German by the word "Scheidegericht";

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that is, in the sense of a tribunal or court in front of which the destiny of a defendant is decided in a TEMPORARY way, a more or less incomplete way. It is based on a rather preparatory investigation. So it would sometimes imply the idea of judgment in terms of the Greek KRISIS, rather than the Greek KRIMA, the two words used in the New Testament for our concept of JUDGMENT. Even the English word "CRISIS" does imply, of course, that a double possibility is still open, whereas the Greek word KRIMA would rather correspond to DOOM in English.

And now this question to you and me: What was it the pioneers of our Advent Movement implied in their concept of an INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT? If the term they arrived at had to do with a trial comprising also the lives of the still living, then their concept must be as close to that used by Daniel as it could ever be expected to come. For both terms imply a certain crisis. And what does crisis mean? It means life OR death, salvation OR perdition. That evokes the idea of a dramatic process, urged forward by a perfectly just, but at the same time infinitely loving and longsuffering God, a God endlessly positive in all respects, a God about whom nothing bad can be reasonably pronounced at any time, in any place.

2) The second grammatical possibility would be to view the word "necheratsa" as a "substantivum compositum cum verbo." Then it would appear as a composite unit of two elements: on the one hand "charats"

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[Hebrew characters] or its closest synonym "charuts" [Hebrew characters]; on the other hand the verb "nachar" [Hebrew characters] or its closest synonym "ni'er" [Hebrew characters].

"Charats" means "decide," "mete out." "Charuts" means "cleave," "separate," "thresh."

"Nachar," the other part of the composite, means "blow," "separate by throwing up into the wind," "sift the grain." The synonym "ni'er" means "shake" "shake out," as one shakes the evil weeds away from the good sheaves. So, here as well, we arrive at very much the same result: NECHERATSA IS THE JUDGMENT PROCESS BY WHICH A CRITICAL SEPARATION OF THE GOOD FROM THE EVIL TAKES PLACE IN MEN'S LIVES.

And now, what do you think about the term chosen by our pioneers, after they had studied the Bible thoroughly, and particularly after they had prayed in a spirit of humility and a

contrition of the heart reminding us very much indeed of the attitude of Daniel, as he knelt in prayer before the great God of the abiding Spirit of Prophecy?

Well, what could have been a more perfect choice? It was not perfect for the flimsy reason that man, as a linguist, as a philosopher, or as a theologian, is so admirably clever. In fact, there is only One

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perfectly knowledgeable Theologian. There is only One truly admirable Philosopher, or Linguist—or whatever field of erudition you might care to mention—namely God. With Him there is no mistake, no miscalculation, no human blunder, no embarrassing confusion of the concepts.

In his old version of the Bible of 1599 the outstanding Polish theologian Ks. Wujek translates the word NECHERATSA with a foreign word quite current in the Polish language: SENTENCYA. That is simply the Latin word SENTENTIA. In Polish law terminology, however, that word is used as the consecrated term for precisely a temporary sentence passed in a juridical process. This preliminary sentence decides, for instance, whether the defendant is to be imprisoned or left free during the investigation of his case.

Evidently Wujek, as well, had realized the disputed word NECHERATSA in Daniel 9 stands for a preliminary sentence—which, however, already decides the fate of the defendant by and large. In our SDA theology the INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT means a decision definitive enough about life or death, although the meting out of the punishment—or of the remuneration in the case of final victory—has been postponed. The detailed measure of woe or weal will have to wait for a definitive decision, and for its public announcement, till a later time. That time is the great millennium (Revelation 20:4, 12–15). The serious thing we have got to do with is a "Pre-Advent Judgment."

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### **The Solemn Ministry of the Great High Priest in Time and Space!**

We have such a high priest who is set on the right of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. (Hebrews 8:1, 2)

Some critics of traditional SDA theology insist on translating the expression "ta hagia" as "the holy of holies." They feel free to do this because it is plural in Greek. Some older translators did the same. But that was because they lacked good dictionaries and grammars some centuries ago. However the best German experts I know in Biblical Greek, such as Schirlitz, Bauer, Knoch and Rienecke, all think differently about this. They now consistently translate the disputed words as "das Heilige,"—THE HOLY PLACE; so evidently the FIRST apartment of the sanctuary, or simply THE SANCTUARY, without any distinction.

The Czechoslovakian language here presents an interesting phenomenon. Its current versions of the Bible call the first apartment of the sanctuary—and also the sanctuary in its totality—simply "svatyne," exactly as the Greek Bible does. Thus the problem simply vanishes in the language of that country, whereas in other countries the matter is made into a burning question of dispute.

Knoch sees in the "ta hagia" not so much a plural as rather a collective term. He translates it "the holies," or "the holy places." However, in Hebrews 9:2 he translates quite correctly the Greek "ta hagia" like most other translators do: THE HOLY (das Heilige).

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By this he obviously means, just as the writer of the book of Hebrews must have done, the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary.

If we keep to the simple form of expression used by Paul who was that author of the book of Hebrews (according to the plain information we have from the Spirit of Prophecy), then we must take the plain consequences of Hebrews 9:2 and just conclude that Jesus, after His return to the heavenly Father, went into the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven to perform His special ministry there. This ought to be quite indisputable wherever one does not dispute for disputation's sake.

Not only the above-mentioned Bible translators, but also the well-known German translator Menge, in his revised edition, translates the "ta hagia" of the verses 12 and 24 of the 9th chapter in this simple way: "the sanctuary."

And then what about the way into that sanctuary. Where does it normally lead its visitor (including even its Visitor with a capital "V")? If we think in terms of apartments, and specific entrances, it would seem natural to direct one's attention toward the door of the first apartment (the veil) leading into what is specifically called THE HOLY. Did Jesus have any "business" there—something that would cause Him to stay for some time in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary?

What does the book of Hebrews have to say about that? Actually Hebrews 6:19, 20 makes it as clear as we could ever wish to have it, that Jesus Christ, our Saviour

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and High Priest, had something most significant to perform there in terms of His holy ministry in our behalf:

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the (first) veil (singular!), whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. (Hebrews 6:19, 20; insertions supplied)

In Rienecke's SCHLUSSEL ZUM NEUEN TESTAMENT, page 531, we learn that this has to do with the FIRST VEIL, which had been erected above the entrance of the holy place of the sanctuary (i.e. the first apartment). In Hebrews 9:3 the veil in front of the holy of holies is called "katapetasma," with the corresponding numeral. In Hebrews 6:19, however, the veil in front of the holy (the first apartment) is called "katapetamos," without any numeral. This matter should be evident enough.

It would indeed be a vain attempt to try and "prove" that Jesus even a long time before 1844 has been officiating in the holy of holies as our High Priest.

Such "proof" would not have any force to unsettle, in the least, the firm doctrine of our Advent pioneers, as far as the year 1844 is concerned.

In an official ministerial capacity the high priest of the Old Testament was permitted to enter the holy of holies once a year only, namely on the day of YOM KIPPUR. His office then

consisted in cleansing the sanctuary. But look now, was that all? What about Aaron and his sons? What did they do every time when the camp was broken up and pitched in a new place? This happened many times in the course of a year. And every time those

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priests went into the most holy place in order to prepare the ark for its transportation, or to place it anew in that same holy of holies at the new camp site (Numbers 4:4–6, 15, 17–20).

Jesus, the Son of the living God, and our High Priest, must of course be assumed to have full freedom of moving to any place He likes in the entire universe at any given moment! Why should He not have access to the most holy at any time, just as some special need might arise? Would His Father—or somebody else—forbid Him to enter there on any occasion on which this might be desirable or even necessary for Him? Should the Creator of the Universe, the Lord of the Heavens, be strictly limited in His movements, having to wait for instance for the year 1844, Anno Domini, to have a "permit" to enter a given part of His sanctuary? Such a trend of thought would be foolishness, wouldn't it?

