

Volume 1, Number 4

Geoscience
Railroad

Picking the Shut-
Door Lock

The Secret Letter

Interview with
JOHN ADAM

Legacy of Guilt

The Great Contro-
versy Over the
Vision of 1844

The "Shut Door"
Discussed

AN UNAUTHORIZED, FREE PRESS SUPPLEMENT TO OFFICIAL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PUBLICATIONS

adventist currents

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FROM THE PUBLISHER:

The publisher and editorial staff of *Adventist Currents* are committed to the belief that Christian freedom is enhanced by information that makes judicious choice a possibility.

Adventist Currents represents an effort to put before Seventh-day Adventists, in a careful, creative, and lively way, information and ideas not usually discussed in official, denominational publications.

Readers should find *Adventist Currents* stimulating and accurate at all times, even when they disagree with its editorial posture. Also, it must not be assumed that the publisher of *Adventist Currents* subscribes to the opinions of its contributors.

It is expected that readers will understand the humor sprinkled throughout the magazine as a useful relief to the curse of protracted seriousness. Amen.

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CURRENTS NEEDS

PEOPLE

Adventist Currents needs people in a variety of geographical locations who will report to the magazine local matters that are of interest to the general readership.

Particularly needed are individuals in or around church administrative offices who can help *Currents* to better understand the minds and actions of conference, union, and General Conference officers.

Also needed are reporters from Seventh-day Adventist college campuses — continuing sources of information and news.

Friends of *Currents* who can assist in its distribution and/or the acquiring of mailing lists are essential.

INFORMATION

Adventist Currents welcomes carefully written articles about Adventism's past, present, and future — articles about issues, events or individuals (maximum length, 5,500 words).

Currents needs brief, specific, and documented news items that provide information that is generally not available through the "General Organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (maximum length, 1,800 words).

Guest editorials are welcome, so long as they do not address the characters of individuals or employ language that is untoward (maximum length, 1,200).

Letters to the editor are encouraged. Those that are not published will be polled.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Adventist Currents needs contributions to promote the growth in size, quality, and readership of the magazine.

Currents needs friends with stamina who will send tax-free contributions on a regular basis — what is elsewhere termed "systematic benevolence."

Adventist Currents' publisher, Mars Hill Publications, Inc., intends to publish books that address various issues of interest to *Currents'* subscribers. Suggestions for topics and potential authors are welcome.

Barely Ajar

by Douglas Hackleman

Adventist Review editor William Johnsson introduced a special (15 September 1983) Adventist history issue of the *Review* with this commendable statement:

Some people are ignorant of their roots. Others attempt to deny them or to falsify them. Both courses lead to confusion of identity. Only as we understand who we are — where we have come from, why we are what we are — can we find peace and wholeness.

working through ministers” who had resumed preaching salvation through Christ to sinners. These open-door ministers, she insisted, “are given over to strong delusions to believe a lie that they might be damned.” Of their converts she had this opinion:

Some appeared to have been really converted, so as to deceive God’s people; but if their hearts could be seen, they would appear as black as ever.

***“Some people are ignorant of their roots.
Others attempt to deny them or to falsify them.
Both courses lead to confusion of identity.”
— William G. Johnsson***

understandable but interesting as he chronicles the evolution of the shut door into the investigative judgment — how one explanation for Christ’s failure to return to earth in 1844 evolved into another.

Hokama returns to show that the most serious theological problems of the shut-door era were never really disowned by Ellen White. His argument is augmented by the transcript of a discussion of the shut door by White Estate officials and invitees to a four-day Ellen G. White Estate International Workshop in 1982.

It is these last three items in particular that should aid the quest for “understanding and insight into our life and problems today” that William Johnsson seeks from our roots. Because even today in Adventist theology the shut door is barely ajar.

And it holds especially true for Adventism what another Johnson — British author Paul Johnson — wrote about Christianity in general:

Christianity, by identifying truth with faith, must teach — and, properly understood, does teach — that any interference with the truth is immoral. A Christian with faith has nothing to fear from the facts; a Christian historian who draws the line limiting the field of enquiry at any point whatsoever, is admitting the limits of his faith. And of course he is also destroying the nature of his religion, which is a progressive revelation of truth.

Amen!



Cover, courtesy David S. Baker portfolio.

Unfortunately, the special history issue of the *Review*, coordinated by assistant editor Eugene F. Durand, was “designed to be shared with non-Adventists who inquire about the church’s origins” (AR, 11 August 1983, p. 24). As such, it did little or nothing to allay the “confusion of identity” that our gilded histories of the Advent movement continue to exacerbate.

To his concern over our “confusion of identity,” Johnsson added the sagacious point that within a real knowledge of our roots “lie understanding and insight into our life and problems today.” But no “understanding and insight” that might help our church resolve its present doctrinal dilemmas can be gained from a review of our roots that ignores the theological precursors to our continuing difficulties.

Not one line of the *Review* history special is devoted to an understanding of our early “shut-door” doctrine. The term is not even mentioned, in spite of the fact that three articles specifically cover the first few years of our movement.

Between 1846 and 1851, the Sabbath and the shut door were the twin pillars of the little band led by the Whites, Joseph Bates, and others. The Sabbath and shut door were the “testing truths” that determined salvation. James White wrote on 26 August 1848:

My Brother and Sister, here is the standard to rally around. Jesus has left His mediatorial throne. He is now claiming His new kingdom. Do you believe it? I hope you do. Well, this is the present “faith of Jesus.” So the shut door and the Sabbath are the present truth (emphasis supplied).

One year later, in the August 1849 *Present Truth*, Ellen White wrote that “Satan was

My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked, but could not see it; for the time for their salvation is past.

The shut door, as believed for the first seven years following 1844 — that salvation was no longer available through the intercessory ministry of Christ — was abandoned by the Whites and their followers in 1851. But no apologies were made to those who were branded “foolish virgins” for returning to the gospel ministry soon after the disappointment. In fact, Ellen White strongly implies that those who did — with the exception of William Miller — are forever lost (see *Early Writings*, pp. 257, 258).

Because our approved publications continue to ignore the antecedents of our present uncivil theological war, considerable space has been devoted in this issue of *Currents* to several articles and exhibits related to the shut door. These fall under *Currents*’ Roots revisited category.

Skip Baker explains how his camera and a 137-year-old Ellen White letter came together in the same room. The results of that meeting are exhibited for *Currents*’ readers.

The editor provides a “tour” of that 1847 letter to Joseph Bates — at once the most important and most studiously ignored document from the shut-door period.

Dennis Hokama, with laserlike logic, exposes the inadequacies of and contradictions among our pioneers’ attempts to refute the validity of repeated complaints that shut-door material in Mrs. White’s early visions was self-servingly deleted upon their republication in 1851 and thereafter.

Wes Ringer makes the tedious not only

Geoscience Railroad

by W. Val Chambers

In the wake of Consultation II church leaders make faulty affirmations

The "Statement of Affirmation" by most of our top division leaders and General Conference officers who participated in the 1983 Geoscience Field Conference indicates that the battle for a rational, careful understanding of the Bible is not yet over.

Consultation II was a hopeful sign, many thought; but theology and biblical understanding are not acquired on two, or even a few, consultations.

Until we have leaders who are trained in theology, it might be well for the church administrators to refrain from making dogmatic affirmations that cast aspersions on Adventist religion scholars who are doing theology on a different level. According to James Londis, theologian and Sligo church pastor: "Many church administrators do not feel at home discussing theological issues because they have not had the education preparing them for such discussion."¹ They make dogmatic statements, nonetheless, without reference to what the theologians of the church have been trying to teach them.

After the great rescue the "liberals" in the church have been attempting (since the shocking revelations of Ellen White's borrowings), the administrators seem to want to throw it all overboard, *affirming* like the good fundamentalists we claim not to be. How we will emerge from the Ellen White impasse is difficult to imagine if we refuse to admit that the old ways of dealing with the Bible and "inspiration" just will not stand up.

An examination of the eight affirmations signed by administrator-participants in the 1983 Geoscience Field Conference must be distressing at least for the scholars who had tried to explain some of the problems of biblical interpretation at Consultation II.

Affirmation one speaks of the "validity" of the scriptural record as both an "authentic" and "historical" description of the origin of our world. Without exception Adventist theologians affirm the validity and authenticity of the biblical record, but historicity is another matter. Perhaps by "historical" the administrators mean to affirm that creation actually happened, which

any theologian would accept; but a careful study of the record itself would make the serious Bible student see the account as a theological rather than historical account. As one of the theologians of the church has said in a recent article, "Genesis I is ultimately a statement about cosmology, namely, that the ultimate origin of the universe is God."² Those who want to put our understanding of history into Genesis simply have not *studied* (as distinguished from *read*) the book. And if we have to affirm that revelation includes historical propositions, why are we now saying that Ellen White's inspiration was not inerrant in matters of history — the facts for which she depended on historians?

Affirmation two claims that the biblical record requires a short chronology of approximately 6,000 years — ignoring the sound research by some of our greatest scholars.³ Seigfried Horn, the "prince" of Adventist archaeologists and editor of the *Adventist Bible Dictionary*, sums up decades of research: "... there is no biblical basis for any date in the B.C. scale for a biblical event preceding the birth of Abraham. If an Adventist wants to believe that Creation took place about 4,000 B.C., he should not claim that he bases his belief on a biblical chronology."⁴

Affirmation three: "That the Old Testament narrative of a global flood is supported in the New Testament by our Lord, who compared earth's final destruction to that of Noah's day (Matt. 24:37-39)." A simple check with almost any (even the most conservative) biblical scholar would have revealed that the biblical account does not demand "a global flood." Neither does our Lord in Matthew support such a thing. Matthew simply asserts that Jesus said that in the day of the coming of the Son of man, people will be doing just what they were doing before Noah's flood — feasting and marrying and giving in marriage.

Affirmation four sets forth "... the importance of honoring the seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial of ... God's Ten Commandments, the Sabbath being a vital element of God's last appeal to the world, calling every nation, kindred, tongue, and people 'to worship him that made heaven and earth and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Rev. 14:7).'" The literalistic emphasis is there, betraying the old fear that unless we see Genesis as entirely literal, the Sabbath (and apparently Adventism) will go

out the window. Search all the recent research of this generation of Adventist scholars (from Andreason to Bacchiocchi), and we find not a trace of this fear of the administrators. Could it be they have never read the recent research that has replaced dead Saturday versus Sunday arguments with Sabbath as a gift of grace, the Sabbath as celebration, the Sabbath as humanitarian blessing and joy? In the face of that growth in understanding, the Sabbath as a "last appeal" to worship according to Revelation 14:17 is not only unattractive but also exegesis that does not even do justice to the proof text method.

Affirmation five: "that secular, humanistic theories such as the evolutionary model or those theories intermediate between Creation and evolution that extend the Creation process into a long indefinite period have no place in the belief system of our church. (See 2 Peter 3:3-6)." This affirmation sounds like one of the older papal encyclicals, restricting Adventists from any belief in Creation that is unlike the belief of the administrators, and limiting the Almighty's Creation to a short, definite period. It is clear that the affirmers did not read the text in 2 Peter that they cited. According to the text, God does not measure time as men do — precisely the opposite of what the administrators seem to be affirming! And how do they explain verse five of the text they quoted: "By the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water" (R.S.V.)?

Affirmation six: "That there is fundamental agreement between God's book of nature and the revealed word when they are correctly interpreted." This is by far the best-stated affirmation of the seven. Yet one Adventist scholar teaching in an Adventist outpost has described his historical critical analysis of Genesis 1 as an attempt "to see how the description of nature (cosmology) understood by biblical authors can be distinguished from their statements about God being the ultimate origin of the creation (cosmogony)."⁵ The scholar is in agreement with the affirmation, but only as he takes both science and the discipline of biblical interpretation seriously.

Affirmation seven: While recognizing the value of scientific study and the "limits of understanding and a personal belief system," the statement affirms "that the creationist/catastrophic model best explains that information de-

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rived from revelation and science." A former member of the Geoscience Research Institute who received his doctorate from the California Institute of Technology finds the evidence to be otherwise. "Serious attempts have been made by Adventist scientists of the Geoscience Research Institute to reinterpret the data in terms of flood geology models, but little or no progress has yet been made on the real crux of the whole geologic column: time."⁶ The eighteenth-century concept of the Flood as the prime geologic agent and the notion of a 6,000-year-old earth were once serious scientific concepts; but neither "stood the test of time required of scientific concepts." The study of geology "indicates climatic conditions and various kinds of animals and plants existed in the past history of the earth that were far different from what exists on earth today." "Little or no consideration seems to be given," says this scientist, "to the possibility that the scriptural data might be interpreted in other ways to harmonize with the scientific data currently available as well as with future scientific discoveries."⁷

In 1969 an Andrews University teacher confided to his class that on a geological study trip the group discovered evidence that calls the 6,000-year chronology into question. When General Conference president Robert Pierson returned from that trip, he wrote a ringing affirmation of what he had always believed. The teacher said that Pierson did not seem to have understood a word of what they had studied. Fourteen years later the participants in the 1983 Geoscience Field Conference do not seem to have understood any more clearly.

The problem is a rather serious one for the future of our church. Here are men with impeccable apologetic instincts ready to compromise the integrity of Adventism by affirmations that suggest that their biblical understanding is at an elementary level. Our bright, diligent students of the Word must pass the test both of loyalty and of orthodoxy before committees that are presided over by those men who may well be good administrators but are poor theologians. These most recent affirmations suggest that a geoscience conference was the wrong thing to have attended. A course in biblical interpretation taught by Adventist scholars with years of training in the field would have been much more appropriate.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. James Londis, "Can We Trust the Church's Theologians?" *Slingscope*, April 1981.
2. Larry G. Herr, "Genesis One in Historical-Critical Perspective," *Spectrum* 13, no. 2, 1982, p. 52.
3. Even conservative Kenneth H. Wood, now chairman of the White Estate board and for 16½ years editor of the *Review*, knows the irrelevance of the 6,000 years argument. "Nobody clings to Ussher's chronology any longer..." (Kenneth H. Wood to W. Val Chambers, 23 July 1971). For a discussion of evidence for a possibly long chronology from an Adventist scientist acquainted with both sides of the question, see P.E. Hare, "Geologic Time: the Scientific Evidence and the Genesis Record," *Spectrum* 10, no. 1, 1979, pp. 13-19.
4. Seigfried H. Horn, "Can the Bible Establish the Age of the Earth?" *Spectrum* 10, no. 3, p. 19.
5. Herr, *Op. cit.*
6. P.E. Hare, "Geologic Time: The Scientific Evidence and the Genesis Record," *Spectrum* 10, no. 1, p. 18.
7. *Ibid.*

OF CURRENT INTEREST

Ellen G. White Health Committee pronounces

- 1) *There is no convincing evidence that Ellen G. White suffered from any type of epilepsy.*
- 2) *There is no possibility that complex partial seizures could account for Mrs. White's visions, or for her role in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

These very final sounding summary points concluded a report entitled "Did Ellen White Have Complex Partial Seizures?" — received in May by White Estate Secretary Robert Olson from Dr. Guy Hunt, chairman of the White Estate board-appointed Ellen G. White Estate Health Committee, composed of nine Loma Linda University health professionals.

In a 14 May 1984 letter to the coordinators of Ellen G. White Publications, Olson explained that the "committee was appointed . . . to investigate the charges that Ellen White had temporal lobe epilepsy. We supplied them with all pertinent information on the subject, including . . . Dr. Delbert Hodder's article [Visions or Partial-Complex Seizures? *Evangelica* 2, no. 5 (November 1981), pp. 30-37]."

Hodder, an Adventist pediatrician with a subspecialty interest in pediatric neurology, noted "an astonishing similarity between Mrs. White's 'visions' and a type of seizure called 'psychomotor' or 'partial complex' seizure." Hodder also knew that "seizure disorders often develop from a severe head injury such as that suffered by young Ellen."



Partial complex seizures?

Southeastern California Conference Spirit of Prophecy director John Hancock provided all pastors and assistant pastors in his conference with a copy of Olson's letter, the committee's report, and a letter attached to the report written to committee chairman Dr. Guy Hunt by Loma Linda University assistant professor of neurology

Kenneth Jordan.

Jordan labelled Hodder "a neurological diletant," and described his arguments as "superficial, amateurish, and logically fallacious." Jordan and other neurologists on the committee took issue particularly with Hodder's claim that "the hallucinations that may be seen during a partial-complex seizure can be remembered after a seizure and often can be described in vivid detail. The amnesia that is characteristic of seizures is for the events occurring outside of the seizure itself."

Another Adventist physician not on the White Estate committee who has combed the literature on this topic says that the committee members simply have not done their homework. Other *Currents'* sources suggest that the discussion of this topic may have only just begun.

Sad tidings from Southern College

Within weeks of *Currents'* previous-issue report "Glad tidings from Southern College," that school's president, John Wagner, had reneged on his promise that no religion teachers would be terminated.

