
Christ in His Sanctuary



compiled from the writings of

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Contents

The Sanctuary Truth—An Introduction	5
1. Christ in the Sacrificial System	28
2. The Heavenly Sanctuary in Miniature	34
3. The Gospel in Type and Antitype	60
4. The Judgment Message Stirs America	70
5. Daniel 8:14 and Steps in God's Mysterious Leadings	103
6. The End of the 2300 Days	117
7. The Glorious Temple in Heaven	129
8. Our High Priest in the Holy of Holies	150
9. Christ's Closing Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary	171



The Sanctuary Truth

An Introduction*

Writing of what must be accomplished by the emerging Seventh-day Adventist Church before the Lord shall come, Ellen G. White in 1883 said:

“The minds of believers were to be directed to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ had entered to make atonement for His people.”—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 67.

In a crisis in 1906, in which certain of the basic teachings of Seventh-day Adventists were threatened, she wrote:

“The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith.”—*Evangelism*, p. 221.

*An introductory chapter prepared in the office of the Ellen G. White Estate, providing the historical setting for the E. G. White chapters and other of her materials selected for the study of the sanctuary truth as understood and taught by Seventh-day Adventists.

THE END OF THE 2300 DAYS

Among the prophecies forming the foundation of the advent awakening of the 1830s and the early 1840s was the prophecy of Daniel 8:14: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Ellen White, who passed through the experience, explains concerning the application of this prophecy:

“In common with the rest of the Christian world, Adventists then held that the earth, or some portion of it, was the sanctuary. They understood that the cleansing of the sanctuary was the purification of the earth by the fires of the last great day, and that this would take place at the second advent. Hence the conclusion that Christ would return to the earth in 1844.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 409.

This prophetic period came to its close on October 22, 1844. The disappointment to those who expected to meet their Lord on that day was great. Hiram Edson, a careful Bible student in mid-New York State, describes what took place among the company of believers of which he was a part:

“Our expectations were raised high, and thus we looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled twelve at midnight. The day had then passed, and our disappointment had become a certainty. Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weep-

ing came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept and wept, till the day dawn. . . .

“I mused in my heart, saying: ‘My advent experience has been the brightest of all my Christian experience. . . . Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God, no heaven, no golden city, no Paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hopes and expectations?’ . . .

“I began to feel there might be light and help for us in our distress. I said to some of the brethren: ‘Let us go to the barn.’ We entered the granary, shut the doors about us, and bowed before the Lord. We prayed earnestly, for we felt our necessity. We continued in earnest prayer until the witness of the Spirit was given that our prayers were accepted, and that light should be given—our disappointment explained, made clear and satisfactory.

“After breakfast I said to one of my brethren, ‘Let us go and see and encourage some of our brethren.’ We started, and while passing through a large field, I was stopped about midway of the field. Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, He, for the first time, entered on that day into the second apartment of that sanctuary, and that He had a work to perform in

the most holy place before coming to the earth; that He came to the marriage, or in other words, to the Ancient of Days, to receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory; and that we must wait for His return from the wedding. And my mind was directed to the tenth chapter of Revelation, where I could see the vision had spoken and did not lie.”—Unpublished manuscript published in part in the *Review and Herald*, June 23, 1921.

There followed a careful investigation of the scriptures that touched on this subject—particularly those in Hebrews—by Hiram Edson and two close associates, Dr. F. B. Hahn, a physician, and O. R. L. Crosier, a teacher. The result of this joint study was written up by Crosier and was published, first in *The Day Dawn*, a paper of limited circulation, and then in rewritten and enlarged form in a special issue of the *Day-Star*, on February 7, 1846. This was a more widely read Adventist journal, published at Cincinnati, Ohio. Through this medium it reached a number of the disappointed Advent believers. The rather lengthy presentation, well supported by Scripture, brought hope and courage to their hearts as it clearly showed that the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days is in heaven, and not on earth, as they had believed earlier.

Ellen G. White, in a statement written on April 21, 1847, declared in endorsement of the Crosier article on the sanctuary question:

“The Lord showed me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the sanctuary, etc.; and that it was His will, that Brother Crosier should write out the view which he gave us in the *Day-Star Extra*, February 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that Extra, to every saint.”—*A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 12.