What the bible speaks about, of course, is the special official ministries performed by Christ on our behalf, at specific times, and in specific places. There is minute order, accurate planning, and concrete realism, in all the affairs of our God—in heaven, as well as on earth.

Some of our theologians, however, have grown so spiritualistic in their pagan views about God that they obviously would almost forbid Him, under pain of banishment, the freedom of moving into certain areas. Permeated as their thinking is by the thought-forms of a spiritualist philosophy, they would probably do their best to keep God out of any place they deem "unworthy"

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for Him to stay in. So they cannot either imagine that the Bible speaks in realistic terms when it announces, quite unambiguously, that God intends to dwell literally among men, on a literal earth, with a literal New Jerusalem, in which we are going to come up every Sabbath to see Him face to face.

According to Biblical terminology, this earth of ours is the courtyard of the holy heavens even today (Acts 3:19–21). Could it be possible that the Creator of the heavens and the earth would think it compatible with His infinite dignity to settle, for year-thousand after year-thousand within the realms of a humble planet in the outskirts of the universe, in order to make His dwelling with MAN—of all creatures! Could anything as incredible as that be taken in a literal sense?

Spiritualist philosophy never grasped one bit of plain reality, as it is in Jesus Christ. Spiritualists of any kind are desolately unrealistic. But listen, is it any more realistic to say, or at least to think, as some among us seem to do: "Jesus, according to the Gospel, after having finished His work on earth, went straight to His Father in heaven. And His Father is only to be found in the Holy of Holies. So the Son must, of necessity, have started His high-priestly ministry right there." Is this broad-minded thinking?

Ellen White, the humble handmaid of the Spirit of Prophecy in modern times, says about this: "I saw that Jesus ministered in both apartments of the heavenly sanctuary." (*Early Writings*, p. 253)

From our study so far we gather the following knowledge:

a) We are in no way entitled to imagine our High Priest as chained to one limited place.  
 b) According to the original texts of the Greek New Testament, we cannot in any reasonable way demonstrate that Jesus upon returning to His Father in heaven, immediately started His ministry as a High Priest in the most holy place in front of the ark of the covenant. It is also unthinkable that Jesus, from the year 31 A.D. was locally "nailed" to the necessity of spending all His time at His Father's throne.

c) The most knowledgeable experts in the field of Biblical Greek (such as Schirlitz, Bauer, Riencke, Knoch—just to mention a few of the German ones) translate the term "ta hagia" as "the holy" (Hebrews 9:2). Obviously that is exactly what Paul wanted to convey.

d) After a closer study of the texts contained in Hebrews 8:1, 2 and 9:12, 24, we realize clearly enough that the author availing himself of the term *ta hagion* also understood the heavenly sanctuary as a totality. Hence we must also consider the following translation of Hebrews 9:12 as the correct one:

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place (the Sanctuary), having obtained eternal redemption for us. (Hebrews 9:12; insertion supplied)

In spite of the fact that the high priest of old, once a year, went into the holy of holies in a ministering capacity, his every-day ministry took place in the first

apartment of the sanctuary (the holy; Hebrews 9:6–10). It is also a demonstrable fact that Jesus, Our Saviour, after His ascension, started His high-priestly ministry in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, that is, the holy, where the seven-armed candle-stick is located:

I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom of patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying: I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. And what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamon, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake to me. And being turned I SAW SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS, AND IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN CANDLESTICKS ONE LIKE UNTO THE SON OF MAN. (Revelation 1:9–13; caps supplied)

John certainly had this vision before the turn of the first century. But notice: up until that time Jesus was evidently then exercising His ministry as our High Priest among the seven candle-sticks! That is in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The time for a conclusion of His work there was still the matter of a distant future. The explanation is as simple as that. The great passing over from His office in the holy to His office in the holy of holies was something that just had to wait, even for long, long centuries. What had been determined, could not be reversed. The INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT, otherwise expressed, the great NECHERATSA, was

foretold for a specific date.

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It was to come to its fruition only at the end of the 2300 evenings and mornings. The God of heaven had His special order of things, His sequences, according to which things were supposed to take place.

**The Ministry of the True High Priest in the First Apartment from the Year 31 A.D. up until 1844 A. D.**

It is nothing less than high treason against God and against the three angels' messages when you and I have the incredible boldness of changing the landmarks, thinking, in the vanity of our barefaced theological pride, that we know for sure what has never been predicted, namely in this case that Jesus went straight into the holy of holies of the heavens at the moment of His ascension to place Himself forever beside His Father on a throne there, starting His high-priestly ministry right there. What do the critics of traditional Seventh-day Adventism mean by that throne? They mean the throne of grace above the heavenly ark. Sister White, on the contrary, in her visions, saw Jesus beside His Father in the holy place on a crystal sea up until 1844. (*Early Writings*, pp. 250–253; 54–56; 42–45)

We are here at the point of a truth about which little research has been carried out so far. But it is a truth which has great light to be shed on the topic we are discussing.

When we study the scriptures thoroughly, we realize that no Bible writer gives enlightenment regarding the issue at hand like the apostle John does in the Book of Revelation.

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The ravaging marauders who have come to us in certain offshoot movements down through the decades, have gone terribly astray themselves, and in turn they do their very best to lead you and me astray as well. Some of them almost totally dismiss the Old Testament. And now they also want to throw overboard the Book of Revelation. So finally what still remains is just what the fallen churches of the great Babylon (Rome and the Ecumenical Movement) condescend to regard as the "spiritual" gospel of Jesus Christ. The specific messages of the three angels and the Seventh-day Advent truth in all its marked specificity—especially devised to meet the main problems of the present day—all this tends to be spiritualized away, vanish into vapor, namely, the learned type of vapor created by modern pseudo-theology, which, in reality, is nothing but sheer ignorance. They have from the beginning been bent on going the way of willful egocentricity, the way of Cain. At the end of that road what awaits them is the second death, nothing more.

We, however, want to base ourselves on the foundation laid by Jesus and the apostles, don't we? We prefer to take the Holy Scriptures as our safe guide (John 5:39; 1 Thessalonians 5:19–21). We want to follow the footprints of an apostle to whom it was granted, as the only one, to follow Jesus in vision all the way to the very mansions of the Father, thus observing, and getting to understand, many things which would otherwise still have remained total secrets to us.

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What thou seest (and hearest) write in a book. (Revelation 1:11; insertion supplied)

This was the solemn order given to the seer of Patmos at the very beginning of his great vision. As he turned around to see who was talking to him, he discovered Jesus Christ supervising the holy place, the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, performing His office as a High Priest there (Revelation 2:1; Exodus 25:31, 37; 27:20, 21; 40:4; Leviticus 24:1–4\*). Just at that moment He, the Light of the world, had something to do, quite evidently, right in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. He had something to do in order to keep the light power of those candles burning, maintaining their right level of vital brightness.

What further things do we get to know? We are acquainted with the specific messages Jesus has to direct to each one of those burning candlesticks, representing God's church at successive eras of our history. It may be a message of admonition. It may be a message of stern reproof. It may be a message of comfort and encouragement.

Although our High Priest is mainly engaged in His work as a mediator for us at the court of investigation, a court of justice, shaking the harvest material IN or OUT, He also still has a certain engagement in the affairs of the first apartment. Remember, the last lamp of the seven-armed candlestick, the Laodicean church (and you do not want to regard that as a negligible church, do you?) needs words of admonition and reproof, consolation and encouragement, in order to reach its indispensable standard of full radiation power.