On 31 January 1984, all three religion teachers who often had been named as being on Southern Union president Al McClure's "hit list" (Lorenzo Grant, Edwin Zackrisson, and Jerry Gladson) received letters indicating they would not lose their jobs.

However, in talks with religion department chairman Gordon Hyde and president Wagner, all three were told that it was understood that they were to take the first acceptable calls that might come to them from other church entities.

Within a few weeks General Conference vice president for North America, Charles Bradford, arranged a position for Lorenzo Grant — secular campus chaplain for the Columbia Union, beginning June 1. Salary for Grant's three-year contract is to be shared among the General Conference, the Southern Union, and Southern College.

Zackrisson had received a feeler from the Southeastern California Conference a few weeks earlier, but this did not develop into a call. Subsequently he did receive and reject a call to do inner city secular campus work in Chicago. He did not feel qualified — by training, experience, or interest — for inner city work.

The Southern College board apparently was not willing to wait for Zackrisson to receive an acceptable call because on May 14 it voted sixteen to two to ask president Wagner to recommend Zackrisson's termination to the board. One of the two votes against this secret ballot action was signed by Georgia-Cumberland conference president Gary Patterson, who has been a consistent supporter of the college and its faculty.

Several ironies emerge from this particular Southern College convulsion: (1) Despite repeated appeals to the board, the college president,

the religion faculty chairman, and the Southern Union leadership to explain the purpose of its action, Zackrisson has been given no explanation for his termination. No charges of any kind have been brought against his teaching effectiveness, his theology, or his personal conduct. In fact, (2) this very school year he was promoted to full professorship and (3) signed and returned to Wagner a continuous contract for the 1984-85 school year. (4) The graduating class voted Zackrisson its class sponsor. And, finally, (5) Zackrisson graduated with a Ph.D. degree in religion from Andrews University 3 June 1984, at a total cost to Southern College of \$70,000 — a cost that is normally amortized by five subsequent years of service to the sponsoring institution.

Zackrisson continues to be refused access to the board minutes that concern him directly, even though the minutes of any nonprofit corporation are by law to be open to public scrutiny.

A reputable source has informed *Currents* that when Lorenzo Grant was forced to take reassignment, South Atlantic Conference president R. B. Hairston said that now a white Southern College religion teacher would have to be moved as well, and that "the big man" (Al McClure) would support such an action.

Perhaps out of fear that his administrative moves could result in a lawsuit, rumor has it that President Wagner is citing L-40 of the SDA working policy as his trump card (L-40 indicates that ordained ministers may be reassigned at the discretion of administration). Does L-40 mean that ordained religion faculty teaching contracts are all potentially meaningless?

Graybill, autumn leaves, and SDA roots

Ronald Graybill will be host and tour guide for a "New England Adventist Heritage Journey" October 11-14, 1984, according to a recent issue of *Slingscope*.

Slingscope reported that Graybill's tour will include such Adventist roots locations as "Portland, Maine — Ellen White's childhood home and place of her first vision; Gorham, Maine — Ellen White's birthplace and site of a newly erected monument to her; East Kingston, Maine, where the Millerite Camp meeting took place; the first Adventist Church in Washington, New Hampshire; and the Melvin farm in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, where the White's lived when they launched PRESENT TRUTH . . ."

Currents recommends the trip to Adventists who wish to know more about their religious roots. It is also an opportunity to get to know first-hand the man so stigmatized by rumor in recent months.

The Adventist heritage tour includes lectures, bus transportation, all meals, three nights' hotel lodging, and the natural beauty of New England in autumn for \$195 (double occupancy) or \$220 (single occupancy). For reservations send a \$50 deposit to Ed Peterson, 2509 Bucklodge Terrace, Adelphi, MD 20783.

OF CURRENT INTEREST

"Awesome power" revisited

All the unions in North America are being assessed by the General Conference to help defray legal defense costs in the suit brought against the General Conference, the Lake Union, the Review and Herald Publishing Association, and eight other church entities by Andrews University psychology professor Derrick Proctor for alleged price-fixing activities. (For background in the case, see "Awesome Power," *Adventist Currents* 1, no. 2, pp. 14-17.)

As of January 1984, the legal documents in the case are no longer available from the court; attorneys for the two sides are simply trading paper. However, sources close to the case indicate that early this year Judge Prentice Marshall nearly pronounced a summary judgment in the case because he felt that the church's attorneys were stalling.

Church attorneys had every scrap of paper in Proctor's office photocopied (approximately 100,000 documents) — a task requiring five people for three weeks. A number of those following the case believe it was an expensive fishing expedition that will net the defense nothing.

The spring months of 1984 found both sides in the case taking depositions from each other. Proctor's attorneys took sworn depositions from Neal Wilson, Charles Bradford, Clyde Kinder, and others. In early June, Proctor gave approximately 700 pages worth of sworn testimony to the church's attorneys.

Everett Tetz, director of Home Health Education Services for the Pacific Union, said that the case has cost the church "hundreds of thousands of dollars." Others have estimated legal costs to date at \$500,000. Tetz also said that unlike some unions (North Pacific, for example), the Pacific Union is not passing any of the General Conference assessment down to its local conferences.

Good news about Good News

Speaking at the Avondale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cooranbong, Australia, on 7 January 1984, *Adventist Review* editor William Johnsson provided his perspective on the continuing viability of Good News Unlimited (GNU):

In the United States, although they continue to receive support, financial support, I do not think they are growing in strength. I think rather the reverse . . . I think it is on the decline.

GNU president Calvin Edwards expresses sincere appreciation for Johnsson's "genuine heart and concern for other people. He is compassionate," adds Edwards, along with the caveat, "Longing not to hurt sometimes hurts more ultimately."

Regarding GNU's condition, Edwards says that during 1983 the organization's growth

exceeded inflation, and that the first quarter of 1984 showed an improvement even over 1983. GNU has just instituted a radio program and has nearly 10,000 recipients of its monthly paper *Good News Unlimited*.



Courtesy David S. Baker Portfolio

GNU president Calvin Edwards

Edwards contends that it is not "an objective of GNU to change the church." Any impact GNU might now have on Adventism Edwards describes as the "unintentional by-product of a positive ministry to persons of all denominations."

Edwards, Noel Mason, and Desmond Ford will be holding weekend summer congresses in Sacramento (July 20-22) and Chattanooga (July 27-29) under the title "Rejoicing in Hope: The Christian Life in a Nuclear Age." For details write GNU, P.O. Box G.N., Auburn, CA 95603

Will North America wait?

A report in the January 1984 *Adventist Woman* indicated that the General Conference continues to reject requests by the Human Relations Advisory Board, various union presidents, and the Potomac Conference Executive Committee to reconsider the possibility of permitting the ordination of women pastors in North America:

The Potomac Conference Executive Committee sent a letter in 1982 to the North American Division asking for a study of the issue. When they had received no response to their request a year later, the committee voted to send another inquiry. Their letter was answered by W. A. Bothe of the General Conference Secretariat who said that the church had done several studies in the seventies on the ordination of women and had decided that although there seemed to be no biblical or theological prohibitions to the practice the church is not ready to move forward on the issue at this time. He also reflected the thinking of Neal Wilson, President of the General Conference and others when he noted that until the world church is ready to study the ordination of

women the church in North America will have to wait.

During a 7 January 1984 question and answer-session at the Avondale S.D.A. Church in Cooranbong, Australia, *Adventist Review* editor William Johnsson responded to a question about the ordination of women:

This is a question that is simmering. Perhaps five or six years ago it reached somewhat of a parting of the ways. There was widespread discussion right at General Conference level, at an annual council. And I think there was widespread support for it in North America, at that time. The argument that kept it out — as I understand the discussions — the main argument was that other parts of the world field could not abide the ordination of women. And one of those parts — it was specifically quoted — was right here, Australia. And because, the argument went, "an Adventist minister should be able to serve anywhere in the world." On that basis, specifically, the ordination of women was set aside, at that time.

Recent events in the Potomac Conference, however, suggest that North America may not be entirely willing to wait on the sexist cultural hangups of the world church. At least ten candidates for membership in the S.D.A. church were baptized by three women pastors in the Potomac conference this year — Jan Daffern, Marsha Frost, and Frances Wiegand. Marsha Frost, with her pastor-husband Jim, is co-pastor of the Arlington-Fairfax district; Frances Wiegand is an associate pastor at the Beltsville congregation; and Jan Daffern is an associate pastor at the Sligo S.D.A. Church in Takoma Park.

The Potomac Conference Executive Committee, chaired by Potomac Conference president Ron Whisbee, has voted on three occasions to permit baptisms by distaff pastors. The most recent vote, a twenty-one-to-one decision, followed the same-day visit by C.E. Bradford and W. A. Bothe from the General Conference to the Conference Executive Committee (16 May 1984), at which time Bradford and Bothe asked the committee to rescind the permission previously voted.

Columbia Union president Wally Coe is said to be supportive of the Potomac Conference's decision; and, all in all, it appears that there will be a confrontation at the 1984 annual council.

Two issues loom large behind the specific question of whether female pastors in North America should be allowed to baptize individuals who have asked to take that step as a result of their ministries: (1) Should the Adventist church in North America be governed by a division of its own make-up, or ruled by the General Conference — a body now heavily populated by leaders from other cultures? (2) When Paul said that women should keep silent in church, was he speaking from a cultural bias? But it is difficult to "sign" while burying a candidate in the waters of a baptismal tank.

More than one hundred years ago (20 Decem-

ber 1881) *The Review and Herald* reported on the fifth meeting (December 5) of the General Conference business proceedings:

Resolved, That females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry.

This was discussed by J. O. Corliss, A. C. Bourdeau, E. R. Jones, D. H. Lamson, W. H. Littlejohn, A. S. Hutchins, D. M. Canright, and J. N. Loughborough, and referred to the General Conference Committee.

All this more than a century ago, before Gloria Steinam, Germaine Greer, Bella Abzug — and before the General Conference wound up in Ellen White's doghouse (see *G. C. Bulletin*, 24 February 1899, p. 74).

"Sister White says"

In a 24 May 1984 form letter to his faculty and staff, Southern College president John Wagner recommended the perspicacity of the Oakwood College board chairman:

Elder C.E. Bradford, chairman, made an impassioned plea that board members and others who will be representing Oakwood College at campmeetings "speak the language of Canaan." He said, "People want to hear, 'Sister White says . . .'" If we talk that kind of language to our people, they will have confidence in the college. Wait till you get back on campus to discuss new theories and raise questions." (I think Elder Bradford's counsel is good for SC too!)

The Bradford remark seems to equate "Sister White says" with "the language of Canaan" — a mistaken equation, since Ellen White wrote



Charles Bradford

ruefully in 1860, "Oh! that I could talk in the language of Canaan . . ." (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. II, p. 54).

If Ellen White couldn't speak the language of Canaan, Bradford and Wagner may be asking a

bit much of the underpaid Oakwood and Southern College faculties' communication skills.

Warren H. Johns does not dance

One month following the publication of *Currents'* last issue, *Ministry* magazine published an article by its associate editor, Warren H. Johns (April 1984), titled "Ellen G. White and Biblical Chronology."

Johns sent a copy of the article to *Currents*, complaining that "in light of the content of this article, what you said about me in the latest *Adventist Currents* (Feb. 84, p. 3) was not only premature, but also highly misleading."

Without naming him, *Currents'* editor had referred to Johns as one of Adventism's "more successful cliff dancers" because "of his failure to share the evidence" by which he had demonstrated three years ago the totally derivative nature of Ellen White's statements on chronology.

In his letter of reply, *Currents'* editor mentioned to Johns that one of his many failings is a lack of prescience. Had he known in February what *Ministry* would publish in April, he would have chosen a less vulnerable example of the "dance along a precipice."

Johns' article will have been well worth the wait, especially if it can be reprinted for the laity in the *Adventist Review* (including non-English, overseas editions).

"Thanks to the assistance of the laser-disc concordance," wrote Johns in *Ministry*, "we now have located a total of forty-two 6,000-year [primary Ellen White source] statements," "forty-one 4,000-year statements, and four 2,500-year statements — all . . . pertinent to . . . determining . . . Ellen White's view on the age of the earth."

Johns found that Ellen White's chronological statements most consistently match those of Archbishop Ussher. "Does this mean that she endorsed the work of Ussher?" Johns put the question.

Referring to the nineteenth century, Johns wrote that "Ussher's chronology so dominated that era that his dates were printed in the margins of most Bibles." "Unfortunately," he continued, "the work of Ussher has in all but a few cases been discredited by modern advances in understanding the unique chronological devices used by the ancients." And Johns added this rather bold statement:

For Seventh-day Adventists to revert back to using Ussher's chronology on the basis that Ellen White used it almost exclusively would be for us to take a giant step backward into the "Dark Ages" as far as chronology is concerned.

Regarding Ellen White's derived chronology statements, Johns believes that "time and place must be considered" . . .

The age of the earth question, he writes, is the "most crucial aspect of Ellen White's chrono-

Courtesy David S. Baker Portfolio

OF CURRENT INTEREST

logical statements" because it impacts the issues of "Creation versus evolution, the Sabbath, and the historicity of Genesis."

Johns believes her chronological statements' "main function is literary, not chronological." He views her use of them as devices for "literary linkage" and "literary emphasis."

One reason Johns limits the authority of Ellen White's statements on chronology is because

some so clearly contradict others. For example, Johns says, "Ellen White, writing between 1864 and 1891, recorded a number of statements advocating the short sojourn [Israel in Egypt for 215 years]; and between 1894 and 1905, she wrote statements advocating the long sojourn [430 years]. Obviously both sets of statements cannot be correct."

Johns also found that "even with her 6,000-

year statements we find two sets of mutually exclusive statements" ["nearly 6,000 years"/ "more than 6,000 years"]

Having said that Ussher's "dates were printed in the margins of most [nineteenth century] Bibles," having stated the inadequacy of Ussher's chronology, having asserted that Ellen White followed Ussher less than consistently, and having demonstrated that Ellen White made contra-

On pages fourteen through seventeen of the Minutes of the Biblical Research Institute Science Council, August 18-20, 1981, is found Warren H. Johns' "6,000-Year Quiz." Take it and check your answers against the key on page 25.

6000-YEAR QUIZ

by Warren H. Johns

All of the following 6000-year statements are from the 19th century. Place an X or check mark by those statements which are taken from the pen of Ellen White, and leave blank those statements which are from non-SDA authors. There are no statements from SDA authors other than Ellen White. No fewer than **two** statements and no more than **eighteen** are by her.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>_____ 1. "What a voice is this breaking over a world which for six thousand years has been a dormitory of sin and death!"</p> <p>_____ 2. "For six thousand years the floods and tempests of Satanic wrath have beaten upon the Rock of our salvation; but it stands unmoved."</p> <p>_____ 3. "Thus we have the gospel preached in Paradise, and justification by faith alone . . . proclaimed some six thousand years ago."</p> <p>_____ 4. "Six thousand years this world has rolled on, getting hoary with age and wrinkled with sins and sorrows."</p> <p>_____ 5. "For six thousand years, Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God's original purpose in its creation is accomplished."</p> <p>_____ 6. "For six thousand years he (Satan) has wrought his will, filling the earth with woe and causing grief throughout the universe. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain."</p> <p>_____ 7. "Why a loving God should, for so slight and curable an evil, have given over our world for six thousand years, to such sorrow, pain, tears, weariness, disease and death as have overflowed it with so terrible a deluge, is a question which such a theory of evil leaves unanswered."</p> <p>_____ 8. "Its (the earth's) groans have lasted now for six thousand years; the whole creation has been groaning, and travailing in pain, waiting to be delivered."</p> | <p>_____ 9. "And were all the sufferings that through almost six thousand years have embittered so many lives, and broken so many hearts."</p> <p>_____ 10. "The deep-toned <i>miserere</i> of humanity that has risen for six thousand years shall be lost in the everlasting jubilee. There will be no tears, no sighs, no crying, no storms. . . ."</p> <p>_____ 11. "Another sign is God's people praying for his coming. Creation, groaning with the travail of six thousand years, cries, 'Come, Lord Jesus.'"</p> <p>_____ 12. "The great controversy between Christ and Satan, that has been carried on for almost six thousand years, is soon to close."</p> <p>_____ 13. "Great prophetic epochs . . . are all passing rapidly into fulfillment. The six thousand years is soon to close."</p> <p>_____ 14. "Ever since he succeeded in overcoming our first parents in their beautiful Eden home, he (Satan) has been engaged in this work. More than six thousand years of continual practice has greatly increased his skill to deceive and allure."</p> <p>_____ 15. "It (sin) is something which can destroy a soul and ruin a world, which can, from one single drop, overflow earth for six thousand years and fill hell eternally."</p> <p>_____ 16. "Man came from the hand of his Creator perfect in organization, and beautiful in form. The fact that he has for six thousand years withstood the ever-increasing weight of disease and crime, is conclusive proof of the power of endurance with which he was first endowed."</p> <p>_____ 17. ". . . He (God) has beautified its floor with the variegated flowers of the field, and made creation a ministry of beauty, so rich, that the ceaseless action of six thousand years have not been able to destroy it, and the sin of succeeding generations has not utterly swept it away."</p> <p>_____ 18. "Six thousand years ago two persons — a man and a woman — were born into the world, and awoke to the consciousness of existence."</p> <p>_____ 19. "For six thousand years, Satan's work of rebellion has 'made the earth to tremble.' He has 'made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof.'"</p> <p>_____ 20. "How skilled in deception are some men, even in a few years! How much more skilled must the father of lies have become in six thousand years!"</p> |
|--|---|

dictory statements on biblical chronology, Johns still concludes that "Ellen White . . . was divinely guided to choose the best available to her."