At a later time she wrote of the rapid development of doctrinal understanding which followed the disappointment:

“The passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and having decided relation to God’s people upon the earth.”—*Manuscript 13*, 1889, published in *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, page 30.

A TRUTH ESTABLISHED BY THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The visions given to Ellen White, while not running ahead of Bible study, confirmed the soundness of the position that an important phase of Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary was entered upon on October 22, 1844. Gradually the breadth and depth of the subject opened before the Advent believers. Looking back on the experience in later years, she recalled their study and

the manifest evidences of God's guiding hand:

“Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce,* Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, ‘We can do nothing more,’ the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the City of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.

*Older brethren among the pioneers are here thus reminiscently referred to. “Father Pierce” was Stephen Pierce, who served in ministerial and administrative work in the early days.

“During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God. The brethren knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given.”—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, pp. 206, 207.

The realization that Christ had entered the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary to begin His closing ministry in our behalf, typified in the sanctuary service observed by Israel of old, solemnized the hearts of our pioneer Adventists. The truths were so clear, so grand, so vital, that it was difficult to sense that upon them rested the responsibility of imparting this light to others. Ellen White wrote of the certainty of their position:

“We are to be established in the faith, in the light of the truth given us in our early experience. At that time one error after another pressed in upon us; ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures, and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of devoted

men and women assembled for this purpose. The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error.

“As the points of our faith were thus established, our feet were placed upon a solid foundation. We accepted the truth point by point, under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. I would be taken off in vision, and explanations would be given me. I was given illustrations of heavenly things, and of the sanctuary, so that we were placed where light was shining on us in clear, distinct rays.

“I know that the sanctuary question stands in righteousness and truth, just as we have held it for so many years.”—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 302, 303.

The pioneers of the movement saw the sanctuary truth as basic to the whole structure of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. James White, in 1850, republished the essential portions of the first presentation of the subject by O. R. L. Crosier, and commented:

“The subject of the sanctuary should be carefully examined, as it lies at the foundation of our faith and hope.”—*The Advent Review* (special combined number).

THE SANCTUARY AND THE SABBATH

It was in the setting of a view of the heavenly sanctuary that the Sabbath truth was confirmed in the vision

given to Ellen White on April 3, 1847, at the Howland home in Topsham, Maine. Of this she writes:

“We felt an unusual spirit of prayer. And as we prayed the Holy Ghost fell upon us. We were very happy. Soon I was lost to earthly things and was wrapped in a vision of God’s glory. I saw an angel flying swiftly to me. He quickly carried me from the earth to the Holy City. In the city I saw a temple, which I entered. I passed through a door before I came to the first veil. This veil was raised, and I passed into the holy place. Here I saw the altar of incense, the candlestick with seven lamps, and the table on which was the shewbread. After viewing the glory of the holy, Jesus raised the second veil and I passed into the holy of holies.

“In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it was purest gold. On each end of the ark was a lovely cherub, with its wings spread out over it. Their faces were turned toward each other, and they looked downward. Between the angels was a golden censer. Above the ark, where the angels stood, was an exceeding bright glory, that appeared like a throne where God dwelt. Jesus stood by the ark, and as the saints’ prayers came up to Him, the incense in the censer would smoke, and He would offer up their prayers with the smoke of the incense to His Father. In the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of stone which folded together like a book. Jesus opened them, and I saw the Ten Commandments written on them with the finger

of God. On one table were four, and on the other six. The four on the first table shone brighter than the other six. But the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God's holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it. I saw that the Sabbath commandment was not nailed to the cross. If it was, the other nine commandments were; and we are at liberty to break them all, as well as to break the fourth. I saw that God had not changed the Sabbath, for He never changes.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 32, 33.

THE SANCTUARY TRUTH UNDER FIRE

While there were those who saw clearly the binding claims of God's law and began to observe the Seventh-day Sabbath as set forth in the law of God, they encountered strong opposition. Of this and the reasons for it, Ellen White explains:

“Many and earnest were the efforts made to overthrow their faith. None could fail to see that if the earthly sanctuary was a figure or pattern of the heavenly, the law deposited in the ark on earth was an exact transcript of the law in the ark in heaven; and that an acceptance of the truth concerning the heavenly sanctuary involved an acknowledgment of the claims of God's law, and the obligation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

Here was the secret of the bitter and determined opposition to the harmonious exposition of the Scriptures that revealed the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 435.