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Let us not deceive ourselves regarding the condition of that particular church. The wick of this last lamp, a lonely end-time witness spreading the divine truth among the peoples of the earth, is partly charred and incapable of nourishing the lamp with the oil of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it has to be cleaned up and trimmed. Jesus does that trimming. He does it by telling His slumbering and unfaithful people the naked truth. With the light of the thorough reformation, which He has ordained, He represents His people on earth. Through the chastisement He exercises, He leads them to sincere repentance. Before it is too late, we must be brought out of our stupor, become truly awake, truly burning for the Lord. For that purpose a true knowledge of the significance of the messages addressed to the seven churches is necessary. Knowing more fully the mighty ministry performed by our Lord during the successive church epochs from 31 A.D. to 1844 enables us to understand more clearly His peculiar ministry in our behalf and His specific way of working in our own day.

### **The Holy of the Heavenly Tabernacle**

Our true High Priest concludes and confirms His prophetic message to John, while He is still standing in the midst of His seven lamps in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, with the following words:

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Revelation 3:21)

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\* \*The original had, instead of these Exodus and Leviticus texts, Leviticus 13:1, 2; 15:1, which have no connection to the candlesticks.

These words inform us where Jesus was at the time when he spoke to John. His place was among the seven

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lamps of the holy (Revelation 1:12, 13). Even there He was with His Father on one and the same throne. The sentence "I am set down with my Father in His throne" is in the present tense. So what throne was it John saw? It was a throne in the first apartment of the sanctuary.

At the beginning of the second vision, shown to John in the island of Patmos, Jesus spoke to him from the same place in the holy where the prophet had seen Him the first time, namely among the lamps of the candlestick. At His return to the heavenly Father, Jesus left one door without any intention of closing it. He left the door to the first apartment wide open. For centuries that door was to remain an inviting door of grace for repentant sinners. The Saviour encouraged His apostle to follow Him through that door of grace into the holy place of the heavens. And John, in his vision, accepted the invitation (Revelation 4:1). As the prophet stayed there for a long time, he also became aware of the golden altar of incense. That points out the identity of the place with still greater accuracy. We certainly find ourselves in the first apartment of the heavenly temple.

What further attention-arousing things did the apostle see there? He saw a great white throne with fiery wheels. It was the same throne that Daniel had once seen, and also the one Ellen White was going to see in the end-time (Revelation 4:2, 3; 20:11, 12; Daniel 7:9, 10, 13).

On the throne the Ancient of days was sitting; that is, the almighty Father of the universe, the true and living God, the great majesty of the heavens.

A deeper study leads to the insight that this divine

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throne, surrounded by 24 thrones of elders, formed an oval semi-circle. At each end of that curved row of thrones, at the inside of the curve, two cherubim were standing; so four cherubim in all. They had the function of guards. In the middle of the half-oval stood Jesus, the Saviour of the world—right in front of His heavenly Father. His immediate function at the moment was to receive from the Most High a confirmation of His office as High Priest. With this, He was at the same time recognized as the Field Marshall of Light (Revelation 12:7), a Warrior at inexorable war against the prince of darkness.

In front of that great throne of the Most High, John saw a sea of glass, a crystal ocean. Round about the great white throne and the 24 thrones of elders, no less than 100,000,000 angels, faithful to God, had placed themselves in order to be present at the solemn celebration, confirming the worthiness of Jesus Christ to enter His high office.

Later John also saw, in his great vision, an innumerable host of redeemed human beings, all the way from Adam down. They were standing on the crystal sea to pay homage to the living God and His incomparably glorious Son. They expressed their great thankfulness to the triune God for the resurrection and translation marvel they had experienced (Revelation 4:4–8; 5:11; 7:9–17).

Why are all these amazing details given?

Is it not simply in order that the Bible reader should obtain a more adequate idea about God and His unfathomable greatness? We should also, thanks to these descriptions,

be more able to acquire an approximate conception of the appearance and the dimensions of the heavenly temple. So why do the enemies of Biblical truths shake their wise heads when they happen to come across passages in the Spirit of Prophecy writings speaking about fiery chariots, which one has to avail oneself of sometimes for the purpose of moving from one apartment of the heavenly temple to another? In her vision (they say), Ellen White had already overcome the problem of distances. By taking away the second veil she had made it possible to arrive from one apartment to the other with just one single human step.

Dear friends, it is not Sister White who has eliminated the distances. Her philosophy is too realistic, too Biblical and hence fundamentally Christian for that. It is the modern theologians with their spiritualistic thought-forms, inherited directly from old platonic idealism, who have problems with the distances. For they think it a great shame for a Christian to speak about literal distances at all in the high heavens of God. To them the very notion of any concrete spatial distance is something far too materialistic to have any validity or any sense in the world of the Spirit, as their theology evaluates "true spirituality." And exactly the same applies to their notion about temporal distances. To them "true spirit" is supposed to eliminate both time and space. Therefore, prophecy in general, and long time prophecies in particular, are considered as a vertical impossibility in the "kingdom of true religion." "What a jumble of childish nonsense!" they seem to say, "2300 evenings and mornings, interpreted as a literal period of 2300 years. Who could be so ignorant

about God's limited ability to pronounce anything with certainty about what turn the lives of free human agents will take in the future. How could minute event after minute event be lined up precisely for the future destinies of people with perfect freedom of choice. According to the openness-of-God theories minutely laid down by sharp-witted modern philosophers such as the British mathematical genius Whitehead, even God just could not be supposed to have any success in operating with fixed dates for destiny-laden happenings in the living stream of an onflowing human history."

Some sophisticated scholars even among our own most trusted and most influential theology professors today keep teaching that same openness-of-God theory. (See *Day of Destiny*, pp. 130–147, Untold Story Publishers, 1982, taking issue quite publicly with R. Rice's book *The Openness of God*, published by Review and Herald Publishing Association.)

Small wonder that the faith we used to have in the relevancy of Biblical prophecies in the Advent movement is gradually breaking down. The reasoning among too many among us today seems to be: Why not let scripture expositors of the ancient mold have a monopoly of that kind of "speculative theology" basing itself on "cocksure" interpretations of apocalyptic prophecies?

Today you come across more and more theologians among us who seem to think it rather childish, on the part of Ellen White and all the rest of our pioneers, to be all that interested in this "weird thing" called prophetic prediction of the future.

So they exult gloatingly when they imagine they have caught the prophetess involving herself in contradictions or anything less than perfect. By way of "evidence" they bring up one

case after the other, assumed to produce convincing proof material, a sort of CORPUS DELICTI, that the child Ellen is getting herself into difficulty because she is not mature enough to elevate her thinking above the level of a material concreteness which gets the better of her. No wonder the Testimonies so often get into deep water, they shout.

Well, dear reader, let us with God's help, carry on our present study to see if that constant doubt assailing the minds of a certain Sadducee type of present-day theologians has any real RAISON D'ÊTRE.