That may not be the "dance along a precipice,"

but it may strike some readers as a bit of political soft shoe.

(Interested readers should send for a complete listing of all Ellen White 6,000-and 4,000-year

statements, to *Ministry*, 6840 Eastern Ave. N.W., Wash., D.C. 20012. Include \$1.00 and ask for the paper "Ellen G. White and Chronology.")

Tithing the tithe

A number of Southern California Conference ministers and lay leaders believe that a 21 February 1984 letter signed by their four highest administrative officers and sent to all conference pastors, first elders, and treasurers was a political ploy intended to outflank an effort by the Glendale Adventist Church delegates to promote a motion (at the then-forthcoming Southern California Conference Constituency Meeting) to have approximately 10 percent of local congregation tithe either retained by or returned to the local churches (a tithe of their tithe, as it were).

Not only did the conference leaders suggest an almost insulting alternative to the 10 percent plan proposed by the Glendale constituents (1 percent), but after the constituency meeting they sent another letter (16 March 1984) advising their workers that they should "restudy the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy references concerning the tithe."

Readers should digest the two letters reprinted below (in which italics are supplied), and decide for themselves who needs to restudy the inspired counsel on tithe — president Ralph S. Watts, Jr., vice president for administration Lorenzo W. Paytee, vice president for finance Relious L. Walden, vice president for special services, Augustine C. Cortez — or the Southern California Conference workers.

February 21, 1984

Pastors
First Elders
Treasurers
Southern California Conference

For a long time we have sensed the increasing frustration experienced by pastors and lay persons alike in viewing the local needs with insufficient dollars to meet those needs.

We have also reexamined the question of why certain church needs are not supported from the tithe when similar needs are supported at the conference office from the tithe. *We have concluded that the problem is how far the retained-tithe dollar can be stretched, not a matter of theology.*

Upon the recommendation of the administration, *our conference Executive Committee* at its February 7 meeting *approved a plan that will provide a modest amount of support for local church needs from the tithe.* Beginning in 1984, we will revert to every church *from the tithe funds* an amount equal to at least one percent of its tithe received in 1983. This is being done with the understanding that the funds will be used for staffing, church growth, and evangelistic outreach.

It is our hope that, in time, the Union and the General Conference will support this concept and thus enable additional help to flow back to our churches. In the meantime, we believe that when this amount *from the conference tithe fund* is combined with church growth and evangelism funds and local monies that may be available, every church will have greater resources for fulfilling their mission.

May the Lord richly bless you and your church as you carry out the gospel commission in your community.

Very sincerely yours,

president
Ralph S. Watts, Jr.

vice president for finance
Relious L. Walden

vice president for administration
L. W. Paytee

vice president for special services
A. C. Cortez

March 16, 1984

Workers
Southern California Conference

Dear Fellow Workers:

As we phase into the distribution aspect of our "one-percent" plan, we believe some *additional clarification* is in order.

First, how, when, and by whom is the fund to be released? The one-percent fund has been assigned to the coordinators in addition to their evangelism and church growth budgets; therefore, Elders Cortez, DeShay, Torkelsen, and Kono will be happy to work with you regarding your church growth, evangelism, or staffing plans.

Second, in order to avoid possible misuse or misunderstandings *regarding the sacredness of the tithe, we want to advise and emphasize that the funds being provided, while equal to at least one percent of 1983 tithe, will be disbursed from non-tithe sources.*

At your convenience, *we would urge that you restudy the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy references concerning the tithe, and take special note of the Spirit of Prophecy admonition to instruct, teach, and counsel in this vital aspect of our ministry. See Counsels on Stewardship, pages 104-107, for examples.*

May the Lord richly bless you and your church as you carry out the gospel commission in your community.

Very sincerely yours,

president
R. S. Watts, Jr.

vice president for finance
R. L. Walden

vice president for administration
L. W. Paytee

vice president for special services
A. C. Cortez
xc: First Elders
Treasurers

Picking the Shut-Door Lock

by Douglas Hackleman

Warning New England's sinners — Christian and non-Christian alike — to prepare to meet their Maker, James White in the early 1840s shared the burden of soul for sinners along with such famous-name Millerite preachers as Josiah Litch, George Storrs, Joshua Himes, Apollos Hale, Charles Fitch, Joseph Turner, Sylvester Bliss, and the Pearson brothers. In fact, White and John Pearson, Jr., "labored together in different parts of Maine much of the time for nearly one year."¹

Within a few weeks following the failure of Christ to appear on October 22, 1844, John Pearson, Jr., with the editorial help of Joseph Turner, published a short-lived Advent religious paper, *Hope of Israel*. A few months later, C. Henry Pearson, John's brother, initiated his own journal, *Hope Within the Veil*, assisted by Miss E. C. Clemons.²

Much more interesting to Seventh-day Adventists, however, are the three visions reported by black, Freewill Baptist preacher, William Foy. The first two occurred in 1842 on January 18 and February 4, respectively, and were published together in January 1845 at Portland, Maine, by the just-mentioned Pearson brothers, under the title *The Christian Experience of William E. Foy*.³

Near the end of her life Mrs. White recalled traveling to Cape Elizabeth with her father in a sleigh to hear Foy lecture in Beethoven Hall. On another occasion, as Ellen Harmon, she sat on the front row beside Mrs. Foy while William Foy spoke. Mrs. White remembered: "He had had four visions." "He had all these before I had them. They were written out and published, and it is queer that I cannot find them in any of my books."

In one sense the visions of William Foy can be found in Mrs. White's books. From very early in her ministry it was believed that God placed the nineteenth-century, prophetic mantle first on William Foy (1842), then on Hazen Foss (1844) — Ellen White's older sister Mary's brother-in-law — and finally upon "the weakest of the weak." So perhaps it should not be surprising that the theme and content of Foy's visions closely parallel some views given later to Ellen White, after Foss was called but failed to run.⁵

What is a little startling is the sometimes closeness in wording between Foy and White. But that surprise diminishes when it is remembered that Ellen Harmon heard Foy on at least three occasions, possessed his published visions, lived within walking distance of his family, and shared with him common friends.⁶ She could have described her visions, which parallel Foy's, without the assistance of her angel guide.

That nontraditional and uncongenial explanation is strongly reinforced by the accumulating evidence that Mrs. White subsequently used the words and ideas of others in a copious and sustained way throughout her books, articles, testimonies, journal, and diary — a practice her son William referred to as her "habit."⁷

Whatever they may imply, here are some examples of the earliest unacknowledged source usages known to exist in the published visions of Ellen Harmon White may be examined in the box entitled "Foy-White parallels."

Beyond thematic and literary congruencies between Foy's and White's visions, there were similarities in physical manifestations. The *SDA Encyclopedia* refers to "the statement of a physician who examined Foy during a vision and testified that he could find no appearance of life 'except around the heart.' As Foy declares, 'My breath left me.'"⁸ And Ellen White recalled, "He fell right to the floor."⁹

In the wake of 1844, doctrinal differences which developed among the disappointed Millerites — as among Seventh-day Adventists today — were not often surmounted by Christian charity. James White's 27

September 1845 letter published in the *Day Star* denouncing his old friends John Jr. and C. Henry Pearson graphically illustrates:

Brethren J. and C. H. Pearson, and [Sister] E. C. Clemons, have given up the shut door, and are doing all they can to drag others to outer darkness. Of late, the "Hope within [sic] the Veil," has turned a short corner, and I am glad of it; for the Editor [Sister Clemons] and the Publisher [C. H. Pearson], some weeks before the change of views, denied their faith [in the shut door], in being published for marriage. We all look upon it as a wile of the Devil. The firm brethren in Maine who are waiting for Christ to come have no fellowship with such a move.

We are looking for redemption in the Morning, Watch [October 22, 1845]. Amen.¹⁰

How interesting it would be to know whether C. H. Pearson or E. C. Clemons had the humor to forward their congratulations to James White and Ellen Harmon upon their nuptials, August 30, 1846, less than a year later.

James White was not alone in believing that probation for earth's population had ended on 22 October 1844 and that the "tarrying time" of Matthew 25 was about to end with "the Morning Watch" (October 22, 1845) and the bridegroom's coming to welcome the "wise virgins" to the wedding feast. His third disappointment, following the expectations of '43 and '44 (it was getting to be an annual thing), did nothing to convince him that his old friends the Pearson brothers might be correct in resuming their preaching of Christ to sinners. Neither was his new bride able to see through the shut-door mistake for several years — her visions notwithstanding.

"The Shut Door!" "Really! That again?" John Robertson shrieks from page 103 of his 1981 Review & Herald booklet *The White Truth*. His ridicule is reserved for those who "dust off and play again the scratchy old records of earlier Ellen White critics." Robertson includes the shut door among items that to him "illustrate the frivolous character of some of the stock objections" to Ellen White's prophetic claims "that have repeatedly surfaced since early days."¹¹

[James White's] third disappointment . . . did nothing to convince him that his old friends the Pearson brothers might be correct in resuming their preaching of Christ to sinners.



James White

Robertson was incorrect in saying "books have been written on this" shut-door topic; when he wrote there were none. Since the publication of *The White Truth*, Ingemar Linden's 1844 *And the Shut Door Problem* was published by Uppsala, (1982) and distributed by Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm, Sweden. In the next few pages some answers will be suggested for Robertson's question, "Why should it take up further space?"¹²

One clue that there may be a substantive difficulty in the shut-door doctrine held by all the earliest founders of Seventh-day Adventism is the

fact that it is raised again and again all through our history. There is not a decade in our nineteenth-century past in which material is not found defending Ellen White against the claim that she believed, taught, and/or had visions supporting the idea that probation closed for the world at

large in 1844.

Another indication that the shut-door charge has lingered for valid reasons is White Estate secretary Robert Olson's recent statement that Ellen White "incorrectly concluded that no one could accept Christ after

Early Visions: Foy-White Parallels

While examining these few examples of the similar imagery and language used by William Foy and Ellen White to describe what they saw in vision, it is important to keep in mind not only that Foy experienced his two published visions in January and February of 1842, but also to remember that Ellen (then) Harmon was acquainted at least with Mrs. Foy and heard Mr. Foy speak on several occasions. Although Foy indicates that he published his first vision shortly after having it, he was not satisfied with the product. Not until January of 1845 were his first two visions published together in one booklet along with a few paragraphs about his personal experience.

Ellen White had her first in a long series of visions in December of 1844. Quite a number of her visions and some of her life's pilgrimage up to about the age of twenty-five were published together in 1851. In the comparisons that follow, fragments of three Ellen White visions (one each from 1844, 1847, and 1849) are compared with excerpts from William Foy's two visions of early 1842.

Christian Experience and Views of Mrs. E. G. White 1851

... upon it sat the Son of Man ... and upon His head were many crowns ... His eyes were as a flame of fire ... and the angels struck a note higher and sang again ... and they were all clothed with a glorious white mantle from their shoulders to their feet. Angels were all about us as we marched over the sea of glass to the gate of the city. Jesus raised His mighty, glorious arm, laid hold of the pearly gate, swung it back on its glittering hinges, and said to us, "... enter in" (pp. 16, 17).

Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square. Some of them had very bright crowns, others not so bright ... And they were all clothed with a glorious white mantle ... Angels were all about us as we marched over the sea of glass ... (pp. 16, 17).

Before entering the city, the saints were arranged in a perfect square ... Then I saw a very great number of angels bring from the city glorious crowns — a crown for every saint ... and then every voice was raised in grateful, happy praise ... In the city was a most glorious throne, from which proceeded a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal (SG-1, pp. 288, 289).

On one side of the river was a trunk of a tree, and a trunk on the other side of the river, both of pure, transparent gold ... Its branches bowed to the place where we stood, and the fruit was glorious; it looked like gold mixed with silver (p. 17).

Angels were all about us as we marched over the sea of glass ... We all went under the tree and ... when Brethren Fitch and Stockman ... whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us ... we touched our glorious harps and made heaven's arches ring (p. 17).

I asked Jesus to let me eat of the fruit. He said: "Not now. Those who eat of the fruit of this land go back to earth no more ... " (pp. 19, 20)

... in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet (p. 16).

And He [Jesus] said, "You must go back to the earth again and relate to others what I have revealed to you." Then an angel bore me gently down to this dark world (p. 20).

On either side of the chariot were wings, and beneath it wheels. And as the chariot rolled upward, the wheels cried, "Holy," and the wings, as they moved, cried, "Holy," ... (p. 35).

I saw four angels winging their way to the gate of the city. They were just presenting the golden card to the angel at the gate ... All the angels that are commissioned to visit the earth hold a golden card, which they present to the angels at the gates of the city as they pass in and out (pp. 37, 39).

The Christian Experience of William E. Foy 1845

Before the gate stood a tall and mighty angel clothed in raiment pure and white; his eyes were like flaming fire, and he wore a crown upon his head which lighted up this boundless plain. The angel raised his right hand, and laid hold upon the gate, and opened it; and as it rolled upon its glittering hinges, he cried with a loud voice to the heavenly host, "you're all welcome!" Then the guardian angels in the midst of the saints struck a song of triumph ... (p. 10)

I then saw in the midst of the place an innumerable multitude, arrayed in white raiment, standing in a perfect square, having crowns of unfading glory upon their heads ... In the midst of this boundless place, there was a river of pure water, and on either side of the river, countless millions of angels stood with crowns of brightness upon their heads ... singing with loud and lovely voices, and worshipping him whose crown gave light to this boundless place (p. 19).

I then beheld in the middle of this boundless place a tree, the body of which was like unto transparent glass, and the limbs were like transparent gold, extending all over this boundless place ... the fruit appeared like clusters of grapes in pictures of pure gold (pp. 14, 15).

Beneath this tree, standing on the sea of glass ... I saw some that I knew while they were living upon the earth, and they were all singing with loud voices and lifting their glittering hands plucking fruit from the tree ... (pp. 14, 15).

With a lovely voice the guide spoke to me and said, "Those that eat of the fruit of this tree return to earth no more" (p. 15).

Against his breast and across his left hand was as it were a trumpet of pure silver ... (p. 18).

My guide now informed me what I must do, saying, "Thy spirit must return to yonder world, and thou must reveal those things which thou has seen." ... My guide then spread his wings, and brought my spirit gently to the earth ... (pp. 20, 21).

Each chariot had four wings ... one of the chariots arose ... and the wings of the chariot, and the wings of the angel cried as with one loud voice saying, "Holy! Holy!" (p. 18).

I then beheld countless millions of shining ones coming with cards in their hands. These shining ones became our guides. The cards they bore shone above the brightness of the sun; and they placed them in our hands, but the names of them I could not read (pp. 10, 11).

October 22, that only the little flock remaining in the household of faith would be saved, and that everyone else would be lost."¹³ Olson further stated that "it appears that in July 1847 . . . Ellen White still held that the door of mercy had been closed for the world in 1844."¹⁴ As proof, Olson quoted from Ellen White's 13 July 1847 letter to Joseph Bates regarding her February 1845 vision in Exeter, Maine — a vision that Olson later wrote "persuaded many to believe in the shut door."¹⁵

While in Exeter, Maine, in meeting with Israel Dammon, James, and many others, many of them did not believe in a shut door . . . There was one sister there that was called very spiritual. She had traveled and been a powerful preacher the most of the time for twenty years. She had been truly a mother in Israel. But a division had risen in the band on the shut door. She had great sympathy, and could not believe the door was shut. (I had known nothing of their difference.) Sister Durben got up to talk. I felt very, very sad.

At length my soul seemed to be in an agony, and while she was talking I fell from my chair to the floor. It was then I had a view of Jesus rising from His mediatorial throne and going to the holiest as Bridegroom to receive His kingdom . . . Most of them received the vision and were settled upon the shut door.¹⁶

In the quote above, Ellen White was writing to Bates about her second, substantive vision (February 1845). The problems the White Estate secretary saw in her first (December 1844) vision were similar:

In Ellen Harmon's first vision, she was shown that the door of mercy was shut for (a) those Millerites who denied that God had led them in the 1844 "Midnight Cry" movement, and (b) "all the wicked world" which God had rejected.¹⁷

Olson's solution seems almost more troublesome than Ellen White's several-year belief in the shut door: "Ellen misinterpreted this vision."¹⁸ Olson believes she should have deduced a great work yet to be done for the world from a reference to "the living saints, 144,000 in number," in her first vision. That is assuming a whole lot.