It is little wonder that those in subsequent years defecting from the Seventh-day Adventist Church should make the sanctuary truth a point of opposition. It was so with Elders Snook and Brinkerhof, conference officers in Iowa, who withdrew in the middle 1860s, and with D. M. Canright, an influential minister, who left the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1887 to become a bitter enemy and critic. Nor is it strange that the pantheistic views at the turn of the century, espoused and advocated by both medical and ministerial workers, should strike directly at this fundamental doctrine. It was in this setting that Ellen White in warning words wrote on November 20, 1905:

“To those medical missionaries and ministers who have been drinking in the scientific sophistries and bewitching fables against which you have been warned, I would say, Your souls are in peril. The world must know where you are standing and where Seventh-day Adventists are standing. God calls for all who have accepted these soul-destroying delusions no longer to halt between two opinions. If the Lord be God, follow Him.

“Satan, with all his host is on the battlefield. Christ’s soldiers are now to rally round the bloodstained banner

of Emmanuel. In the name of the Lord, leave the black banner of the prince of darkness, and take your position with the Prince of heaven.

“‘He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.’ Read your Bibles. From higher ground, under the instruction given me of God, I present these things before you. The time is near when the deceptive powers of satanic agencies will be fully developed. On one side is Christ, who has been given all power in heaven and earth. On the other side is Satan, continually exercising his power to allure, to deceive with strong, spiritualistic sophistries, to remove God out of the place that He should occupy in the minds of men.

“Satan is striving continually to bring in fanciful suppositions in regard to the sanctuary, degrading the wonderful representations of God and the ministry of Christ for our salvation into something that suits the carnal mind. He removes its presiding power from the hearts of believers, and supplies its place with fantastic theories invented to make void the truths of the atonement, and destroy our confidence in the doctrines which we have held sacred since the third angel’s message was first given. Thus he would rob us of our faith in the very message that has made us a separate people, and has given character and power to our work.”—*Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, pp. 16, 17.

It was in the setting of this pantheistic crisis that Ellen

White, attending the General Conference session of 1905, declared in words significant to us today:

“In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?”—*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 53.

The pantheistic views, so earnestly advocated by some, Ellen White declared, would “do away with God” (*Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 16) and invalidate the sanctuary truth.

At about the same time one of our ministers, whom we will identify as “Elder G,” espoused the view that when Christ went back to heaven after his ministry on earth, He went into the presence of God, and that where God is, must be the most holy place, therefore on October 22, 1844, there was no entering into the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary as we believed and taught. These two concepts, both of which struck at the doctrine of the sanctuary as we held it, led Ellen White several times to refer to the soundness and integrity of this point of faith. In 1904 she wrote:

“They (the children of God) will not, by their words

and acts, lead anyone to doubt in regard to the distinct personality of God, or in regard to the sanctuary and its ministry.

“We all need to keep the subject of the sanctuary in mind. God forbid that the clatter of words coming from human lips should lessen the belief of our people in the truth that there is a sanctuary in heaven, and that a pattern of this sanctuary was once built on this earth. God desires His people to become familiar with this pattern, keeping ever before their minds the heavenly sanctuary, where God is all and in all. We must keep our minds braced by prayer and a study of God’s Word, that we may grasp these truths.”—E. G. White Letter 233, 1904.

POINTS SUSTAINED ONLY BY MISUSED SCRIPTURE

Writing particularly of “Elder G’s” work in undermining confidence in the sanctuary truth in 1905, Ellen White pointed out the unsoundness of his use of Scripture evidence and the dependability of our understanding of the sanctuary truth. This is what she said:

“I have been pleading with the Lord for strength and wisdom to reproduce the writings of the witnesses who were confirmed in the faith and in the early history of the message. After the passing of the time in

1844 they received the light and walked in the light, and when the men claiming to have new light would come in with their wonderful messages regarding various points of Scripture, we had, through the moving of the Holy Spirit, testimonies right to the point, which cut off the influence of such messages as Elder G has been devoting his time to presenting. This poor man has been working decidedly against the truth that the Holy Spirit has confirmed.