### **The "Fiery Horses" of God—Seen Toward a Background of the Unfathomable Dimensions of the Heavenly Sanctuary**

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.  
(Revelation 11:1)

The Bible has nothing to say regarding John's special reaction to this request. Did he succeed in following it, or did he throw up his hands in unconditional surrender? We do not know. But one thing we do know: The question in itself is not an unreasonable one. It is a question whose realism modern intelligent men of a true scientific mold ought to acknowledge. How large, after all, quite literally speaking, could the space of that first part of the heavenly sanctuary be estimated

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to be? If you have still preserved a sound sense of wonder, when, as a modern tourist you visit Egypt and stand face to face with the Sphinx and the pyramids, why should you not likewise stop a while and think thoughts of equal realism at the moment when you find yourself confronted with what the Bible does inform you about the time-space reality of the Holy Place in the celestial temple? Let us, so far, content ourselves with wondering about the dimensions of that one part of the tremendous whole. The dizziness of our minds may be great enough, even if, to begin with, we limit our aspiration a little bit. We have already seen that some one hundred millions of angels find ample room in that apartment. To that should be added the uncountable host of redeemed human beings down through the millennia of this earth's history. Here all arithmetic and geometry on a common human level seems to come to a blank end. We must naturally assume that John, quite overwhelmed by the multitude of persons assembled in front of the altar of the holy, simply abandoned the task as unfeasible.

### **Four Different Sanctuaries in the Bible**

Holy Writ and the Testimonies of the Spirit of Prophecy tell us about no less than four different specimens within the sanctuary category, as it has pleased the living God to have them included in His wonderful kingdom:

I. In the first place, Moses was shown, on the mountain, a model of the true sanctuary in heaven. Ellen White too was shown that one. And it was Jesus Himself

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who had taken upon Himself the humble charge of carrying out the task of functioning as a guide

for that beloved lady on that remarkable occasion (*Early Writings*, p. 32). This time one might say that the afore-mentioned affirmation had some validity: Ellen could make one single step from one apartment of the temple to the other.

II. In the second place, the Bible speaks about an imitation, so to speak, a shadow of the reality of God's ministration in heaven. That was the terrestrial sanctuary with all its parts, constructed by Moses and his helpers—under the leadership still of course of the true Master-Builder:

And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee on the mount. (Exodus 25:40; Hebrews 8:5)

III. In the third place, from the testimonies of God conveyed to you and me through Ellen White, we know about a temple of the Lord outside the Holy City, the New Jerusalem.

Here a distinction should be made between the temple to be found inside the city of old, the one constructed more or less after the pattern shown to Moses on the mountain, and also shown to Ellen White in her vision (*Early Writings*, p. 32), and, on the other hand, the temple of the New Earth, a temple to be found outside the New Jerusalem, on Mount Zion (*Early Writings*, p. 19).

IV. In the fourth place, we have the gigantic Temple of God in the high heavens, the special residence of the Ruler of the universe.

The priest and prophet of God, Ezekiel, during the Babylonian captivity, one day happened to be near the

river Kebar. This was in the year 593 B.C. Then suddenly the heaven seemed to open in front of him. A violent tempest was blowing toward him. A shining cloud appeared. In it the prophet could see a "fiery chariot."

Such fiery vehicles, by the way, were not entirely unknown to God's people even before that time. We remember the record of Elijah being taken to heaven. His successor in the prophetic office, Elisha, had a gripping firsthand experience of that event:

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more, and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. (2 Kings 2:11,12)

The Syrians once besieged Dothan where Elisha happened to be a visitor. In the morning his servant awakened him with the terrible announcement that the city was entirely surrounded by strong enemy forces. Then Elisha prayed:

Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see, and the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. (2 Kings 6:17)

Did Elisha have any realistic reason to say to the youngster, as he did: "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them"?

Tell me, do you think the idea of "chariots of fire" is something fitting into the "childish

concepts" of certain Negro spirituals and "similar stuff" only, but not into the "sober thinking of grown up modern men, men who have "shed the superstitions" of an "unrealistic past"?"

If so, then I pray that you, as well, may be granted

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the helpful experience of having your eyes opened.

It was God's most real angels who, on that occasion, were literally transported on chariots of fire, as a result of Elisha's need of protection. The praying servants of God were in a most realistic need of being protected without delay in order to survive.

Now, of course, with the modest technological knowledge you and I, even today, have at our disposal, it is difficult for us to imagine exactly what a Biblical "chariot of fire" actually stands for. What in our modern mind might seem to come closest to it, would probably be what we in the present era call a space ship—"shuttle," to be entirely up to date. As far as the horses are concerned, this certainly conveys the notion of something vibrantly alive. Of course we do still measure the power of ultra-modern engines in terms of so many "horsepower." But in our advanced technology, that tends to be a pretty materialistic type of terminology, doesn't it? We should at least know about our own modern language, that it is pitifully one-sided and "pure-matter" oriented. To us engines are alive only in terms of barren "horsepower output." God's reality, contrariwise, is a wonderfully composite one. Spiritual power (mental power) and material power are not natural enemies. They rather work harmoniously together in God's world to make one great and inseparable totality.

Let us go on hearing what Ezekiel has to tell us about a certain type of "horse powers" that revealed themselves to him as intensely alive and most meaningfully complete in their practical functions. Out of an approaching

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cloud the prophet first saw small lightnings proceed, discharging themselves at a rapid pace.

Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four LIVING CREATURES, and this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a MAN. (Ezekiel 1:5; caps supplied)

What has been emphasized in this quotation are features of just that highly advanced divine technology about which we have little exact knowledge, but which impresses us as particularly meaningful, biologically and spiritually speaking. The writer, overwhelmed by his vision, goes on describing those "LIVING CREATURES" as follows:

And every one had four faces, and everyone had four wings. (Ezekiel 1:6)

If we compare this description by Ezekiel with what people today describe as "flying saucers" in the current UFO literature, which is full of similar terms, then one feature seems to stand out: There is something so convincingly meaningful about the communications taking place, according to what the Bible describes as "chariots of fire." And here the comparison with the UFO reports seems to break down. For what meaningfulness do we manage to derive from most things in those reports? Most literature dealing with the phenomena arousing our excitement today under the title of "flying saucers," or the more official term of "unidentified flying objects," compared to the Biblical accounts, seem to be sadly lacking, both in consistency

and in worthiness. This does not necessarily mean that there is

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nothing corresponding to stern reality behind the UFO phenomena. It only means that when it comes to a pattern of true meaningfulness, religiously speaking, the cherubim chariots of the accounts in Biblical prophecy are endlessly more impressive in terms of spiritual meaningfulness.

There seems, in fact, to be ample reason to hesitate considerably in front of what is happening today in that weird UFO world. Instead of being operated by heavenly cherubs, some of those "flying saucers" might be specters operated by quite other forces. Here we are finding ourselves on dubious and most dangerous ground.

Maybe the most important fact—and a wonderfully meaningful fact—we should mention regarding Ezekiel's experience with "wagons of fire" is this: Over the heads of the "living creatures" there was a firmament, and above the firmament something like a majestic throne. And upon that throne-like thing, presenting the appearance of a huge sapphire stone, there was Someone reminding the prophet of a Man. What Man?

And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within (the throne). (Ezekiel 1:27; insertion supplied)

And significant beyond description is the following:

As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of One that spake. (Ezekiel 1:28)

Why now do some think it improper (downright unseemly)

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that the first noted prophetess of the great Advent movement was led to see particularly wonderful things about the heavenly sanctuary, things so intimately connected with major world events of the end-time history? How do we actually think we are going to be realistically EVACUATED from the last bridge-heads of this earth at the time when it shall no longer be fit for habitation and human survival, if we do not accept, as our ultimate chance for embarkation, just that "living chariot" Jesus Christ has provided for our evacuation, our glorious transportation up to a safer place of refuge than earth today is gradually growing to be? Or do we not perhaps feel any true longings in our hearts for that translation which will enable us to stand on the crystal sea before the great white throne of the Most High?

Now, in order to come still closer to the conclusion of our theme, let us see how many different thrones of God the Holy Scriptures speak about. They are three in all.

1. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE FACING THE CRYSTAL SEA. Both Daniel and John—and Ellen White—have much to say about what was graphically shown them regarding that throne. They evidently did their very best, within the limited scope of human writers, and human readers, to describe what they saw. The result, more or less poor admittedly, compared to the actual reality, may be seen in Daniel 7:9, 10, 13; Revelation 4:2–9; 20:11; *Early Writings*, p. 55.

2. THE THRONE CHARIOT OF EZEKIEL, described in chapters 1 and 10, but also in Revelation 14:14; Daniel 7:13; Matthew 19:28; 25:31; Hebrews 1:8.

Between that throne chariot of the Father and that of the coming King, Jesus Christ, there is a definite difference. Regarding the throne chariot of the Lord Jesus we learn that it is operated by four cherubs, having four wings each. Their power of locomotion is described by Ezekiel as a "whirlwind." John, however, describes the greater throne chariot of the Father as being operated by four seraphim, having six wings each. The motive power in this latter case is located in the wheels and described as "fiery flame," or "burning fire" (Daniel 7:9; Revelation 4:5).

3. Thirdly, there is, in the heavenly sanctuary, apart from the great white "Conference Throne" of the first apartment already described, from which God's announcements and orders go out to the angels, also ANOTHER THRONE. That is the Throne of Grace, an exceedingly glorious one, located above the tables of the Decalogue in the holy of holies (Hebrews 9:4, 5; 4:16). In the sanctuary on earth that throne was represented by the "kapporat," the golden mercy seat, with the two golden cherubs above it. In the Jewish tabernacle the presence of God's glory, the SHEKINAH appeared occasionally in this place—"between the cherubim"—as an extremely bright light.

All this indicates that the Almighty One, residing in His highest heavens, is not necessarily to be considered as a God absolutely bound to the precincts of His throne

of Grace (above the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary). This is not His uninterrupted place of residence. He is not the static, absolutely unmoveable God whom heathen idealism knows. That spiritualistic Greek idea of God is non-Christian and non-Biblical. Still it is widely disseminated. That is rather unreasonable. For the Bible abounds in tests giving us an entirely different notion of God. See 1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; Psalms 80:2. "Dwelling between the cherubs" does not of course mean "being incarcerated between the cherubs." The devil—and also many men—would be pleased indeed to have God incarcerated, a life-long imprisonment, if possible. A more simple understanding of the two thrones of God in the heavenly temple leads us to two important conclusions:

1. The incorrigible ones who do not want to have anything to do with God, and therefore also despise His moral commandments, cannot have their eternal destiny decided in front of the throne of grace of the holy of holies. No, that throne is the proper place for one thing: the full pardon. But such pardon is of course out of the question in the case of the obdurate sinner. You cannot have your case decided in front of the mercy seat, if you have not permitted it to enter there. Most people refuse to follow God's appeal for penitence and improvement. They finally let the balance down in favor of definite disobedience against God. Since the days of Adam a minute account has been made of everything individuals on earth have done, or failed to do. To think of this registration as a sort of automatic tape recorder

might suggest a certain impersonalism on the part of the registrars. But please note one thing down: Those angels who have the charge of noting down the facts of human lives, are NOT impersonal automatons. On the contrary, they are most personally concerned, but also absolutely

incorruptible, absolutely reliable in the performance of their task. They rejoice every time a sinful person overcomes his sin and wins a decisive victory, with Christ's help, over every evil inclination; that is, accepting, through the mighty realism of a full repentance (METANOIA), the full grace of God, thus standing finally victorious in the battle against Satan and the entire confederation of darkness belonging to this earthly kingdom today. That is all it requires to have one's name entered into the book of life by Jesus and His holy angels. It does not require any gigantic construction on man's part. But it does require, absolutely, that man's attitude be NOT DE-structive. Your refusal to accept is fatally sufficient to bar your way toward Christ's gracious salvation.

2. Now, in the course of the INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT ("Scheidegericht" is the term of some knowledgeable German theologians), from the year 1844 on, the names entered into the book of grace are brought in front of the supreme Judge by our great Mediator and Redeemer Jesus Christ. The Judge is seated on His supreme throne of grace. And "the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). This jurisdiction of mercy in front of the great throne of grace of the Most Holy One, is the best deal anyone could ever give you and me. It is the generous

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treatment we never deserved, and our attitude toward it should be an attitude of deep gratitude. It is our attitude of thankfulness—or unthankfulness—that will decide whether that mercy is going to do us any good or not at the moment when our names come up in the court. If the matter is decided positively, we shall have the good fortune of our case being decided THEN and THERE. Otherwise it will be put off and treated in detail only during the great public Judgment process in the course of the millennium, while we are still resting in our graves, together with all other impenitent men. That is the time when other human beings, already called back to life through a glorious resurrection, have the sadness of reviewing our tragedy. Then those who have despised God's temple of grace, are to be judged by the righteous Judge on the white tribunal, reserved for the ones who "come unto condemnation" (John 5:24; James 2:13; 1 Peter 4:17). As late as that no grace can be expected. For the records dealt with are those of impenitent sinners.

Those impenitent ones are judged in front of the great white throne of the first apartment to which the Judge returns after the time of grace has run out. With terror they shall have to observe, projected vividly against the firmament of dire reality, a living panorama of their past lives. Called back to life at the end of the millennium, for a final confrontation with the inescapable reality of their past impenitent lives, they have to face in retrospect their unpardoned iniquities. It is essential for the vindication of God as the perfectly Righteous One, and the future safety of the redeemed

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and all other spectators, that this last page of the lugubrious drama should be turned. Even the chief among the wicked, the devil himself, has to be forced by the dire necessity of simple reality, to confess publicly that he was tragically wrong. He and his associates have for a long time led lives of self-assurance and fearlessness. (They lacked something basic: the fear of God. So they have to suffer another fear, namely the final terror-ridden experience of a life without God, nothing less than that.) Then, from the stern heights of the just tribunal of God, fire and brimstone shall rain down upon them. The second death, a death from which there is no hope of

an awakening in all eternity, is the simple salary of their lawlessness.

And now back to the investigative judgment, the court of decision which separates the chaff from the wheat.

Under the headline of

### **End of the 2300 Days**

Ellen White—or at that time the young girl Ellen Harmon—has a most remarkable passage in a most remarkable little book in the history of end-time Christianity. The first part of that chapter has been commented on in the recent book by Carsten Johnsen, *The Mystic Omega of End-Time Crisis*, to give evidence of the overwhelming philosophy of Biblical realism manifesting itself in incomparable documents of the Spirit of Prophecy. Let the passage here be quoted verbatim and in extenso:

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I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, "If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist." Before the throne I saw the Advent people—the church and the world. I saw two companies, one bowed down before the throne deeply interested, while the other stood uninterested and careless. Those who were bowed before the throne would offer up their prayers and look to Jesus; then He would look to His Father, and appear to be pleading with Him. A light would come from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the praying company. Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from the Father to the Son, and from the Son it waved over the people before the throne. But few would receive this great light. Many came out from under it, and immediately resisted it; others were careless and did not cherish the light, and it moved off from them. Some cherished it, and went and bowed down with the little praying company. This company all received the light and rejoiced in it, and their countenances shone with it glory.