It assumes that the specific wording of her visions should be carefully dissected — even anthologized — for subtle or hidden meanings (almost a verbal view of inspiration). It assumes, given the absence of a definition in the vision, that the 144,000 is a literal number of saints. It assumes that "the living saints" means the saints living in the last generation who remain alive to see Jesus come. But whether literal or figurative, "the living saints, 144,000 in number" might well include all "those who had died in faith under the third angel's message, keeping the Sabbath," who are resurrected, according to Ellen White, just prior to the second coming.¹⁹ And Mrs. White believed that there had been faithful Sabbath keepers from the time of Christ to her own century.²⁰

If the number 144,000 were her only clue, Ellen White could hardly be blamed for missing a "vision" of a worldwide work. And Olson offers no explanation of how Ms. Harmon misunderstood her second vision as explained to Bates above — if indeed she did.

Even if Olson's explanation is tenable, it leaves Mrs. White's readers to wonder which other visions she may have misunderstood.

Olson tries to draw an analogy between the apostle Peter's typical Jewish anti-Gentile prejudice and Ellen White's conviction that there could be no salvation for sinners after 22 October 1844. So far from being analogous, the two stories are practically opposites. Peter was given visions specifically to *correct* the prevailing prejudice against Gentile worthiness (see Acts 10). Somehow Ellen White's visions led her and others *into* the shut-door error: As she said, "Most of them received the vision, and were settled upon the shut door."²¹

The thankless task of those who through the past twelve decades have tried to clear Ellen White of a several-year participation in the belief that grace terminated in 1844, or that her visions contributed to that misunderstanding, was made considerably more difficult by the discovery of her 13 July 1847 letter to Joseph Bates by Ingemar Linden in the late 1960s.²²

The two and only known prior, public exposures of the letter are a photograph of its first, innocuous, handwritten page, reproduced on page 104 of the 1915 edition of *Life Sketches* (A footnote at the bottom of that page indicates that it is intended merely to provide the date of Ellen Harmon's first vision.); and Willie White's harmless excerpts from the letter published in the 14 March 1935 *Review and Herald* to describe his parents' early ministry.

F. D. Nichol in his 1951 *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* spent 105 pages defending Ellen White's course during the shut-door era, her past apologists, and his own effort:

Some of those who have written in defense reveal that they did not have before them, and perhaps had never seen, the earliest writings of our fathers. Otherwise they would not have made certain sweeping generalizations. Fortunately, the reputations of the pioneers do not suffer from a full presentation of all the sources, as this present study, we believe, reveals.²³

But the most revealing document of the shut-door era — the same Ellen White letter to Joseph Bates of 13 July 1847 — is strangely missing

The Secret Letter by Skip Baker

I believe it was just around the new year of 1979-80. I was a photographer at the Review and Herald Publishing Association. A number of us were in the art department discussing the transcript of a letter written by Ellen G. White which someone had sent me the week before. The book editor, Tom Davis, had just joined our conversation; and with some warmth he was insisting that the transcript was not genuine, since it indicated that Ellen White believed in the shut-door three and a half years after the great disappointment. This was the meaning of the term "shut door," held by the pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism until 1851: that only those who had believed William Miller's mistaken message could be saved. All others were lost since the bridegroom had come and "shut the door" of probation.

Elder Davis asked if I had seen the original letter; and when I admitted that I had not, he said that I shouldn't talk about something that I could not prove and knew very little about. I agreed completely and realized how easy it would be for someone to fabricate the letter in an attempt to discredit Sister White. I resolved then and there not to talk about the letter until I could read the original in the Ellen G. White Estate vault, if it existed at all.

In the photo studio at that time I had a large oil painting attached to the wall waiting to be copied on 8x10 sheet film for reproduction. The White Estate had commissioned the artist, Elfred Lee, to render a beautiful depiction of the Fall of man, his redemption, and the Second Coming of Christ; and they wanted to sell copies at the upcoming General Conference session in Dallas. Ron Graybill called from the White Estate to say how desperately they needed the transparency to meet their printing deadline, and suddenly I had a flash: "Tell you what, Ron," I said, "bring me Ellen White's July 13, 1847, letter to Joseph Bates; and I will drop everything and photograph your painting today."

"Has that letter been released?" he asked. And I told him that Arthur White had released a transcript to the scholars in 1971. This satisfied him, and later he arrived in my office with the letter, anxious to get the painting shot and to the printers. When he left I took the letter into the studio, thinking that if I worked fast there might be just enough time to photograph it before he returned. My hand trembled as I laid the 133-year-old letter on the copy table, adjusted the polarizing lights, put a red filter on my 6x7 Pentax, and filled the viewfinder with the letter. Due to the cross-polarized lights and red filter, the enlarged photographs were easier to read than the original; and when I compared it to the typed transcript, I discovered that the two were nearly identical.

The White Estate typescript is corrected for spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Punctuation and capitalization are all but missing from Ellen White's handwritten original, and the White Estate has supplied paragraphing where there is none in the original. The letter ends abruptly because its closing page or pages apparently are not in the possession of the White Estate.

from Nichol's "full presentation," except as a footnote much later in his book (p. 621), verifying the date of Ellen Harmon's first (December 1844) vision. How Nichol could honestly ignore the most essential primary document in shut-door history has two possible explanations. One, he never read the letter but in a moment of hasty research simply worked from the *Life Sketches* footnote. Or secondly, as he allowed for the inadequate defenses of earlier Adventist apologists, "A vividly held premise can blind the eye and invalidate the reasoning even of the most conscientious."²⁴

The time is past due for a careful annotation of the three existing pages of this pivotal letter regarding two of Ellen Harmon White's visions and their contribution to her shut-door, theological error. (Ellen White's handwritten original contains no paragraphing whatever.)

While following this letter and annotations, it is instructive to keep in mind that the letter's recipient, Joseph Bates, was a committed shut-door advocate. Notice two samples of his thoughts on that topic in 1847:

I believe the work [Ellen White's] is of God, and is given to comfort and strengthen his "scattered," "torn," and "pealed

people," since the closing up of our work for the world in October, 1844.²⁵

Paul's open door, then, was the preaching of the gospel with effect to the Gentiles. Now let this door be shut, and the preaching of this gospel will have no effect. This is what we say is the fact. The gospel message ended at the appointed time with the closing of the 2300 days; and almost every honest believer that is watching the signs of the times will believe it.²⁶

Readers will see in what follows* that Ellen White wrote Bates nothing that would discourage — or even modify — his written views:

Brother Bates, you write in a letter to James something about the Bridegroom's coming, as stated in the first published visions. By the letter you would like to know whether I had light on the Bridegroom's coming before I saw it in vision. I can readily answer, No. The Lord showed me the travels of the Advent band and midnight cry in December [1844],

*From here on, passages from Ellen White's 13 July 1847 letter to Bates will be indented in san seriph type.

Ellen White to Joseph Bates 13 July 1847

Gorham, Maine July 13th 47

Dear Brother Bates

As James is at work & Sisters are from home thought I would employ myself in writing a line to you my health is quite good for me my faith is still strong that that very same Jesus that assended up into heaven will so come in like manner as he went up. & that very very soon. I have had many trials of late discouragement at times has laid so fast hold upon me it seemed impossable to shake it off but thank God satan has not got the victory over me yet by the grace of God ne never shall. I know & feel my weakness but I have laid hold upon the strong arm of Jehovah & I can say today I know that my redeemer liveth & if he livs I shall live also — O how good it would be to meet with a few of like precious faith to exort & comfort one another with words of holy cheer from the word of God. The sheep are now scattered but thank God ther about to be gathered to a good pasture. O now sweet it will be to meet all the blood washed throng in the city of our God tis then well sing the song of moes & the lamb as we march through the gates into the City bearing the palms of victory & wearing the Crowns of glory Bro Bates you write in a letter to James something about the bridegrooms coming as stated in the first published visions by the letter you would like to know wether I had light on the bridegrooms coming before I saw it in vision I can readily answ- er no. The Lord shew me the travil of the advent band & mid- night cry in december but he did not show me the bridegrooms coming untill February following perhaps you would like to have me give a statement in relation to boath visions at the time I had the vision of the midnight cry I had given it up in the past & thought

Gorham, Maine July 13th 47
Dear Brother Bates
As James is at work & sisters are from home thought I would employ my self in writing a line to you my health is quite good for me my faith is still strong that that very same Jesus that assended up into heaven will so come in like manner as he went up. & that very very soon. I have had many trials of late discouragement at times has laid so fast hold upon me it seemed impossable to shake it off but thank God satan has not got the victory over me yet & by the grace of God he never shall. I know & feel my weakness but I have laid hold upon the strong arm of Jehovah & I can say today I know that my redeemer liveth & if he livs I shall live also — O how good it would be to meet with a few of like precious faith to exort & comfort one another with words of holy cheer from the word of God. The sheep are now scattered but thank God ther about to be gathered to a good pasture. O how sweet it will be to meet all the blood washed throng in the city of our God tis then well sing the song of moes & the lamb as we march through the gates into the City bearing the palms of victory & wearing the Crowns of glory Bro Bates you write in a letter to James something about the bridegrooms coming as stated in the first published visions by the letter you would like to know whether I had light on the bridegrooms coming before I saw it in vision I can readily answer no. The Lord shew me the travel of the advent band & midnight cry in december but he did not show me the bridegrooms coming untill February following perhaps you would like to have me give a statement in relation to both visions at the time I had the vision of the midnight cry I had given it up in the past & thought

but He did not show me the Bridegroom's coming until February [1845] following.²⁷

Some twentieth-century Adventists will not be familiar with what Ellen White meant by "the Bridegroom's coming" or "the midnight cry."

The midnight cry had been the contagious, almost frenzied, proclamation in New England by the Millerites between the middle of August and October 22, 1844, that the bridegroom of Matthew 25 (Christ) was coming to earth to receive his bride, the faithful Church.

Weeks after the disappointment, some Millerites had reinterpreted "the Bridegroom's coming" to mean Christ's acquisition of the New Jerusalem (his bride, on this view) in Heaven from his Father. This is the alternate understanding which Ellen White explained to Bates she had been shown by the Lord in February 1845. The question of just how the Lord showed her will be discussed later. Continuing with her letter to Bates:

Perhaps you would like to have me give a statement in relation to both visions. At the time I had the vision of the midnight cry [Dec., '44] I had given it up in the past and thought it future, as also most of the band had. I know not what time J. Turner got his paper. I knew he had one out and one was in the house, but

I knew not what was in it, for I had not read a word in it. I had been, and still was very sick. I took no interest in reading, for it injured my head and made me nervous.

According to Ellen White in July 1847, by December 1844 she believed that October 22 had been a mistake and that the 2300 days would terminate some time in the future. James White concurred:

When she received her first vision, Dec. 1844, she and all the band in Portland, Maine, (where her parents then resided) had given up the midnight-cry, and shut door, as being in the past.²⁸

J. Turner's paper that Ellen White referred to was either the December 1844 *Hope of Israel* or, much less likely, the *Advent Mirror* of January 1845; he was coeditor of both. And it is interesting that Ellen White makes a point of not having "read a word in it." From this distance her reasons for not reading something that was uppermost on her mind seem incongruous, especially since she could — as the next portion of her letter indicates — speak publicly and travel:

After I had the [first] vision and God gave me light, he bade me deliver it to the band, but I shrank from it. I was young, and I thought they would not receive it from me. I disobeyed the Lord, and instead of remaining at home,

it future as also most of the band I know not what time J. Turner got out his paper I knew he had one out & one was in the house but I knew not what was in it for I did not read a word in it I had been & still was very sick I took no interest in reading for it injured my head & made me nervous after I had the vision & God gave me light he bid me deliver it to the band but I shrank from it I was young & I thought they would not receive it from me I disobeyed the Lord & instead of remaining at home where the meeting was to be that night I got in a sleigh in the morning rode 3 or 4 miles & there I found J.T. he nearly inquired how I was and if I was in the way of my duty I said nothing for I knew I was not I passed up chamber & did not see him again for 2 hours when he came up asked if I was to be at meeting that night I told him no he said he wanted to hear my vision & thought it duty for me to go home I told him I should not he said no more but went away I thought & told those around me if I went I should have to come out against his views thinking he believed with the rest I had not told any of them what God had shone me and I did not tell them in what I should cut across his track all that day I suffered much in body & mind it seemed that God had forsaken me entirely I prayed the Lord if he would give me strength to ride home that night the first opportunity I would deliver the message he had given me. He did give me strength & I rode home that night meeting had been done some time & not a word was said by any of the family about the meeting very early next morning J.T. called said he was in haste going out of the city in a short time & wanted I should tell him all that God had shown me in vision it was with fear & trembling I told him all after I had got through he said he had told out the same last evening I was rejoiced for I expected he was coming out against me for all the while I had not heard any one say what he believed he said the Lord had sent him to hear me talk the evening before but as I would not he must his children should have the light in some way so he took him their was but few out when he talked so the next meeting I told my vision & the band believing my visions from God received what God bid me to deliver to them The view about the bridegroom

A future as also most of the band I know not what time J. Turner got out his paper I knew he had one out & one was in the house but I knew not what was in it for I did not read a word in it I had been & still was very sick I took no interest in reading for it injured my head & made me nervous after I had the vision & God gave me light he bid me deliver it to the band but I shrank from it I was young & I thought they would not receive it from me I disobeyed the Lord & instead of remaining at home where the meeting was to be that night I got in a sleigh in the morning rode 3 or 4 miles & there I found J.T. he nearly inquired how I was and if I was in the way of my duty I said nothing for I knew I was not I passed up chamber & did not see him again for 2 hours when he came up asked if I was to be at meeting that night I told him no he said he wanted to hear my vision & thought it duty for me to go home I told him I should not he said no more but went away I thought & told those around me if I went I should have to come out against his views thinking he believed with the rest I had not told any of them what God had shown me and I did not tell them in what I should cut across his track all that day I suffered much in body & mind it seemed that God had forsaken me entirely I prayed the Lord if he would give me strength to ride home that night the first opportunity I would deliver the message he had given me. He did give me strength & I rode home that night meeting had been done some time & not a word was said by any of the family about the meeting very early next morning J.T. called said he was in haste going out of the city in a short time & wanted I should tell him all that God had shown me in vision it was with fear & trembling I told him all after I had got through he said he had told out the same last evening I was rejoiced for I expected he was coming out against me for all the while I had not heard any one say what he believed he said the Lord had sent him to hear me talk the evening before but as I would not he must his children should have the light in some way so he took him their was but few out when he talked so the next meeting I told my vision & the band believing my visions from God received what God bid me to deliver to them The view about the bridegroom

where the meeting was to be that night, I got in a sleigh in the morning and rode three or four miles and there I found Joseph Turner. He merely inquired how I was and if I was in the way of my duty. I said nothing, for I knew I was not. I passed up [to the] chamber and did not see him again for two hours, when he came up, asked if I was to be at meeting that night. I told him, no. He said he wanted to hear my vision and thought it duty for me to go home. I told him I should not. He said no more, but went away.

Shortly after her first vision in December of 1844, Ellen Harmon got in a sleigh and went to see Joseph Turner. She was well acquainted with him. He already knew she had experienced a vision and wanted to hear it. He was an editor of two shut-door papers, at least one of which was in the Harmon home. But she didn't know his views?

I thought, and told those around me, if I went I should have to come out against his views, thinking he believed with the rest. I had not told any of them what God had shown me, and I did not tell them in what I should cut

across his track.

If Ellen Harmon was so concerned about cutting "across" Turner's "track," it seems she might have risked headache and nervousness to scan his paper that "was in the house" to find out whether they differed. She could have asked a family member to read her Turner's view. Just telling those around her that she would "have to come out against his views" could have generated enough conversation to indicate to her at least whether his views were different than most.

As it happened, Turner and Harmon agreed that salvation for sinners was no longer an option.

All that day I suffered much in body and mind. It seemed that God had forsaken me entirely. I prayed the Lord if He would give me strength to ride home that night, the first opportunity I would deliver the message he had given me. He did give me strength and I rode home that night. Meeting had been done some time, and not a word was said by any of the family about the meeting.