“When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions contrary to the light God has given are to be entertained. Men will arise with interpretations of Scripture which are to them truth, but which are not truth. The truth for this time God has given us as a foundation for our faith. He Himself has taught us what is truth. One will arise, and still another, with new light, which contradicts the light that God has given under the demonstration of His Holy Spirit. A few are still alive who passed through the experience gained in the establishment of this truth. God has graciously spared their lives to repeat, and repeat till the close of their lives, the experience through which they passed even as did John the apostle till the very close of his life. And the standard-bearers who have fallen in death are to speak through the reprinting of their writings. I am instructed that thus their voices are to be heard. They

are to bear their testimony as to what constitutes the truth for this time.

“We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God’s Word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake. He who makes such an application knows not the wonderful demonstration of the Holy Spirit that gave power and force to the past messages that have come to the people of God.

“Elder G’s proofs are not reliable. If received, they would destroy the faith of God’s people in the truth that has made us what we are.

“We must be decided on this subject; for the points that he is trying to prove by Scripture, are not sound. They do not prove that the past experience of God’s people was a fallacy. We had the truth; we were directed by the angels of God. It was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that the presentation of the sanctuary question was given. It is eloquence for everyone to keep silent in regard to the features of our faith in which they acted no part. God never contradicts Himself. Scripture proofs

are misapplied if forced to testify to that which is not true. Another and still another will arise and bring in supposedly great light, and make their assertions. But we stand by the old landmarks.”—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, pp. 160–162.

THE REALITY OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY AFFIRMED

Repeatedly we find in the Ellen G. White writings statements on the reality of the heavenly sanctuary, its furnishings, and its ministry. One such was penned in the 1880s as she described the experience of the Advent believers following the disappointment:

“In their investigation they learned, that the earthly sanctuary, built by Moses at the command of God, according to the pattern shown him in the mount, was ‘a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices;’ that its two holy places were ‘patterns of things in the heavens;’ that Christ, our great High Priest, is ‘a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.’ . . .

“The sanctuary in heaven, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf, is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy.

“The matchless splendor of the earthly tabernacle reflected to human vision the glories of that heavenly

temple where Christ our forerunner ministers for us before the throne of God.

“As the sanctuary on earth had two apartments, the holy and the most holy, so there are two holy places in the sanctuary in heaven. And the ark containing the law of God, the altar of incense, and other instruments of service found in the sanctuary below, have also their counterpart in the sanctuary above. In holy vision the apostle John was permitted to enter heaven, and he there beheld the candlestick and the altar of incense, and as ‘the temple of God was opened,’ he beheld also ‘the ark of His testament.’ [Rev. 4:5; 8:3; 11:19.]

“Those who were seeking for the truth found indisputable proof of the existence of a sanctuary in heaven. Moses made the earthly sanctuary after a pattern which was shown him. Paul declares that that pattern was the true sanctuary which is in heaven. John testifies that he saw it in heaven.”—*Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. IV, pp. 260, 261.

Earlier she had written with emphasis on the furniture:

“I was also shown a sanctuary upon the earth containing two apartments. It resembled the one in heaven, and I was told that it was a figure of the heavenly. The furniture of the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary was like that in the first apartment of the heavenly. The veil was lifted, and I looked into the holy of holies, and

saw that the furniture was the same as in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 252, 253.

THE ARK AND THE LAW IN THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

On different occasions she spoke and wrote of the ark in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary. One such statement was made in a sermon preached in Orebro, Sweden, in 1886.

“I warn you, Do not place your influence against God’s commandments. That law is just as Jehovah wrote it in the temple of heaven. Man may trample upon its copy here below, but the original is kept in the ark of God in heaven; and on the cover of this ark, right above that law, is the mercy seat. Jesus stands right there before that ark to mediate for man.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 1109.