I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after He arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who arose when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him as He left the throne and led them out a little way. Then He raised His right arm, and we heard His lovely voice saying, "Wait here; I am going to my Father to receive the kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to myself." Then a cloudy chariot with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest,

standing before the Father. On the hem of His garment was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, "My Father, give us Thy Spirit." Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy and peace. (*Early Writings*, p. 55)

We readily see that no contrast whatsoever exists between the Word of God in the Bible and the Testimony of the Spirit of Prophecy about these things, as Sister White has written it down for our enlightenment. But many who have fallen away from our ranks are found mocking at the doctrines we have received from God about a heavenly sanctuary. This "geography of the heavens" is looked down upon as having no value any more for the inhabitants of the earth. But who could ever expect any true appreciation of material time-space facts from teachers of theology who are penetrated by the "pure" ideas of a spiritualistic philosophy. To them material realities are not dignified enough to find any room in Biblical prophecy. They may at one time have joined the company of the peculiar people called Seventh-day Adventists. But they have lost the patience which Revelation 14:12 describes as the "patience of the saints." Accordingly they have no part any longer in the three angels' messages. So they do not either believe that the Spirit of Prophecy is still active among God's people. As soon as we make a reference to the Testimonies in matters of faith, they tell about us that we regard Ellen White as the incarnate Spirit of Prophecy. That is not necessarily true about us. Seventh-day Adventists of true realism know perfectly well that Ellen White was nothing

but a modest tool in the hands of God to communicate to us the power which God has in store for us. On this we shall have more to say in the following chapter.

### **The Spirit of Prophecy—to Satan a Thorn in the Flesh**

When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8)

This was the question Jesus asked of God's people at the time of His first advent. They were silent. They were too surprised to give an answer. In fact they were unable to understand the question. So how could they answer it?

Also the people of God at the time of the Second Advent are taken by surprise. So they too remain silent. To some extent they know their condition, and therefore also the seriousness of the inquiry. The proud doubters among us (our modern Sadducees) have penetrated with their evil leaven the churches, the Sabbath schools, the missionary colleges, our theological seminaries on the highest level. The fruit of their faithful activity is plainly seen and commonly known.

How much is there left of the belief our Advent pioneers had regarding the 2300 evenings and mornings? Many purely nominal Seventh-day Adventists exert an appallingly strong influence on the leadership of our denomination. How many of them do still seriously believe in the essentials implied in the interpretation once given to those landmark prophecies, namely at the time when the basis was laid for our peculiar faith? Do we with full

conviction rely on the correctness of our fundamental doctrine about the present Investigative Judgment taking place in the holy of holies in heaven? A large number of Seventh-day Adventist teachers and preachers, generally professing to be on the side of the message of the three angels, are in a state of utter confusion regarding what the Bible teaches about the open and the shut door, and also about the tremendous facts regarding the door of grace. The Spirit of Prophecy declares that the doctrines here at stake just cannot be separated from the Sabbath truth. Then why do we know so little about these things? And if the simple knowledge is lacking, how can we hope for any realistic improvement? How could anyone teach what he himself still does not know? There must be a serious sin of omission here. The true and faithful Witness points out the real reason for this condition in our church today. It is lukewarmness and spiritual blindness. Ignorance, doubt and unbelief among our people could not fail to be the direct consequence of that criminal neglect.

And what is too often the sad lot of those who take the initiative to make particular efforts in order to ensure some definite change and real progress by reaching out and courageously grasping hold of the light from heaven? Envy and hate may be all they are met with in many circles. But of course that is not either anything entirely new under the sun. Ellen White is certainly right when she says:

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The same disobedience and failure which were seen in the Jewish church, have characterized in a greater degree the people who have had this great light from heaven in the last messages of warning. (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 456. Compare Exodus 4:1; Numbers 11:29.)

Do we have the rare boldness of assuming the full responsibility of letting the history of ancient Israel repeat itself in our lives?

We fiercely fight the very instruments whom the Spirit has elected for His great work. We heap upon their heads false accusation and hateful criticism in order to destroy their credibility. Just as in the case of the covenant people of old, the consequences are fateful (Proverbs 29:18). Down through the ages of church history God never failed to offer light and counsel. By accepting that light and that counsel God's people of all ages had their only chance of being saved from material annihilation and eternal perdition. And now comes the main question to you and me: Has the remnant of succeeding ages received the messengers and reform preachers God sent to them in a more noble way than what history has to tell about apostate Israel and Babylon? How could we be surprised if the confidence in the leadership we constitute today—including teachers and preachers, as well as administrators—is in the process of collapsing.

With longsuffering meekness and heart-rending sorrow the Holy Spirit speaks to us through the writings of His handmaid, Ellen White, for the purpose of saving our faith from total shipwreck:

What voice will you acknowledge as the voice of God? What power has the Lord in reserve to correct your errors, and show you your course as it is? What power to work in the church? If you refuse to believe until every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility

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of doubt is removed, you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration. The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us urging us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which speaks from God. We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience without parleying or compromise, lest its promptings cease, and will and impulse control. The word of the Lord comes to us all who have not resisted His Spirit by determining not to hear and obey. This voice is heard in warnings, in counsels and reproofs. It is the Lord's message of light to His people. If we wait for louder calls or better opportunities, the light may be withdrawn, and we left in darkness. (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, pp. 68, 69)

Hardly anything can strengthen our faith like Biblical prophecy, being fulfilled right in front of our eyes. In the same way, nothing can ruin our faith like the absence of truthful prophetic testimonies and the suppression of prophets and their faithful interpreters.

The phrase "we, the people of prophets"—to describe our denomination—should be used with caution, above all never in a mood of flattering self-admiration. There must be a clear distinction between doctrinal lecture, or sermon—and prophecy. Some may have various talents at the same time, but in all cases wise discernment is an imperative need. Self-importance will tend to lead a people astray. Such tragic derailment must be carefully avoided.

The warnings and explanations originating from the Spirit of Prophecy, and written down by Ellen White, plainly and simply, often appear "too dull" to the minds

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of many readers. They are felt to be "unscientific" and "dreamlike." Here and there in her writings they discover offensive details, contradictions, deviations from Holy Writ and from sound human logic.

Well, we all tend to find what we are looking for. Critics find errors. And the reason is often very simple: They just happen to be confronted with notions that do not suit their worldly and self-sufficient minds. They also feel immediately entitled to pass similar negative judgments on their seniors and former teachers. They think their own ideas are rather infallible. It so happens that the statements made by the Spirit of Prophecy writings do not fit into the pattern of the "infallibility." So they must be rejected. Such people hardly realize that only those who permit themselves to be led by the Spirit of God have any chance of understanding what the Spirit has inspired. Those who demand perfection and infallibility of mortal creatures, and consider themselves as the only ones having reached the standard of such ideals, are in reality to be pitied. What they often need more than anything else is simple instruction.

### **The Open and the Shut Door of Grace in the Apartments of the Heavenly Sanctuary**

The very element of GRACE in this headline ought to be sufficient to indicate that "OPEN" door and "SHUT" door are not concepts here supposed to carry us into a complicated web of sophisticated theological speculation. The theme is too existentially serious for such sophistication, which does not serve any useful purpose.

In order to remain on a level of deep Biblical childlikeness, we prefer to introduce, as our channel of introduction, the simple symbols the childlike disciple John availed himself of, as he introduced his book of Revelation, or rather what he calls the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST.

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest my right hand and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. (Revelation 1:20)

This piece of information is followed by the teachings about the tasks of reform assigned to each one of the seven messengers of heaven (Revelation 2:1–29; 3:1–22; Daniel 12:3).

### **First Church Epoch (Ephesus)**

As this epoch was running out and threatened to end in spiritual drowsiness, the apostle John was sent as the first reformer of the Church of Jesus. It was Jesus Himself who had selected John for the mission and given him his necessary credentials. Through the great apocalyptic vision John received full instruction. He was equipped with all the necessary tools for his work. He further wrote his famous epistles about Christian love. Those who then permitted God to wake them up from their slumber by means of John's revival sermons, became the foundation, humanly considered, of the Smyrna church.