Millerites who said nothing to a returning member of the household about a meeting in which an alternative explanation for their disappointment had just been suggested must have been Millerites in bed asleep!

coming I had about the middle of February 1845 while in Exeter Main in meeting with Israel Dammen James & many others. Many of them did not believe in a shut door I suffered much at the commencement of the meeting unbelief seemed to be on every hand their was one sister there that was called very spiritual she had traveled & been a powerful preacher the most of the time for 20 years she had been truly a mother in Israel. but a division had risen in the band on the shut door she had great sympathy & could not believe the door was shut (I had known nothing of their differences) sister Durben got up to talk. I felt very very sad at length my soul seemed to be in an agony & while she was talking I fell from my chair to the floor it was then I had a view of Jesus rising from his meaditorial thrown & going to the holiest as bridegroom to receive his kingdom they where all deeply interested in the view they all said it was entirely new to them the Lord worked in mighty power setting the truth home to their hearts sister Durben knew what the power of the Lord was for she had felt it many times & a short time after I fell she was struck down & fell to the floor crying to God to have mercy on her when I came out of vision my ears were saluted with Sis. Durbens singing shouting with a loud voice. most of them received the vision & was settled upon the shut door. Previous to this I had no light on the coming of the bridegroom but had expected him to this earth to deliver his people on the tenth day of the 7th month I did not hear a lecture or a word in any way relating to the bridegrooms going to the holiest. I had but very few privelages in 423 & 4 my sisters boath went to the campmeetings in N. Hampshire & Main while my health prevented me from going to but one in Main I know the light I have received came from God it was not taught me by man I knew not how to write so that others could read it till God gave me my vision I went to school but very little on account of my health I do not think I went to school a day after I was 12 years old & did not go then but a few days at a time when sickness would cause me to take my bed for weeks & sometimes for months the first I wrote any thing that could be called writing was after I had been sick the prayer of faith was put up for me & healing

Turner & Hale's Advent Mirror was dated Jan 1845 saying I had about the middle of February 1845 I fell in the chair in meeting with Israel Dammen James & many others. many of them did not believe in a shut door I suffered much at the commencement of the meeting unbelief seemed to be on every hand. there was one sister there that was called very spiritual. she had traveled & been a powerful preacher the most of the time for 20 years she had been truly a mother in Israel. but a division had risen in the band on the shut door she had great sympathy & could not believe the door was shut (I had known nothing of their differences) sister Durben got up to talk & fell to the floor crying to God to have mercy on her. while she was talking I fell from my chair to the floor it was then I had a view of Jesus rising from his meaditorial throne & going to the holiest as bridegroom to receive his kingdom they where all deeply interested in the view they all said it was entirely new to them. the Lord worked in mighty power setting the truth home to their hearts sister Durben knew what the power of the Lord was for she had felt it many times & a short time after I fell she was struck down & fell to the floor crying to God to have mercy on her. when I came out of vision my ears were saluted with Sis. Durbens singing shouting with a loud voice. most of them received the vision & was settled upon the shut door. Previous to this I had no light on the coming of the bridegroom but had expected him to this earth to deliver his people on the tenth day of the 7th month I did not hear a lecture or a word in any way relating to the bridegrooms going to the holiest. I had but very few privelages in 423 & 4 my sisters boath went to the campmeetings in N. Hampshire & Main while my health prevented me from going to but one in Main I know the light I have received came from God it was not taught me by man I knew not how to write so that others could read it till God gave me my vision I went to school but very little on account of my health I do not think I went to school a day after I was 12 years old & did not go then but a few days at a time when sickness would cause me to take my bed for weeks & sometimes for months the first I wrote any thing that could be called writing was after I had been sick the prayer of faith was put up for me & healing

Very early next morning Joseph Turner called, said he was in haste going out of the city in a short time, and wanted I should tell him all that God had shown me in vision. It was with fear and trembling I told him all. After I had got through he said he had told out the same last evening. I rejoiced, for I expected he was coming out against me, for all the while I had not heard anyone say what he believed. He said the Lord had sent him to hear me talk the evening before, but as I would not, he meant his children should have the light in some way, so he took him.

These postdisappointment Millerites were charismatics. They attributed their impressions and movements to God. "the Lord had sent" Turner to hear Ellen Harmon speak, not knowing, apparently, that she wouldn't. When she didn't, the Lord "took" Turner. For a frightening moment the spiritual gift appeared to have passed not only from Foy to Foss to Harmon, but now, when she refused it, to Joseph Turner. Given the sequence of events, it is not surprising that there is no evidence that Turner was impressed enough by Ms. Harmon's telling him "all" her vision to think she had a special gift.

There were but few out when he talked, so the next meeting I told my vision, and the band, believing my visions from God, received what God bade me to deliver to them.

James White specifies that when Ellen spoke, "about sixty confessed their error" in giving up "the midnight-cry, and shut door, . . . and acknowledged their 7th month [October 22] experience to be the work of God."²⁹

Ellen White's second shut door vision occurred two months later:

The view about the Bridegroom's coming I had about the middle of February, 1845, while in Exeter, Maine, in meeting with Israel Dammon, James, and many others. Many of them did not believe in a shut door. I suffered much at the commencement of the meeting. Unbelief seemed to be on every hand.

On Ellen White's original letter to Bates, above and below the words "I had about the middle of February, 1845, while in Exeter, Maine," someone had interlineated in another hand the words "Turner & Hale's *Advent Mirror* was dated January, 1845" above, and "The *Hope of Israel* published about the 20th December" below.

The interlineations are almost certainly Bates', noting where and when Ellen White could have gotten her views about the midnight cry and the bridegroom's coming before her December and February visions. Mrs. White's letter makes it clear that Bates was asking those kinds of questions. Certainly no one at the White Estate would write in ink on such a rare, original letter. (Compare the interlineations with a sample of Bates' handwriting from 1848. See box.)

James White already believed that salvation for sinners ended in 1844 — before Ellen Harmon's February vision — referring in the *Day-Star* "to January, when we got light on the shut door."³⁰ Whether he meant by "light" Ellen Harmon's first vision in December or Turner's December *Hope of Israel* and/or January *The Advent Mirror* articles is unclear.

There was one sister there that was called very spiritual. She had traveled and been a powerful preacher the most of the time for twenty years. She had been truly a mother in Israel. But a division had risen in the band on the shut door. She had great sympathy, and could not believe the door was shut. I had known nothing of their difference. Sister Durben got up to talk. I felt very sad.

Divisions on the shut door were inevitable — with Ellen Harmon, James White, Israel Dammon, Joseph Bates, the Pearson brothers, Joseph Turner, and others finding themselves in the minority as the disappointment wounds began to heal. Within ten weeks of Ms. Harmon's vision of February 1845, the majority of well-known Millerite preachers at the Albany Conference (April 29-May 1, 1845) officially reopened the shut door. William Miller himself said:

"Where you find a door open, enter upon that field of labor, and labor until the Master shall tell you to stop. As yet he has given you no such command."³¹

But Ellen Harmon believed there had been such a command:

At length my soul seemed to be in an agony, and while she was talking I fell from my chair to the floor. It was then I had a view of Jesus rising from His mediatorial throne and going to the holiest as Bridegroom to receive His kingdom. They were all deeply interested in the view. They all said it was entirely new to them. The Lord worked in mighty power, setting the truth home to their hearts.

Apparently there were no *Advent Mirror* or *Hope of Israel* readers in

Compare the interlineations from Ellen White's 1847 letter to Bates (A), with a sample of Joseph Bates handwriting from 1848 (B).



Joseph Bates

A Turner & Hale's *Advent Mirror* was dated Jan. 1845; coming & had about the middle of February, 1845. I was in Exeter, Maine, in meeting. The *Hope of Israel* Extra published about the 20th December.

B Turner & Hale's *Advent Mirror* was dated 1845. The *Hope of Israel* Extra published about the 20th December.

this meeting since "it was entirely new to them."

Sister Durben knew what the power of the Lord was, for she had felt it many times; and a short time after I fell she was struck down, and fell to the floor, crying to God to have mercy on her. When I came out of vision, my ears were saluted with Sister Durben's singing and shouting with a loud voice.

Although these charismatic activities were common with the Millerites; Adventists today finding themselves in such a setting would probably flee with their hair straightened or curled, depending on its normal state.³²

Most of them received the vision, and were settled upon the shut door. Previous to this I had no light on the coming of the Bridegroom, but had expected him to this earth to deliver His people on the tenth day of the seventh month. I did not hear a lecture or a word in any way relating to the Bridegroom's going to the holiest.

Two problems mark this final quotation from the letter to Bates, problems that have crucial implications for Ellen White's integrity:

First, Ellen White claimed that her February vision (about "the Bridegroom's going to the holiest" "to receive His kingdom," the New Jerusalem, on October 22, rather than "to this earth to deliver His people") convinced the group at Exeter — against their natural sympathies — that salvation's door was forever barred. In 1883, nearly forty years after the fact, Ellen White seemed to have forgotten this:

For a time after the disappointment in 1844, I did hold, in common with the advent body, that the door of mercy was then forever closed to the world. This position was taken before my first vision was given me. It was the light given me of God that corrected our error, and enabled us to see the true position.³³

That directly contradicts what Ellen White explained to Joseph Bates in 1847 had been the actual effect of her December 1844 and February 1845 visions; it contradicts, as well, James White's 1847 *A Word to the Little Flock* statement quoted earlier.

As early as 1874 Mrs. White's shut-door retrospective was already clouded:

With my brethren and sisters, after the time passed in forty-four I did believe no more sinners would be converted. But I never had a vision that no more sinners would be converted.³⁴

Compare that with another statement by White in 1883 in which she appears to be demonstrating a burst of candor: "*I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door in 1844.*" But then she went on to redefine "shut door" in a manner consistent only with her somewhat evolved view, following 1851.³⁵

Ellen White demonstrates the difficulty of admitting mistakes while attributing one's authority to God; witness these less-important examples of her edited, 1874 memory:

It was on my first journey east to relate my visions that the precious light in regard to the heavenly sanctuary was opened before me and I was shown the open and shut door.³⁶

A perusal of Mrs. White's earliest visions clearly shows that the first such mention of an "open and shut door" occurred Sabbath, March 24, 1849, at Topsham, Maine — more than five years after her "first journey east."³⁷ But it is not necessary to rely on scholarship for this conclusion. In 1854 Ellen White wrote a *Supplement* to her visions published in *Experience and Views*, explaining:

The view of "The Open and Shut Door," on pages 42-45, was given in 1849. The application of Revelation 3:7, 8, to the heavenly sanctuary and Christ's ministry was entirely new to me. I had never heard the idea advanced by anyone.³⁸

Twenty years later Ellen White wrote adamantly to Loughborough on another point:

I never have stated or written that the world was doomed or damned. I never have under any circumstances used this language to any one, however sinful. I have ever had messages of reproof for those who used these harsh expressions.³⁹

Speaking of those Millerite preachers who had resumed their

preaching of the gospel to sinners with effect, Mrs. White wrote in 1849:

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.⁴⁰

It appears that James White — not altogether candid either — had a private and a public memory of his wife's role in the shut-door mistake. He was pressed by a troubled Adventist on the point in 1865; and his off-the-record remarks as reconstructed by H. E. Carver and J.N. Loughborough (who was also present) dovetail perfectly.

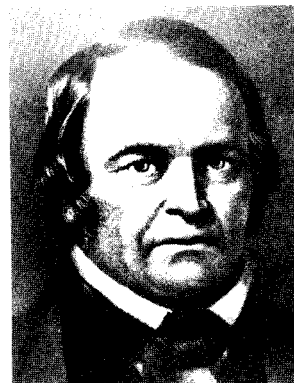
Carver, quoting White:

Brother Carver, I will make an admission to you, I would not make to a sharp opponent. Considering her youthfulness at the time, and her faith in the shut-door doctrine, and her association with those of the same faith, it should not be considered singular if these things should give a coloring to the vision not warranted by what she really saw.⁴¹

Loughborough, quoting White:

Brother Carver, I will make an admission to you, which, of course, I would not make in public to a sharp opponent. She did believe it. And so, as you know, did nearly all the Advent people . . . Considering her youthfulness, and her belief in the shut door, and the views of the Advent people, it would not have been considered very strange, if her vision had received a coloring, in writing it out.⁴²

"Where you find a door open, enter upon that field of labor, and labor until the Master shall tell you to stop. As yet he has given you no such command" —
William Miller



William Miller

Although he was privy to James White's private candor in 1866, and despite a 24 August 1874 letter from Ellen White saying "with my brethren and sisters, after the time passed in forty-four I did believe no more sinners would be converted," Loughborough would still write in *The Great Second Advent Movement* (p. 222):

Mrs. White met Joseph Turner at the above-named place [Paris, Maine] in the early spring of 1845, and heard him declare his doctrine of "no more manual labor for Adventists, and no more mercy for sinners," and plainly told him he was "teaching a false doctrine; that there was still mercy for sinners, and for those who had not understandingly rejected the truth."⁴³

When Loughborough quotes James White as saying, "I will make an admission to you, which, of course, I would not make in public . . .," he was probably recalling the conversation accurately. But James White, in 1868, not only refused to "make an admission . . . in public," but also publicly, in print, grossly misled his readers into believing that the "beautiful and harmonious" writings of Mrs. White

cannot be found in the writings of others, they are new to the most intelligent readers . . . She could not have learned them from books, from the fact that they do not contain such thoughts . . . If Mrs. W. gathered the facts from a human mind in a single case, she has in thousands of cases, and God has not shown her these things which she has written.⁴⁴

James White's denials had begun much earlier when, in 1847, he wrote that Mrs. White "does not 'obtain the sentiments' of her visions 'from previous teaching or study.'"⁴⁵

This leads specifically to the second provocative issue stimulated by the last quotation of the Ellen White July 13, 1847, letter to Joseph Bates,

quoted and annotated at length above:

Previous to this I had no light on the coming of the Bridegroom, but had expected him to this earth to deliver His people on the tenth day of the seventh month. I did not hear a lecture or a word in any way relating to the Bridegroom's going to the holiest.

Perhaps the examples just provided of Ellen White's contrasting memories of what she believed and taught from vision, the more recent, expanding awareness of her lifelong "habit" of using "matter from books" in her own writings, and (probably) Joseph Bates' questioning interlineations will give readers the patience to consider evidence that contradicts Mrs. White's clear denial that she had heard "a word in any way relating to the Bridegroom's going to the holiest."

Some who might quibble that she *read* about it but hadn't *heard* the view should return to the second section of the letter annotated above for her statement that she "had not *read* a word" in Turner's paper.

It is time, anyway, for readers to have a good look at one of the visions

under discussion and compare it with J. Turner's earlier publication that was "in the house" (see box entitled "Divine or derivative?").

In reviewing this interesting and sometimes disturbing part of our Adventist roots, these questions in particular present themselves:

(1) How reliable were Ellen White's visions or her representations of them?

(2) How candid were our pioneers when they wrote out their memories of those life's incidents that have come to be our roots?

(3) Is it a weakness or a strength of character to wonder about (1) and (2).

The book *Education* (p. 146) includes the wisdom that "no part of the Bible is of greater value than are its biographies. These biographies differ from all others in that they are absolutely true to life." That is a sentiment that justifies picking the lock on the door that has been shut on the biographies of our movement. Because it is difficult to face the future with confidence without *really* knowing how the Lord has led us in the past.

("Picking the Lock" footnotes on page 41)

DIVINE or DERIVATIVE?

In comparing the two document excerpts below, it becomes clear that Ellen Harmon was not relying on her friend Joseph Turner for language. (Turner's presentation is didactic and expository; Harmon's view is disjointed and sprinkled with symbolic imagery.) But it is also clear that Harmon's vision contains no concept that is not thoroughly spelled out in Turner's earlier, three-and-a-half-page article "Has not the Savior come as the Bridegroom?"

Although Ellen Harmon never used the term "bridegroom" in the vision she consistently dated at February 1845, the notion of Christ as bridegroom is implicit. And in her 13 July 1847 letter to Joseph Bates, Ellen (by then) White wrote, "The view about the Bridegroom's coming I had about the middle of February." "It was then I had a view of Jesus rising from His mediatorial throne and going to the holiest as Bridegroom to receive His kingdom."

Granted that God could bless different people simultaneously with the same view, it nevertheless would be inconsistent with the "economy of miracle principle" (God does not do for his servants what they can do for themselves) that Ellen White's apologists are employing to excuse her sustained, copious, and uncredited use of sources. Why give Ellen a vision when she has immediate access to Turner and his writings? The economy of miracle principle asks about Ellen Harmon's February 1845 "view about the Bridegroom's coming" the vexing question: Divine or derivative?

Joseph Turner, January 1845

... Now, if Christ is spoken of in the character of Bridegroom, and the word of God informs us of a marriage scene in which he is to be present as the Bridegroom, why should we suppose that this parable speaks of his coming as the King of glory, ... the wonder now is, that we should have confounded one with the other as we have ...

Is it not clear ... that the coming of the Bridegroom, in the sense of the parable, and the marriage itself, must precede the change to a state of immortality? ...

The prevailing opinion, which supposes the church to be the bride, is so deeply rooted, that it is difficult to see that anything else can be the truth ... But the words of the Revelator must settle the question ... and he informs us that "the bride, the Lamb's wife," is "that great city, the holy Jerusalem." ...