And in 1903 she again wrote of the reality of the heavenly sanctuary:

“I could say much regarding the sanctuary; the ark containing the law of God; the cover of the ark, which is the mercy seat; the angels at either end of the ark; and other things connected with the heavenly sanctuary and with the great day of atonement. I could say much regarding the mysteries of heaven; but my lips are closed. I have

no inclination to try to describe them.”—Ellen G. White Letter 253, 1903.

LAST-DAY DELUSIONS WILL INVOLVE VITAL TRUTH

It is clear that our adversary, Satan, will try to unsettle the faith of God’s people in the doctrine of the sanctuary in these “latter days.” Ellen White wrote;

“The Saviour foretold that in the latter days false prophets would appear, and draw away disciples after them; and also that those who in this time of peril should stand faithful to the truth that is specified in the book of Revelation, would have to meet doctrinal errors so specious that, if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived.

“God would have every true sentiment prevail. Satan can skillfully play the game of life with many souls, and he acts in a most underhanded, deceptive manner to spoil the faith of the people of God and to discourage them. . . . He works today as he worked in heaven—to divide the people of God in the very last stage of this earth’s history. He seeks to create dissension, and to arouse contention and discussion, and to remove if possible the old landmarks of truth committed to God’s people. He tries to make it appear as if the Lord contradicts Himself.

“It is when Satan appears as an angel of light, that he takes souls in his snare, deceiving them. Men who pretend to have been taught of God, will adopt fallacious theories, and in their teaching will so adorn these fallacies as to bring in Satanic delusions. Thus Satan will be introduced as an angel of light, and will have opportunity to present his pleasing fables.

“These false prophets will have to be met. They will make an effort to deceive many, by leading them to accept false theories. Many scriptures will be misapplied in such a way that deceptive theories will apparently be based upon the words that God has spoken. Precious truth will be appropriated to substantiate and establish error. These false prophets, who claim to be taught of God, will take beautiful scriptures that have been given to adorn the truth, and will use them as a robe of righteousness to cover false and dangerous theories. And even some of those who in times past the Lord has honored, will depart so far from the truth as to advocate misleading theories regarding many phases of truth, *including the sanctuary question.*”
—Manuscript 11, 1906. (Emphasis supplied.)

A few weeks later she added these words on the importance of a correct understanding of this truth:

“I know that the sanctuary question stands in righteousness and truth, just as we have held it for so many years. It is the enemy that leads minds off on sidetracks. He is pleased when those who know the truth become

engrossed in collecting scriptures to pile around erroneous theories, which have no foundation in truth. The scriptures thus used are misapplied; they were not given to substantiate error, but to strengthen truth.” — *Gospel Workers*, p. 303.

WITH EYES FIXED ON THE SANCTUARY

At no time are we to lose sight of the important work being done in our behalf in the sanctuary in heaven. We are admonished:

“As a people, we should be earnest students of prophecy; we should not rest until we become intelligent in regard to the subject of the sanctuary, which is brought out in the visions of Daniel and John. This subject sheds great light on our present position and work, and gives us unmistakable proof that God has led us in our past experience. It explains our disappointment in 1844, showing us that the sanctuary to be cleansed was not the earth, as we had supposed, but that Christ then entered into the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and is there performing the closing work of His priestly office, in fulfillment of the words of the angel to the prophet Daniel, ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’

“Our faith in reference to the messages of the first, second, and third angels was correct. The great waymarks

we have passed are immovable. Although the hosts of hell may try to tear them from their foundation, and triumph in the thought that they have succeeded, yet they do not succeed. These pillars of truth stand firm as the eternal hills, unmoved by all the efforts of men combined with those of Satan and his host. We can learn much, and should be constantly searching the Scriptures to see if these things are so. God's people are now to have their eyes fixed on the heavenly sanctuary, where the final ministration of our great High Priest in the work of the judgment is going forward,—where He is interceding for His people.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 222, 223.

THIS LITTLE BOOK

Except for a few footnotes and the study questions which follow each chapter, the materials which follow are exclusively from the pen of Ellen G. White and consist primarily of chapters from *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *The Great Controversy*, with some bridging materials drawn together from various E. G. White published writings. In each case the source is given. As most readers will have at hand the E. G. White books, it has seemed unnecessary here, where brevity is desirable, to include portions of chapters not immediately relevant to the subject—Christ in His sanctuary.

—The White Trustees