### **Second Church Epoch (Smyrna)**

Spiritually this church, called into new life thanks to John's ministry, was well armed. Nevertheless, greedy wolves had sneaked into the leadership of the church. This was what Paul, teacher and reformer of the second

church era, had to warn against so strongly (Acts 20:29). In spite of all admonitions, the church was ravaged by many "wolves." They were also called by another name: the Nicolaitans; that is, those who act as "guardians for the people," but, alas, without guarding them against the wiles of the evil one. The reason for this failure to guard realistically is easy to grasp: They themselves were evil, led astray by the great enemy.

### **Third Church Epoch (Pergamos)**

The Nicolaitans pressed their proud stamp upon the church. They had hardly yet entered upon the scene, when the apostle who announced their coming suffered martyrdom. Toward the end of the Pergamos period God sent new reformers to continue the battle against the evils of darkness in a wicked world. Such reformers were Wycliffe and particularly John Hus. The ministry of the latter led to the founding of the

### **Fourth Church Epoch (Thyatira)**

Through cruel persecutions inflicted upon them by the Papacy, the saints were crushed to the ground. Their response was an intensive thirst for the word of God and for a thorough

reformation that might change a man in the totality of his being. Jesus sent them Calvin and Zwingli—and the courageous reformer Martin Luther. With God's help Luther succeeded in laying the foundations for a long-desired religious freedom. However, that freedom did not establish itself overnight. It had to be fought for

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laboriously and through great pain, inflicted by the evil forces. The Thirty Years War was just one facet of the struggle.

After the Reformation a downfall was destined to pass over the reformed world. The next church era is about to take its beginning:

### **Fifth Church Epoch (Sardis)**

The precious religious freedom which had cost the reformers such labor and sacrifice, was soon squandered and lost by Protestants of a later generation, who preferred to sleep rather than fight on for their freedom. So Jesus had to send them a new set of sturdy reformers. Perhaps the most thorough among them was Count Zinzendorf. He was one of the great stars of this church era, bringing it up to a maturity which culminates in the sixth one:

### **Sixth Church Epoch (Philadelphia)**

In Bohemia and Moravia, in Germany, England, and the United States, certain sister churches had developed. We may mention the Bohemian Brethren, the Moravian Brethren, the Baptists, the Methodists, and finally the Millerites (or First-day Adventists).

It was to these awakened churches Jesus now sent Advent pioneers, with Ellen White as the prophetic witness at their head. Through her radical reformation activity, that unique writer, led by the Spirit of Prophecy, guided an important group of people back to the complete realism of the Bible. A new (and at the same time very old) philosophy was dawning over the western World. Ellen White became the human founder—to the extent one may speak at all about "human foundations" in matters of this sort—of:

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### **Seventh Church Epoch (Laodicea)**

The true and faithful Witness, Jesus Christ, has had to chastise most severely this last church. For even the Seventh-day Adventist denomination is seen falling, gradually—and deeply—into the fatal condition of spiritual lukewarmness and typical worldly backsliding. Fortunately, however, the great faithful Witness had promised to John already that a correspondingly efficient messenger ("angel," or reformer) would be sent (Revelation 3:14). Ellen White herself was looking eagerly forward to the stern reality of such a special messenger:

### **Let Heaven Guide**

Prophecy must be fulfilled. The Lord says: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Somebody is to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and when he appears, men may say:

"You are too earnest, you do not interpret the Scriptures in the proper way. Let me tell you how to teach your message." (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 475)

Under what special circumstances is this Elijah of the end-time to appear? We learn about that from the following testimony:

I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony, called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not hear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people. (*Early Writings*, p. 270)

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This messenger of Jesus is certainly going to shake God's people of our days out of their lukewarm condition, and, under God's leadership, prepare what is needed for the sealing of the 144,000.

Here it would be right and appropriate to come emphatically back to precisely the Spirit of Prophecy. That special spiritual gift, with a particularly glorious luster of its practical manifestations, was destined to be revived among the pilgrims bound for the kingdom of God toward the end of the sixth church era (Revelation 12:17). Who was the special "angel" (that is, messenger) of the second last church period toward the very end of that special church epoch? Whom did God send to the churches of the "Brethren" (to the Methodists and to the Millerites)? That timely messenger and reformer was, as has been amply evidenced, Ellen White. God had equipped her wonderfully just for a purpose of that magnitude. The evident success of her ministry made something great possible in the history of this world, namely the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist church. From the very beginning the mission of that church was most significantly a PROPHETIC one. Jesus, the King of the prophets, has this to say about the ambassador He sent to His Church at the decisive moment of a historic transition from the 6th to the 7th church era.

To the angel of the church of Philadelphia write: These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a

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little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. (Revelation 3:7, 8)

### **The One Who Has the Light Also Has the Power**

Power here means "power of attorney," that is, the indisputable right, the full authority to unfold the necessary power for performing a great task. The power and authority granted to Ellen White is based on the gift of prophecy. First she was inspired by this gift of grace to observe, in humble obedience, the entire moral law herself, even including fairly soon the Sabbath

commandment. And she remained forever afterwards faithful to that principle of obedience. Secondly, that same gift entitled her and empowered her to exert the office of a prophet for the benefit of a whole people.

We should know this much: It was thanks to that plenipotentiary mandate given her by God that Ellen was endowed with both the authority and the ability to organize, very much like Moses in the wilderness, a well-informed people of witnesses for God. With her visions and sundry experiences Ellen White served her contemporary fellow believers in a great way. Her activity, blessed by God, actually led, by and by, to the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, thanks to which we have all been acquainted with the light of the three angels' messages. So we have got to know Ellen White as a true and faithful handmaid of the Lord. She was granted an overwhelming portion of the light which constitutes the incomparable philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist realism. Hence she was at the same time granted the full right and the full ability to engage in a most radical work of

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reformation. The year 1844 was an epochal milestone, an event pregnant with tremendous consequences. It announced a period of prophetic and reformatory highlight, intensively laden with the spark-sputtering electricity of end-time finality (Amos 3:7; Revelation 3:7, 8.).

Jesus, after that triumphant victory over Satan and over the entire execution gang of murderous demons, bent on annihilating the Prince of Life on the cross of Calvary, eventually embarked upon His homeward journey, back to the beloved Father in heaven. On that solemn occasion already, every faithful angel of God welcomed Christ as the great Conqueror. They demonstrated their love and their allegiance by opening for Him the gates to the heavenly sanctuary; that is, first the gate affording entrance into the great court (the "first," to distinguish it from our own earth, which is named the "second"), and then through the door of the first apartment (the holy; Psalms 24:7, 9). This first door of grace was the one Jesus left open for repentant sinners. Its openness was a constant invitation.

One day soon Jesus was going to call His beloved disciple John to be the great prophet of the New Testament. On that occasion, as we all know, He requested John, in vision, to join Him in the holy of the heavens. According to John's own testimony, he did find the door still open. Accepting the Saviour's invitation, the disciple just entered (Revelation 4:1).

Ellen White had a very similar experience. Have you noticed that? In the year of 1847 Jesus led her through the door, at the time already opened, into the holy of holies. They were standing right in front of the heavenly

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ark. (See *Early Writings*, pp. 32 and 42.)