The coming of the bridegroom would point out some change of work or office, on the part of our Lord, in the invisible world; and the going in with him a corresponding change on the part of his true people. With him it is within the veil — where he has gone to prepare a place for us; with them it is outside the veil, where they are to wait and keep themselves ready till they pass in to the marriage supper ...

If there is good reason to believe that the history of the Adventists is found there [in the parable of Matthew], it would seem to be as clear that the Bridegroom has come, and that they who were ready have gone in with him to the marriage, and that the door is shut, as that any other part of the parable has been fulfilled ...

Our Forerunner, who has gone ... within the veil, is to appear to bring in safely all that look for him. There is no trouble about the old landmarks, they have answered their purpose, look out for the Forerunner and all will be right ... (A. Hale and J. Turner, eds., *The Advent Mirror* 1, no. 1 (January 1845).

Ellen Harmon, February 1845

Bro. Jacobs: —

... God showed me the following, one year ago this month [February 1845]:

... Then I saw the Father rise from the throne and in a flaming chariot go into the Holy of Holies within the veil [sic], and did sit. There I saw thrones which I had not seen before. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and most of those who were bowed down rose up with him. And I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after he rose up, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who rose up 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 ye, 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. — And I saw a cloudy chariot with wheels like flaming fire. Angels were all about the chariot as it came where Jesus was; he stepped into it and was borne to the Holiest where the Father sat. Then I beheld Jesus as he was before the Father a great High Priest. On the hem of his garment was a bell and a pomgranite [sic], a bell and a pomgranite [sic]. Then Jesus shewed me the difference between faith and feeling. And I saw those who rose up with Jesus send up their faith to Jesus in the Holiest, and praying, Father give us thy spirit. Then Jesus would breathe on them the Holy Ghost. In the breath was light, power and much love, joy and peace ... (Enoch Jacobs, ed., *The Day-Star* vol. X [14 March 1846], p. 7).

CURRENTS INTERVIEW: JOHN ADAM

A church reforming Adventist pamphleteer decries conflict of interest, the edifice complex, and secrecy in church leadership.

It would probably be safe to say that John Adam feels as "called" to his present avocation as any pastor does to the work of the gospel ministry. Adam believes that the Seventh-day Adventist church — his church — is foundering in a sea of corruption and mismanagement, and he's trying to enlist people to man the pumps.

Given his educational background, it is difficult to assume that he is crying, "Wolf!" Adam has a law degree from Memphis State University. He has trained in the New York Stock Exchange and has a principal's license that qualifies him to administer a brokerage firm. He is licensed in all major markets, including commodity markets.

Between 85 and 90 percent of Adam's clients are Seventh-day Adventists, which gives him an insider's perspective on what Adventists do with their increase. He also became familiar with how the church handles — and sometimes mishandles — investments while he was president of the Adventist Laymen's Foundation for the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference. It was there that he first encountered the name Donald Davenport.

*As editor of the large, newspaper-like format, fact sheets called the **SDA Press Release**, Adam, along with his publisher, John Felts, almost single-handedly forced the Davenport story into the open. Adam and Felts reproduced favor-offering-and-accepting letters between Davenport and various conference and union administrators, administrator-Davenport joint tax returns, and other financial documents that illustrated the pervasive nature of the problem.*

Adam grows weary with the conflict of interest that he sees everywhere in the Adventist corporate structure; he regrets the "edifice complex" that puts plush conference and union office buildings before mission schools and local church needs; and he abhors the secrecy that surrounds the handling of the money entrusted to church leaders by a trusting laity.

*Adam was interviewed by **Adventist Currents** contributing editor J. B. Goodner in Florence, Alabama, on 3 March 1984.*

CURRENTS: Why are Seventh-day Adventist church members losing confidence?

ADAM: The laity has lost confidence in their administrators. They don't have representation on boards; they're kept in the dark about things. For instance, just last week I discovered that the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference has been borrowing money to meet payroll. This is something the laity doesn't know about. We're the last ones to find out anything.

CURRENTS: How can this secretiveness be overcome?

ADAM: More laymen will have to be involved

in the church. They're going to have to take a more active role in the administrative process. They're going to have to serve on boards. They're going to have to have access to the political process of the church. For instance, in the Adventist hospital system where the Adventist Laymen's Council has been doing a considerable amount of investigation, we learned that out of thirty-five people on the board, there are only three laymen. Most board members are conference and union officials. I really think that is an insult to the Adventist laity. Now, Adventist lay people are not going to run up and down the

street with banners saying, "We're being discriminated against"; but we really are second-class citizens in this church.

CURRENTS: The Adventist Health System/Sunbelt — is that nonprofit or for profit?

ADAM: It is nonprofit. I'm speaking of the sunbelt system.

CURRENTS: I have heard that the Sunbelt System has borrowed a lot of money.

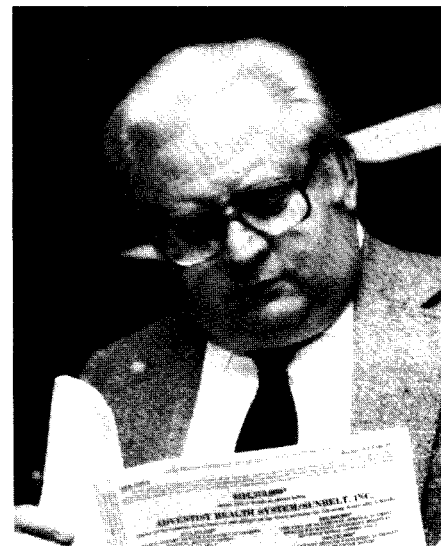
ADAM: The Sunbelt System alone is in debt 225 million dollars. The Sunbelt System alone. Now, you might say, "Well, they're doing such a tremendous job and they're really spreading



Adventist lay people are not going to run up and down the street with banners saying, "We're being discriminated against."



The Proctor case will . . . show that neither our administrators nor our legal department knows what they are talking about.



The [Sunbelt] system and two . . . Adventist laymen formed a 50/50 partnership . . . and borrowed \$16 million to establish the clinics.

the message." But we don't really find that to be the case. They're not doing that good a job. The hospitals seem to be more responsive to the interests of the community than the mission of the church. The hospitals were all given to the Adventist Health System by the union conferences in the first place. Then the health system went out and incurred all this horrendous debt. And we are supposed to believe they are doing a wonderful job.

CURRENTS: What do you mean "the hospitals were given to them in the first place?"

ADAM: Well, this point can be argued. I don't think it was properly done in a constituency meeting. But the Southern Union gave the hospitals to the Adventist Health System/Sunbelt, and on this nucleus the present borrowing and expansion began. I think it was in 1972 that the General Conference decided that it was necessary to further centralize the medical work. Of course, there are a lot of people in the church who do not feel that centralization and productive business necessarily go hand in hand. The North American Adventist hospital systems were all combined in the past four or five years under the authority of one man named Don Welch.

CURRENTS: Did this happen in a General Conference session or was it behind closed doors in an Executive Committee meeting?

ADAM: It was done, as I understand, in a General Conference session.

CURRENTS: What can we do about the apathy of the membership?

ADAM: This is going to be a very, very difficult thing to handle. We're dealing with people's attitudes. In my practice I often encounter domestic problems between a man and wife. As with husband and wife, if we Adventists grow cold toward our church, it's hard to turn those feelings around. We're going to have to revitalize the laity; we're going to have to get them more involved in the church; and, above all, they have to have the feeling that this is *their* church.

CURRENTS: There's little question that you are well informed about the financial situation within the church. How did you become interested in it?

ADAM: Well, I was president of the Adventist Laymen's Foundation in the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference and an elder in the local church. And one year I went to a constituency meeting where we had an election of officers. We had an election of officers, and I took a look at a financial statement that indicated we had something like \$142,000.00 on a balance sheet that was not approved by the General Conference. I started getting the run-around. That experience piqued my interest, and it wasn't too long before I ran into the name Davenport.

CURRENTS: Who do you mean by the brethren? Were they local conference officials?

ADAM: Local conference officials.

CURRENTS: Like the treasurer?

ADAM: Like Reuben Lopez, who was the treasurer of the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference. I started with him and worked my way up to McClure.

CURRENTS: Is that Al McClure?

ADAM: Al McClure. He was President of the

Kentucky-Tennessee conference at that time. As we continued to probe, we came across a number of illegal loans made by the conference to a Donald J. Davenport. Being a lawyer, I really like to minimize the gray area in my life; and I didn't understand why we had loans with some fellow out in California — loans that were not consistent with General Conference financial policy guidelines. Why, I wondered, were we

James Ware . . . was disfellowshipped for questioning what was going on in the Atlantic Union at the Pawtucket Nursing Home.

operating outside of policy. Of course, from there I really started digging into the Davenport relationship; and it turned out to be a real horror story. With my connections, in the Southern Union particularly, I found out that other conferences and unions were involved with Davenport. And it was a pretty sizable involvement. The sad thing about all this was that the laity was totally unaware of what was happening. All these loans were made without the knowledge of the laity.

CURRENTS: There are laymen on conference executive committees. Weren't they aware of the loans?

ADAM: Well, a lot of the laymen who function on these executive committees are really men who don't question what goes on. If you take a look at these laymen, they're just not inclined to question too many things. They're sworn to secrecy. There really is no open-book book-keeping system. The only thing we get is what little we can get at a constituency meeting.

CURRENTS: In other words, the laity on the conference committees more or less provide a rubber stamp for the conference president.

ADAM: That's correct.

CURRENTS: Please continue describing your interest in Davenport and the repercussions that resulted.

ADAM: Well, I checked as far as I could. I actually went before the Executive Committee in Kentucky-Tennessee when Al McClure was the president there; and I was assured by the people on the committee, particularly the conference attorney, Mitch Tyner, that the loan mortgages were all proper and in place. I found out that the loans at that time totalled about \$200,000.00. The situation looked so bad that I took my concerns through church arbitration. The church arbitration process turned out to be a farce. In essence, the arbitration committee said that a layman has no business examining the books of a conference. Now, with my financial credentials, as an elder in the church and as president of the businessmen's foundation, if I didn't have the right to take a look at the books, then I really feel that nobody did. Any fool could see that there was something seriously wrong; all these Davenport loans were being hidden for some reason.

CURRENTS: Al McClure is now president of the Southern Union, but this is when he was

president of Kentucky-Tennessee Conference?

ADAM: That's correct.

CURRENTS: What was the upshot of your going through arbitration?

ADAM: The upshot was that I never did get to see the books. I lost in arbitration, but I didn't give up. You just can't give up. You're up against a tremendous political machine. You've got to be a fighter. You've got to hang in there.

You've got to keep pressing. I had gone so far into this thing that I was determined to get results no matter what they said. Conference officials said all the mortgages were safe and sound. I was lied to. That is the worst thing about this whole situation. I was repeatedly lied to. The Bible says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Are we not a Christian organization? I don't really care to get into doctrinal issues, but we are Christians. We should at least be honest. Christians don't go around lying to people, as I was lied to when trying to discover the status of Kentucky-Tennessee Conference investment practices.

CURRENTS: Now after that didn't you discover Davenport's relationship to the Georgia-Cumberland Conference and the involvement of its president, Des Cummings, Sr., with Davenport?

ADAM: Yes, sir. But before that I was sued by Davenport for libel and slander.

CURRENTS: What brought that on?

ADAM: Well, it's very difficult to say why the man sued me. I don't really feel that he was Christian about the whole thing. He never contacted me; I never talked to the man; I didn't know him. All of a sudden a federal marshal served me with a summons, and I was faced with a \$4 million libel suit. I retained Robert Potts of Florence, Alabama, as my attorney. Looking back, one of the most ironic things about the whole Davenport affair is that Potts wrote the General Conference legal department asking that they get involved in the case because it was a tremendous lawsuit between two fellow Adventist brethren of the church. The General Conference informed Potts that they had no interest in the Davenport matter at all. Yet on 20 November 1980, the General Conference denied knowing that church investments were in jeopardy. As North American vice president Charles Bradford put it, "We have no knowledge of shady dealings."

CURRENTS: How long was this suit in effect, and what was the outcome of it?

ADAM: The suit lasted for about a year. Potts is a fantastic attorney who has had tremendous experience in federal procedure. And he pushed the case very, very quickly. Although Davenport had the highest-priced Beverly Hills lawyers available, Potts kept pressing them. Just when we had our court orders in hand to go to California and examine Davenport's books, I got a phone call (21 February 1980) from the

Georgia-Cumberland Conference president, Des Cummings, Sr. It was the first time I'd really talked to the man. Cummings said that he would talk Davenport into dropping his lawsuit against me if I would persuade my friend John Felts, the publisher of *SDA Press Release*, not to press a lawsuit against him. To me this indicates that the ministry in the Southern Union was responsible for the lawsuit against me. I've told this story to many people, and nowhere has it ever been denied. Of course Des Cummings was president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, and I'm assuming the man was truthful.

CURRENTS: Is this the same Potts who is on the President's Review Commission relative to the Davenport affair?

ADAM: No, Robert Potts is the son; Frank Potts, the one who is on the President's Review commission, is his father.

CURRENTS: It would seem that you did not have benefit of due process within the church.

ADAM: Well, that's very true; I did not. Except maybe for Kenneth Emmerson, there are very few Adventist ministers who came up to me and said, "Hey, John, we really feel sorry for you being strung out like this." But this is a pattern of things. The same thing happened in the Merikay Silver and Lorna Tobler cases and is currently happening in the Dick Proctor case.

CURRENTS: The Silver and Tobler cases were against the Pacific Press Publishing Association?

ADAM: Yes. My problems with the Tobler case are this: the church administrators indicated in the Tobler case, in pleadings, that she was going to be disenfranchised from the church. I don't believe the church manual states that you're to disenfranchise anybody through the courts. I think it was a horrible mistake. The woman was done a grave injustice. And then she went into court and won the case!

CURRENTS: Along with all the other female employees.

ADAM: That's right. Every woman won the right to equal pay for equal work from the Pacific Press. Now, the Pacific Press was run by Brother Leiske.

CURRENTS: Leroy J. Leiske?

ADAM: Yes. Leroy Leiske is well known to us in the Southern Union. He was the president of the Southern Union. Like many other presidents, eventually his administration was beset with problems and we got rid of him. After stints as president of Southwestern Adventist College,

ADAM: Dick Proctor is a professor of psychology at Andrews University, and he has also been a colporter for a good portion of his life. He opened a small religious and religious educational discount bookstore. All of a sudden he ran into problems with some brethren in the Adventist publishing work. They tried to sandbag him. They were stupid enough to write letters to Proctor's suppliers and everyone else telling them not to do business with him. But they should have realized that they also represented the General Conference and its subordinate entities, and thereby opened up a tremendous legal liability for the church.

CURRENTS: In what way? Antitrust?

ADAM: Yes, antitrust. You can't use the powers of a vast corporation like we have to run one man out of business. It's a flagrant violation of federal law, which was instituted to protect small businesses against price fixing and market control. I believe that Proctor's going to win the case. He's going to go through a lot of pain—he's twisting in the wind right now; and nobody has come to his aid, either laymen or administrators. But he's going to win the case. And yet, you know what's going to happen? We're going to have a protective order; we're going to have a settlement; and we'll never read about it in the *Review*, I assure you.

CURRENTS: You mean that the laity of the church will never know the outcome of the case?

ADAM: That's correct.

CURRENTS: How can that be?

ADAM: Well, because when settlements are made—for instance, the suit in the North Pacific Union in which a few retirees settled with the church regarding their claims that the North Pacific Union and its entities had mishandled their trusts—very often a gag order is built into the settlement.

CURRENTS: Are you speaking of the class-action suit against the North Pacific Union?

ADAM: It was a suit, but not a class-action suit. I understand that the North Pacific Union paid the ten plaintiffs roughly \$800,000.00. Nobody really knows what happened. But those people had to go to court to get justice from their church. I think that is a horrible thing. And then you ask why laymen have lost confidence in the church.

CURRENTS: How many laymen know that the church was out \$800,000.00 there in the

hear, \$800,000.00 went to pay these people off, we should know that our tithes and offerings were so allocated.

CURRENTS: And you foresee the same thing happening with Dick Proctor?

ADAM: Yes, of course.

CURRENTS: In addition to this \$800,000.00 that was paid out to those plaintiffs in the North Pacific Union, how much of the \$21 million in the Davenport affair do you think the church will actually recover?

ADAM: That's a good question because right now my sources in California indicate that these conferences and unions have got the whole settlement process all bogged down. (If there was \$300,000.00 owed to any one conference, both the conference and the conference association have filed claims simultaneously.) So, instead of \$300,000.00, they're asking for \$600,000.00; and the claims are staggering. Nobody really knows what's going on. And when you consider how much interest we're losing on this money as the years go by, . . . this thing has cost us money. But I'll tell you, the money is nothing compared to the laity's loss of confidence in church administration. This is the serious problem. Mutual trust between the laity and church administration has been the whole strength of the Adventist church. But you don't maintain or recover trust by edict.

CURRENTS: What's the solution?

ADAM: There is only one solution: We have to start getting honest with the laity and with each other. Now, if administrators can't be honest, we need to get rid of the administrators. I'm dead serious about this.

CURRENTS: Is it dishonest administrators or a dishonest system? Do honest men get enmeshed in the system and find they can't do otherwise?

ADAM: I'm not worried too much about these administrators, but I am very concerned about the attitude of the laity. Recently we uncovered an \$80,000.00 second mortgage from trust funds in the Florida Conference—\$80,000.00 improperly and illegally borrowed from the Florida Conference. And no one—and I'm talking about laymen now—hardly blinks an eye.

CURRENTS: You have evidence of that?

ADAM: Of course. Yes, sir. As a matter of fact, we circulated quite a few copies of the mortgages. This is what really started our scrutiny of the hospital system.

CURRENTS: Was that the case in which \$80,000.00 was borrowed by the president of the Florida hospital, Mardian J. Blair?

ADAM: That's correct. Now, how can laymen who are concerned about Christ and who love the church let this thing go by and not even blink an eye. The laymen in Florida ought to be up in arms over this. They should get rid of every single administrator involved in misconduct. Instead, Blair was recently elected president of Adventist Health System/Sunbelt. This is after Davenport. It's as if we have learned nothing from the Davenport situation. So many of these administrators are ministers. In the hospital system, ministers make up 98 percent of the boards. A child could tell you that we've got some very serious problems with the hospital

The arbitration committee said that a layman has no business examining the books of a conference.

the North Dakota Conference, and the Northern Union Conference, he wound up as head of the Pacific Press. Now on the Proctor case I have voluminous documentation in my file. We've discussed with some of the best attorneys whether or not Proctor has a case against the church.

CURRENTS: For readers who are not acquainted with it, would you explain the Proctor case?

Northwest, since there was a gag order put on the decision?

ADAM: Nobody really knows; because when they made the settlement, they made all these people, including the attorney, Ernest Ching, sign an affidavit saying that they would not discuss the settlement or its amount with anyone. That was part of the settlement. But that's not the issue. The issue here is accountability. If, as I

system.

CURRENTS: That brings to mind the Pawtucket Nursing Home scandal in New England.

ADAM: Yes. The Pawtucket Nursing Home situation was exposed by some laymen. Laymen are getting concerned. I might sound very negative at times, but laymen are beginning to wake up and take an active interest in their church. The Pawtucket problem was uncovered by laymen in the Atlantic Union Conference. Then-administrator of Fuller Memorial Hospital, Gerald Shampo, with two of his friends built a nursing home and then turned around and sold this nursing home to Fuller Memorial Hospital. They made a profit of, I think, \$800,000.00.

CURRENTS: How much did each one of these

on in the Atlantic Union at the Pawtucket Nursing Home. He was actually disfellowshipped. He wasn't even disfellowshipped at a regularly called business meeting. These are very sad facts. And you cannot regain the laity's trust with these kinds of shenanigans taking place. The structure of the Adventist church, particularly if you follow the church manual, is pretty rigid. We have ways to get people disfellowshipped. But you do not get them disfellowshipped by an edict from the General Conference. It's very, very funny to me that nobody's been disfellowshipped because of their part in the Davenport affair, but on these other peripheral matters they get disfellowshipped. James Ware was disfellowshipped immediately; and it took four months to get him back into the

Conference officials said all the mortgages were safe and sound. I was lied to . . . I was repeatedly lied to.

three men invest initially?

ADAM: They put in one dollar each. Now, that's a pretty good return on your money. I can't do that in the stock market.

CURRENTS: These men put in a dollar each. Do they still own the nursing home or have they sold out?

ADAM: It's very, very difficult to get answers from official sources on this. Church administrators have been working on the problem for a year now. They've used the same old commission ploy. They have attorneys running all over the place. They have C.P.A.s all over the place but no real answers. We have copies of audit reports ordered by the General Conference that are never answered.

CURRENTS: Were each of these three men members of the Adventist church?

ADAM: No. One was an Adventist; the other two were not.

CURRENTS: Was the Adventist the administrator, and is he still an administrator?

ADAM: Yes, but he is now vice-president for hospital relations, Adventist Health System/North, and board chairman of Battle Creek Adventist Hospital, Fuller Memorial Hospital, and Parkview Memorial Hospital. Notice, the man moved up to greater responsibilities. Meanwhile, the Pawtucket problem has been pretty much dumped into the lap of the General Conference.

CURRENTS: What are they doing about it?

ADAM: Nothing really.

CURRENTS: What can the laity do to get the Pawtucket problem off of dead center if the General Conference is not doing anything about it?

ADAM: This is really a very tragic case. If we could ignore the money for a moment, I want you to think about James Ware. James Ware was the Adventist who uncovered the damaging evidence. I'm not saying whether he gave me any material or not, but he did a tremendous amount of sleuthing on this case. He was disfellowshipped for questioning what was going

church. What a tremendous amount of embarrassment to the denomination. Now Davenport himself has been disfellowshipped. But remember, Davenport did not run around putting a gun to people's heads; the money was given to him by people in whom we had trust and confidence.

CURRENTS: Back to the hospital system. Do you think that those problems will soon be resolved?

ADAM: I think in the hospital system you will find the Davenport situation just magnified. Everything is done in utter secrecy, with 98 percent of the board controlled by ministers who are not sensitive to the ethical issues involved in corporate finance. For instance, I have some physician clients who close their offices on Sabbath. Now the hospital system comes and builds a clinic right next door and runs it day and night, seven days a week. Now, how would you like to be an Adventist doctor who closed his office on Sabbath, and across the street from you there's an Adventist clinic — built with your money — operating full blast on Sabbath? I mean, there's nothing sacred any more when you start rolling over the Ten Commandments. A minute ago we were talking about falsehoods, and now we're talking about breaking the Sabbath. We let an organization like the hospital system dictate to us what we're going to do on the Sabbath. At the Pawtucket Nursing Home we have dancing lessons on Friday night and bingo games on Sabbath afternoon. This is a complete disgrace!

CURRENTS: What about the free-standing clinics?

ADAM: There are twenty-eight free standing clinics being built by the Sunbelt Hospital System throughout the Southern Union. The system and two unknown Adventist laymen formed a 50/50 partnership, then went to the Sun Bank in Florida and borrowed \$16 million to establish the clinics. I have both asked and demanded the opportunity to examine a copy of this partnership agreement. I have been refused.

Can you imagine, a \$16 million secret deal? Al McClure would not let me examine the mortgages on the Davenport investments, and we lost \$200,000.00 in my conference (McClure was president at that time). Now, McClure is president of the Southern Union and he refuses to let anyone examine a \$16 million partnership. It is high time every laymen began asking questions, got their noses out of the television sets, and got about the mission of this church.

CURRENTS: How can anyone get this information?

ADAM: You have to apply political pressure. If McClure doesn't give the laymen answers, he must resign. Do you know that the best-kept secret in this church was the Davenport investments. And how many of our leaders in the Southern Union have sold their nursing homes to the health system? The secret deals and private deals are an abomination to the Lord.

CURRENTS: You're saying that the laity needs to take charge; yet you and I both know that beyond the local conference level a layman has no say-so whatsoever. Aren't you being more or less idealistic?

ADAM: I believe that the unions are superfluous, and laymen have no control over them. I think the unions have only one purpose right now, and that's to suppress the laity. The laity has to take control of the conferences. I see no reason why we have to have even one minister on conference executive committees. They're not trained as businessmen. We've got Adventist businessmen everywhere. Why take a minister out of his calling? His assignment is to work for the salvation of souls. What in the world is he doing on a business committee? This is pathetic.

I think the laity can take control of a conference. The unions are in deep trouble anyway because of the tremendous amount of dishonesty and skulduggery taking place in them, and I think that will resolve itself.

CURRENTS: You're not saying that the unions are going to dissolve themselves?

ADAM: No, but I think that the recent action at the Southeastern California Conference triennial session — in which the constituency voted that serious study should be given to dissolving the union conferences — was portentous. The die has been cast. The unions are in very serious trouble, as are the union presidents.

CURRENTS: Neal Wilson is on record, however, at the last Annual Council as being in favor of the unions staying as they are.

ADAM: I can understand Brother Wilson's situation. He would like the Union presidents to return him to office in 1985. Wilson wrote me a very fine letter telling me how he liked Elder Elsworth Reile; and yet Reile and he were really not that friendly to each other when Neal Wilson went to Lincoln last year to dislodge him from the presidency of the Mid-America Union. But here again I want you to notice something that just flies in the face of common intelligence. What happened to Reile finally? He was given a vice presidential position in the hospital system. Reile's salary is now twice Wilson's; but I assure you, Wilson works ten times harder than Reile. Where did Des Cummings go when he was fired? He went to work

for the hospital system, too. The hospital system is riddled with people of this caliber.

CURRENTS: Referring to the Davenport scandal, General Conference vice-president for North America C. E. Bradford is on record as stating that "the system has been tried and it works." What do you think?

ADAM: I don't agree. I think the trial is yet to come. The heat is just being applied right now in the form of decreased tithes and offerings. I think that Bradford's statement was premature. It's like the situation where people say that Neal Wilson should have named the people who were improperly involved with Davenport. Neal decided not to do it. I really don't think we can weigh accurately yet the wisdom of that move. Only time will really prove that it might not have been such a good thing. A major goal of this church, including the General Conference and you and me, should be to build up the confidence of the laity in the church. Now, did Wilson's decision not to name the Davenport offenders build up the confidence of the laity? I want you to answer that yourself. When Bradford says that Dick Proctor is taking food from the mouths of our literature evangelists, does it build up the confidence of the laity in Elder Bradford?

CURRENTS: Confidence is something that has to be earned.

ADAM: That's very true. It's not bestowed upon you. And the tragic thing is the very serious damage that has been done to the confidence of the laity in our leadership. I don't revel in this. No one should really relish what's going on. But if the laity is not soon brought into the confidence of leadership and treated like adults instead of children, the church is going to be in very, very bad trouble; and most of that trouble will be financial.

CURRENTS: I imagine that Neal Wilson is aware of that, because the back cover of a recent *Review* states that he has written over four hundred letters to pastors and lay members of local conference executive committees, asking how church organization might be improved. So they must be aware of it.

ADAM: Well, Brother Wilson is very hard working and very articulate, but I think he needs to have a little more faith in the laity. For instance, when he and Elder Bradford went down to Texas to remove Southwestern Union president Ben Leach, he went down there on his own, not counting on any support from the laity. He thought he was going to do it himself, and he wound up being defeated. When he went up to remove Reile from office in the Mid-America Union, the same thing happened. Neal can't go up against a union president and have that man removed without support from other sources. I'm certain that Neal realizes this now.

CURRENTS: That suggests that Neal Wilson does not have the support of the Union conference Committees. What kind of support does he have in the General Conference among his colleagues?

ADAM: I've done a lot of serious thinking about this. Neal has a very good mind; he's very articulate; he works very hard; and, believe me, we have tried, through various sources, to

discover whether Neal has made any serious ethical mistakes. He's managed to stay pretty clean. Now, a lot of times people say, "John, you are defensive for the General Conference and its officers generally." That's true; because I know how these people live, and I know how they work. These people work very, very hard. I doubt very seriously whether you or I would want to be in Neal Wilson's shoes for any period of time. The real corruption in this church lies in the unions. We could discuss union corruption all day long. The problem is that it's so removed from the laity, and the General Conference is powerless to dictate much to the unions. The only solution I can see is we're going to have to eliminate the unions.

CURRENTS: How do some of the men who are close to Wilson — say Kenneth Wood or Robert Spangler — feel about his administration methodology?

ADAM: I really don't think that Neal Wilson wants to be pictured as an axe-man. He doesn't wish to be known as the man who runs around with the black hood, chopping people down. These people ultimately vote him into office. And this is another problem with the process. The laity has next to nothing to do with electing a General Conference president. He is elected by the union presidents and other world leaders. I don't think Neal wants to be seen as an executioner of the men who are going to vote for him.

CURRENTS: But when Kenneth Wood was still editor of the *Review*, he had quite a bit to say about the leadership not taking more firm action in the Davenport affair. He appeared to differ with Neal Wilson in the *Review*. I just wonder how Robert Spangler feels about this. He's the director of the Ministrial and Stewardship Association, and *Ministry* editor (and Wilson's next-door neighbor).

ADAM: Well, I think Spangler generally is very supportive of Neal Wilson. As editor of the *Review*, I think Kenneth Wood had and exercised a greater degree of independence than Spangler can or will exercise. And, of course,

the file represents a Christian brother who has a difference with the church. Unfortunately the arbitration process in this church has failed miserably. But the people in the legal department could take up the slack by being honest. We are getting enmeshed in the legal problems of the world. The reason people sue the church is that they want to call attention to what they feel is an inequity. And that's another situation that is getting worse and worse. We are driving our laity to courts to get justice from their church.

CURRENTS: The General Conference legal department has been farming out certain legal cases that they can't or won't handle themselves.

ADAM: That's true. The General Conference does farm out cases, which reminds me of a point. I understand — from very, very reliable sources — that the legal fee for the Davenport disaster is \$1.7 million. I don't see how our people in the legal department have the nerve to collect a paycheck.

CURRENTS: That includes the accounting firm and the public relations consultants?

ADAM: Of course not. Of course not. Yet they had the nerve to write my attorney a letter in 1979 saying, "We have no interest in the Davenport case." And we wind up paying \$1.7 million in legal fees!

CURRENTS: They even farm out theological things. The General Conference legal department paid a Roman Catholic attorney, Vincent Ramik, to try to pronounce last rites on the question of Ellen White's plagiarism.

ADAM: I think this is the worst thing; and we're just beginning to put this together. Talk about conflict of interest within the church. I have information from very, very reliable sources that the attorneys in the General Conference also collect a fee from the Adventist Hospital Systems.

CURRENTS: All of the hospital systems?

ADAM: From all the hospital systems. Now imagine Neal Wilson sitting there getting legal advice from a man who is paid by another church-related entity. What kind of information

McClure is president of the Southern Union and he refuses to let anyone examine a \$16 million partnership.

you know that Kenneth Wood is not with the *Review* any longer. But I think they were different positions, and it was easier for the one man to say something than the other.

CURRENTS: Are there any General Conference departments that you are uncomfortable with?

ADAM: In my opinion, the worst department in the General Conference is the legal department.

CURRENTS: Why?

ADAM: Seventh-day Adventist attorneys should remember that they are to be Christians first and lawyers second. When a brother has a difference with the church, General Conference lawyers should not try to ice the man over. Lawyers are getting so that they look at everything as a file. It is difficult to work up much compassion for a file. The church attorneys must remember that

do you think Neal Wilson gets about the hospital system from his attorneys? Do you understand how conflict of interest could literally choke this church to death? How in the world can Neal make an intelligent decision when he has paid lackeys around him? I think this is where we're going to have our biggest problems. Our next biggest problem in this church will be with the hospital system; and it will be mind blowing, maybe ten times more pervasive and expensive than the Davenport situation.

CURRENTS: What's the track record of the legal department in the General Conference? How many cases do they win?

ADAM: Very seldom do they win. They're very good at putting out protective orders though.

CURRENTS: Settling out of court, you mean?

ADAM: Yes.

CURRENTS: And that means paying out money in amounts that cannot be discovered by the laity.

ADAM: Yes. If Proctor wins his lawsuit and makes any kind of settlement, I think the people in our legal department ought to resign in mass, and we laymen ought to push for that.

CURRENTS: I noticed that you mentioned the Dick Proctor case again. Why does this really upset you so?

ADAM: Well, I know Dick Proctor. He's a very fine Christian. He's got a tremendous amount of faith in the Adventist church structure. But this lawsuit and the expense that he's incurring have got to be taking a toll on his family. The things that are said about him are very, very untrue. Conference officials — I think in particular of one in Ohio — write letters in black and white urging people not to do business with this fellow Proctor. What type of church do we have here when a fellow church brother is hung out to twist in the wind? I mean, we as members ought to get up in arms; and the people who have done this horrible thing to Proctor, and thereby to the church, ought to be removed from their jobs. We talk about the publishing work, but the

of the destructive effect this will have on the laity's attitude toward administrators. And they can put 5,000 protective orders around this case but, believe me, it's not worth it. The Proctor case will not only show that you and I have the right to go into the publishing work and sell books if we want to, it will show that neither our administrators nor our legal department knows what they are talking about. And they live in the publishing work; they ought to know what they're doing.

CURRENTS: Well, it's evident that the General Conference brethren are aware of the problems in the publishing work. The *Review* reported an action taken in the most recent Annual Council in which a committee was appointed to review and make recommendations regarding the publishing work.

ADAM: We're getting into a situation where committees and commissions are the answer for the day. In actuality, they do nothing but sandbag the issues. What in the world has the President's Review Commission accomplished, will you please tell me that? Not one person has been fired over the Davenport issue.