In reality, by the way, John too had had the experience, some 1750 years earlier, of that door into the holy of holies being solemnly opened. That was the time when he had his great vision in Patmos of events in the distant future (Revelation 11:19). The reason for opening this second door of grace was the **FULNESS OF THE TIME**, the inescapable time when the "judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17). In his vision John was carried forward to the distant year of 1844. The great Investigative Judgment was beginning to take its historical course. Let us again pass on to that unique piece of Seventh-day Adventist literature called *EARLY WRITINGS*:

## The Open and the Shut Door

Sabbath, March 24, 1849, we had a sweet and very interesting meeting with the brethren at Topsham, Maine. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us, and I was taken off in the Spirit to the city of the living God. Then I was shown that the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ relating to the shut door could not be separated, and that the time for the commandments of God to shine out with all their importance, and for God's people to be tried on the Sabbath truth, was when the door was opened in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary, where the ark is, in which are contained the ten commandments. This door was not opened until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the holy place of the sanctuary in 1844. Then Jesus rose up and shut the door of the holy place, and opened the door into the most holy, and passed within the second veil, where He now stands by the ark, and where the faith of Israel now reaches. (*Early Writings*, p. 42. See also Daniel 12:1.)

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As Jesus, in the year 31 A.D., left open the door of grace into the holy place in heaven, thousands of repentant sinners availed themselves of the opportunity to make sure of God's grace in their behalf. They accepted the unique and indispensable condition that had to be met by them for the purpose of making the great gift a definite reality: simple penitence. That is the willingness of the contrite heart. Of course that implies something most specific in practical respect, namely a full willingness to OBEY, to abandon oneself wholeheartedly into the arms of the Loving Saviour. He, for His part, never fails. This is today, it has always been, and will always be, the one great prerequisite on man's part, for receiving that precious grace of God, offered freely at His holy temple. The immediate result is that you are registered in the book of life.

Every one of those penitent ones down through the ages who met this requirement, also remaining faithful till the end, could have a never falling hope of being saved from the foe of foes: SIN. He could be sure of full forgiveness for sins committed. He really could, thanks to the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God. He could realistically consider himself as a full citizen of the kingdom of the eternal King.

But please notice something essential in the meticulous history of salvation. The case of each one of those faithful ones has to pass the orderly sequences to which an orderly God has submitted them. Only at the moment when Jesus, in the year of 1844, passed through the second door of grace of His heavenly tabernacle, to reach the

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golden throne of grace of the most holy place, only then could the definitive and really decisive word of the supreme Judge possibly be pronounced. Please don't miss the solemn truth: IT IS ALL THAT IMPORTANT—ALL THAT INDISPENSABLE—FOR THE GOD WHO SAVES ETERNALLY TO SEE TO IT THAT THE PRECIOUS REGISTER OF THOSE DEAR ONES PREVIOUSLY AND TEMPORARILY ENTERED INTO THE BOOK OF LIFE, NOW FINALLY HAVE THEIR NAMES SOLEMNLY CONFIRMED BY THE FATHER!

For heaven's sake, and for your own salvation's sake, please get on reasonable terms with that

"METICULOUSNESS," which you may NATURALLY RESENT. Most people in this world do resent it—particularly so in times like ours, and in a culture like ours. What then is wrong here? Is there something wrong with God? Or is there something wrong with

### **Our Time and Our Culture**

This is a very serious question. For it is intimately connected with another question: What makes so many of our theologians and most influential workers today shy away from the beaten path of Biblical orthodoxy, above all in the field of the prophetic faith of our fathers?

It is the very nature of liberalism, and all trends of the humanist spirit, which prevails in modernist theology, that there happens to be an inveterate resentment against anything that smacks of METICULOUSNESS. And what, then, is here the bone of contention, the cause of downright scandal? It is the very idea of the METICULOUS.

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How come, we cry, we sick ones of a modernist age, how come that this tedious spirit of minute orderliness in all things should now have made its way right into salvation history. Is it not too pedantic indeed! Imagine the judiciary case of God's faithful children down through the ages, those faithful ones of old! After having fully accepted, as an accomplished fact, Jesus Christ and His eternal sacrifice, as a total ransom, should they still have to pass this stage and that, this office and that, a bureaucratic maze of minutely ordered stations along the salvation line? Could this be Christianity?

To some members of the already quite complicated society, which you and I, citizens of the modern world, have the dubious privilege of belonging to, this reminds a bit too much, as it were, of the rat race, and the cobweb of red tape we have continually been submitted to in our civil lives. Now, why should something "of the same kind" repeat itself right in the midst of that encounter of sweet intimacy we have longed to have with our merciful God in heaven? Why this "complicated business" of "veils" and "doors" and "apartments," different places at different times?

Even the distribution of specific tasks among the individual Persons composing the Godhead (the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost) appears to some an unnecessary complication. Why is it that the case of each sinner should have to wait for the final moment when Jesus, in the year of 1844, passed through the second door of grace of the heavenly tabernacle, to reach the golden super-throne of grace of the most holy place, to have the eventual OK of the Father? Had not the name of

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that pardoned sinner of old been entered into the book of life hundreds and thousands of years ago? So why did it need to be solemnly confirmed by the Father before the decisive word of the supreme Judge could be pronounced?

Here you should know something important in order to be better able to understand that type of reaction so typical of persons growing up in a culture like yours and mine. It is an endemic characteristic of any social environment so thoroughly permeated by the pagan thought forms of the cursed sham religiousness of philosophical spiritualism, as we find it in the Western World after the age of Plato (and in the Eastern, for that matter, after the age of Buddha, which is the

same God-forsaken aeon). It is a tragic fact that human beings exposed, from generation to generation, to the most bewildering "SPIRITUAL SHORTCUTS" of such a culture, gradually come to think that we can—and even must—skip, the sooner the better, all realistic lines of time-space sequence. It was in an atmosphere of that kind of pure-spirit-ism that another "spiritual short-cut" in humanist soteriology managed to spread its fatally spurious trends of thinking in our culture, namely the shortcut of IMMORTAL-SOULISM. The most dangerous enemies of plain Christian realism developed the nefarious idea that the child of God already at the very moment of his death passes directly into the paradise of heaven. He does not have any need of passing across the chasm of any literal death at all. God, the spiritualist claims, is

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not so "punctilious," or so "narrow-hearted" that He would delay the entry of His beloved child into heaven the way our Bible, taken quite literally, proclaims. Oh, no, the borders of time and space are a "materialistic illusion" we should overcome thanks to our inborn spiritual superiority. Is this Christian realism?

Let us rejoice that the Biblical doctrine of the sanctuary service is infinitely more realistic than that "pure spirit" idea of pagan idealism. It never implies that God is "great enough" to skip all firm rules of established order in a reasonable world of plain reality. Christian philosophy never espoused the cheap doctrine: "once a Christian, always a Christian." Salvation is not something a human being drops into quite automatically. That automatism is entirely a pagan notion.

It is your business and mine to submit wholeheartedly to the system of order and law-abidingness God has established for life in our world, as He has created it. Divine Providence has a definite program for you and me in all things. Today that happens to be a program of heart-searching prayer, an active exercise of Christian faith, and notice: a divinely planned discipline of realistic sanctification. What does that mean? It means a constant effort of intimate cooperation between the High Priest in heaven and puny man on earth to RESTORE THE TEMPLE, LET THE HOLY OF HOLIES COME TO ITS FULL RIGHTS AGAIN, CLEANSE THE TEMPORARILY POLLUTED SANCTUARY OF GOD. It is your privilege and mine today to "give diligence to make our calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10).

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Those who at the present critical moment for our ordered movement on earth are bold-faced enough to mock and actively resist the light from God, will have to take Satan's Egyptian darkness instead.

I saw that Satan was working through agents in a number of ways. He was at work through ministers who have rejected the truth and are given over to strong delusions to believe a lie that they might be damned. (*Early Writings*, p. 43)

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. (Daniel 12:1–3)