CURRENTS: Shifting gears a bit, how is it that you can be such a liberal voice on financial

church administrators' ability to handle financial corruption straightforwardly legitimize the question of whether these same men have either the integrity or the skill to lead us through theological thickets?

ADAM: If the General Conference were to emerge from Autumn Council with an edict that said, "We sincerely doubt the authenticity of Sister White's writings," I doubt very seriously whether the laity would believe it. We're reaching the point at which the membership believes nothing that the administrators say. This is a very serious problem. If they say the sun is going to come up in the morning, many laymen will not believe.

CURRENTS: But in the current *Adventist Review* there is a three-page article by Robert W. Olson. He plainly states there that "50% or more" — that's in quotes — of *The Great Controversy* was borrowed from other authors. Do you think the laymen will believe that?

ADAM: Many of the laymen don't even get the *Review* any more.

CURRENTS: John, you evaded the question.

ADAM: I reassert my point that no matter what you print in the *Review*, the laymen aren't going to believe it — whether it's good, bad, or indifferent. It's like a cancer. It's just eating away at this church. We're in a terminal state.

CURRENTS: There sometimes appears to be an across-the-board defensiveness at church headquarters. Leaders don't want to be questioned about organization, finance, theology, Ellen White — especially Ellen White. Look what happened to Ron Graybill, for example.

ADAM: Well, I don't share anyone's sympathy for Ron Graybill. Walter Rea was in the Florida Conference when I was a small boy; I've known him all my life. And when Rea came out with his book *The White Lie*, Ron Graybill was the first man to travel from one coast to the other shooting Rea down. Then he turns around and does the same thing. So Graybill's problems don't really upset me too much, and what happened to him doesn't upset me at all.

CURRENTS: Do you think that there are occasions or topics on which it is in the best interest of the church to keep the laity in the dark?

ADAM: I don't think it's ever to the advantage of any organization to have its membership in the dark. How can they effectively contribute their time and interest without a clear knowledge of where it is needed? It's time that we, as a church, realize what the blacks are doing in their conference. We also should realize what the women are doing. You cannot convince me that there isn't one woman in the church who could effectively run a conference. I just can't believe that. I've been skirting around your theological questions, but there's one thing I would say. If Sister White could see what's going on in our conferences and our unions right now, she'd turn over in her grave. She repeatedly said that the job of the ministry is the salvation of souls. Why, then, are they running businesses — very complex businesses, such as the hospitals? We are going to lose a tremendous amount of money with the hospital system; it might destroy this church. How? It's a corporation that can

If they don't understand that it is wrong for a man to take money . . . how are they going to grapple with theological problems?

publishing work isn't exactly a model of business acumen. It's a mess.

CURRENTS: Assuming that Proctor receives justice, whether by out-of-court settlement or through a judgment, what effect will that have upon the Seventh-day Adventist publishing work?

ADAM: I don't really think it will make much difference. The publishing work is taking its lumps right now.

CURRENTS: Why do you say it wouldn't make any difference, Brother John, when it's the Illinois Attorney General's office that is pressing the case under the antitrust statute? Won't it revamp our method of distributing and selling our publications?

ADAM: The job of the publishing work is to spread the gospel to the corners of the earth. If we can print *Desire of Ages* for twenty-five cents and sell it, let's do it. I don't think we should use our publishing work to protect a couple of cronies in their jobs.

CURRENTS: But, as I understand it, Proctor's case is an antitrust suit over price fixing and is not about the method of distributing God's word. What do you think it will do to it? If the church loses in federal court, might it not revamp the entire publishing work, the Adventist Book Centers, the colporteur work, — everything?

ADAM: Well, the publishing work and its distribution mechanisms are already in serious trouble. People in the General Conference will admit to that privately. This has got nothing to do with Proctor at all. If Proctor wins his case, he'll walk off with a good settlement. But think

matters while remaining so conservative on theology?

ADAM: Well, I wouldn't really say I was liberal on financial issues. As a matter of fact, I want to say that the General Conference has many good policies on running and operating conferences and unions. They have a very thick policy manual. We don't need any more policies. The policies that we have are not adhered to; they are run over roughshod. Rather than being liberal, I'm stringent on policy control and audits.

Now, in regard to the theological issue, I really feel that many Adventists don't know the Bible; they don't study out theological issues for themselves. But if they don't understand that it is wrong for a man to take money from the conference or get involved in conflict of interest, how are they going to grapple with theological problems? The average Adventist has got to be sensitized to the need for basic decency and honesty. How can a man be subjected to abuse from the church and no one says or does anything? As I said before, how can we let Proctor twist in the wind? It has nothing to do with his theology. I'm talking about the fact that Christians are supposed to be honest, God-fearing men and women who love their neighbors. We don't exhibit this type of love toward one another. Now, whether you drink a Coke or I don't drink a Coke, or somebody's wife wears lipstick or not, that's not the issue here. The issue here is honesty and decency, with love and concern for our brothers and sisters.

CURRENTS: Does a valid loss of confidence in

bankrupt itself. And if somebody is smart enough to show that the officers and directors of the hospital system went on a trip to Alaska, and they took out \$300,000.00 to pay for the trip, that same lawyer is smart enough to know that they personally benefited. They personally benefited from this trip to Alaska. Another question: Why is the salary of an ordained minister in the hospital system something like twice that of other Adventist preachers? Why should Elsworth Reile, as spiritual adviser to Adventist Health System/Mid-America, make twice as much money as Neal Wilson?

CURRENTS: It's interesting that you say that the hospitals could go bankrupt. Is it true that corporately the Adventist hospital system of North America has an aggregate debt of \$917 million? Almost a billion dollar debt?

ADAM: You are now talking about an area in which I'm very well versed. The Medicaid/Medicare payments on cost containment are going to put small hospitals out of business. If you take a look at the Adventist Health System/Sunbelt, over half their bed capacity is in small hospitals. It's not necessarily bad management. I'm talking about the federal government and Medicaid/Medicare payments. We are going to be in very serious trouble. All hospitals are going to be in serious trouble. But if our hospitals' bond holders can show that as a church, we

going to have serious problems is in the Atlantic Union.

CURRENTS: Why's that?

ADAM: Because they're badly strapped financially.

CURRENTS: More so than Georgia-Cumberland?

ADAM: Georgia-Cumberland is also badly strapped; so is the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference. You may read a very rosy report in the *Review* or *Southern Tidings*; but, believe me, that's not the case.

CURRENTS: The Association of Adventist Forums Task Force on Church Structure has proposed that lay people should "comprise at least 50 percent of every permanent committee, commission, and board." Do you think that 50 percent lay participation would carry adequate wallop?

ADAM: Their 50 percent figure is completely objectionable. There should be no ministers on any of the boards, period. By definition, an ordained minister's work entails the salvation of souls. He has no business dealing with the business of the church.

CURRENTS: You object to the ordained minister's involvement in church business. What about other salaried employees of the church serving on boards?

ADAM: Any salaried employee of the church

CURRENTS: Where would these thousand people begin?

ADAM: They begin in their local churches. Adventists must have a closer walk with Christ on a daily basis. They need to be warm, people who care about their brothers and sisters. This is not a tirade against leadership. We are the leaders in this church. The laymen are the leaders. And if our dear administrators won't realize this, we need to get rid of them. The church is the laity. Things are changing in the church, however slow these changes may appear to be.

KEY TO THE 6000-YEAR QUIZ

1. J. R. MacDuff, *The Mind and Words of Jesus* (1866).
2. E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (1891).
3. J. Cumming, *The Church Before the Flood* (1853).
4. J. R. MacDuff, *The Faithful Promiser* (1866).
5. E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1899).
6. E. G. White, *The Great Controversy* (1888).
7. H. Bonar, *God's Way of Holiness* (1850).
8. J. Cumming, *Voices of the Day* (1858).
9. J. G. Pike, *A Guide for Young Disciples* (1832).
10. J. Cumming, *Apocalyptic Sketches* (1850).
11. J. Cumming, *Voices of the Day* (1858).
12. E. G. White, *Signs of the Times* (1844).
13. J. Cumming, *Voices of the Day* (1858).
14. E. G. White, *Signs of the Times* (1887).
15. H. Bonar, *God's Way of Holiness* (1850s).
16. E. G. White, *Review and Herald* (1881).
17. J. Cumming, *The Church Before the Flood* (1853).
18. J. Holland ("Timothy Titcomb"), *Gold-foil* (1872).
19. E. G. White, *The Great Controversy* (1888).
20. J. G. Pike, *A Guide for Young Disciples* (1832).

We automatically make the man's wife a delegate at large. I mean what type of foolishness is this?

were inept or irresponsible in running our hospitals, they can sue the boards of directors and the church as owner of the hospitals.

CURRENTS: Well, how could the denomination be sued for inefficient hospital operation?

ADAM: If they took money out of general operating expenses and squandered it on jet planes, trips to Alaska, drug stores, and various travel agencies — and they blew this money away — the bond holders will quite legitimately ask, "Where's our money?" And when audits illustrate irresponsible spending on jets, Alaska junkets, drug stores, etc., the board of directors will be held accountable for the money that they lost. They are liable. Attorneys will then look at who these directors are in association with. If you are a director, you are liable; and the people that you represent become liable for your actions — particularly if you personally benefited from them.

CURRENTS: John, does the laity have any voice, any impact at all above the local conference level?

ADAM: Recently I attended a presentation by Elder Bradford to the Adventist Forum chapter in Collegedale. He made it clear that the tithe has fallen off drastically. So now they want input from the laity. There won't be a massive revolt. People will just quit giving. That's what's happening now, and Bradford admits it. Many of the people in the General Conference admit the same thing. By the way, the first place we're

should not be on a board, period. It's very objectionable to me. Particularly with conference officials, we automatically make the man's wife a delegate at large. I mean what type of foolishness is this?

CURRENTS: Well, Brother Adam, do things seem to be so bleak that there's no light at the end of the tunnel?

ADAM: I really feel that the strength of this church is in its laity. I think that Neal Wilson and everybody needs to understand that. It's the laity that make up this church. Take the Pawtucket Nursing Home situation; I'm very, very encouraged that the laymen are not letting that thing die. Down in Texas, laymen are insisting they be told what's happening to the money. At the hospital system in Florida, laymen are raising questions. No one or two people are going to be able to solve these problems. But the laity is waking up. They're becoming very concerned about the fact that their friends are dropping out of the church; and when that is added to self-evident financial problems, answers are demanded. Laymen are waking up. When the Davenport situation was at its height, I doubt whether there were more than thirty people who were really concerned about bringing that problem to a head. Thirty people. We don't need every single layman in this church awake to get turned around. A thousand people could straighten out this church. Laymen are waking up in droves.

The Great Controversy Over Deletions in the Vision of 1844

by Dennis Hokama

Introduction

The battles that have been fought over the deletions in Ellen White's vision of December 1844 have not been mere exercises in academic hair-splitting. And the battles have been bloody — because to a large extent the credibility and integrity of the Advent movement, its publishing work, and Ellen White herself, appear to hang upon the history of this vision. In a sense, the battle waged over this first postdisappointment vision is a microcosm of the history of the Adventist church.

The history of this vision includes the most serious charges the church has had to combat since its founding: the shut door heresy; mistaken visions; coverup and suppression of mistaken visions; dishonesty and lies by church leaders, scholars, and Ellen White herself; manipulation of the White writings by the church's publishing arm against the will of (or unbeknown to) the prophetess.

A Brief Background

Ellen White's first written account of her December 1844 vision appeared in the *Day Star* of January 24, 1846 (pp. 31-32), under the title of "Letter from Sister Harmon, Portland, Me., December 20, 1845." It appeared for the second time in print on April 6, 1846, as a broadside (one sheet with printing on only one side). Its third printing was in James White's tract *A Word to the Little Flock* May 30, 1847 (pp. 14-18), under the title "To the Remnant Scattered Abroad." In these first three printings, Ellen White's vision was reproduced without significant alteration. However, with the fourth printing, critical deletions were made. Approximately 19 percent of the vision's original text was missing when it appeared in the July 21, 1851, *Review and Herald Extra*. A few months later the vision appeared for the fifth time in a booklet published by the Whites, entitled *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Mrs. E. G. White*. The same passages were missing from this printing. When the booklet was republished some thirty-one years later within the larger volume of *Early Writings*, it was this same reduced version of the vision which appeared; and so it has remained with subsequent editions of *Early Writings*.

Excluded with the 19 percent chaff discarded from the original text was a sentence that clearly appeared to support the "shut-door" theory of early Adventism. Speaking of these Adventists who later denied that the "midnight cry" (predicted October 22, 1844, return of Christ) movement was of God, she said in her first vision (December 1844):

The light behind them went out leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and got their eyes off the mark and lost sight of Jesus, and fell off the path down in the dark and wicked world below. *It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the City, as all the wicked world which God had rejected. They fell along the path one after another. . .*

(*A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 14).

The italicized portion (italics mine) was among the deletions from the 1851 printings and thereafter. The discarding of this sentence apparently coincided with the early church's retreat from the "Sabbath and Shut-Door" banner, which they had carried proudly between 1846 and 1851. (See *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 162). But the deleted sentence in the 1844 vision was scarcely noticed amid the confusion caused by the publication of the booklet *Experience and Views* in 1851. Members were aghast over the exclusion of whole visions which they believed were central to the Sabbath and shut-door message. In 1906 Ellen White describes how her husband defused the crisis.

At one time in the early days of the message, Father Butler and

Elder Hart became confused in regard to the testimonies. In great distress they groaned and wept but for some time they would not give a reason for their faithless speech and manner, Elder Hart referred to a small pamphlet that had been published as the visions of Sister White, and said that to his certain knowledge, some visions were not included. Before a large audience these brethren both talked strongly about their losing confidence in the work.

My husband handed the little pamphlet to Elder Hart and requested him to read what was printed on the title page. "A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Mrs. E. G. White," he read.

For a moment there was silence, and then my husband explained that we had been very short of means, and were able to print at first only a small pamphlet, and he promised the brethren that when sufficient means were raised, the visions should be published more fully in book form.

Elder Butler was deeply moved, and after the explanations had been made, he said, "Let us bow before God." Prayers, weeping and confessions followed, such as we have seldom heard.

Father Butler said, "Brother White, forgive me; I was afraid you were concealing from us some of the light we ought to have. Forgive me, Sister White." . . . (SM I, p. 53).

Despite James White's improved financial situation during the remaining thirty years of his life, he never did keep his reassuring promise to Elders Butler and Hart. As the years passed and the church moved further away from its earlier shut-door stance, its leaders began to deny that such a view was ever held; and it became evident that the omissions and deletions in the 1851 printings were not coincidental. Despite the deletions from some visions (other visions were also tampered with), and the wholesale omission of entire visions which taught extreme shut-door positions, *Experience and Views* laid into obscurity. Church critics contended from time to time during the booklet's years of exile that it was because of its shut-door content, as well as other embarrassing teachings, that *Experience and Views* was allowed to go out of print. With respect to the publication itself, they charged that it attempted to save the credibility of the visions by deleting or editing away offending passages.

As the years passed and the church moved further away from its earlier shut-door stance, its leaders began to deny that such a view was ever held.

By the 1880s few members or leaders of the church had any knowledge of the circumstances which had confronted the fledgling church upon the publication of *Experience and Views*, and supposed that critics were getting away with blatantly false accusations when they charged the church with suppression. G. I. Butler, who was then president of the General Conference, decided that the critics could be silenced once and for all by republishing *Experience and Views*. D. M. Canright was in those days closely associated with Uriah Smith, editor of the *Review and Herald*. He describes the circumstances leading up to the decision to republish *Experience and Views* within the covers of *Early Writings*:

... At the time Butler was president of the General Conference, president of the Publishing Association, etc. One day in 1880 he

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came into the office where Elder Smith and myself were. In high glee he said, "Those Western rebels say we have suppressed some of Sister White's earliest visions. I will stop their mouths, for I am going to republish all she ever wrote in those early visions." Elder White leaned forward, dropped his voice low, and said, "Butler, you better go a little slow." That was all. I did not understand what his warning meant, nor did Butler.

Soon Elder White died — in August 1881. Butler then went ahead, and in 1882 issued the present edition of "Early Writings" (*Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, Canright, 1919, pp. 156, 157).

In the December 1882 *Review and Herald*, Butler proudly announced the publication of *Early Writings*:

Before me lies a neat volume of 270 pages, entitled, "Early Writings of Mrs. White." . . . These were the very first of the published writings of Sister White. Since they went out of print, many thousands have become interested in her writings. Many of these have greatly desired to have in their possession *all* she has written for publication. Efforts in all directions have been made to hunt up the little volume in question, and worn copies here and there have been obtained and held with great care. So strong was the interest to have these early writings reproduced that several years ago the General Conference recommended by a vote that they be republished . . . It meets a want long felt.

There is another interesting feature connected with this matter. The enemies of this cause, who have spared no pains to break down the faith of our people in the testimonies of God's Spirit, and the interest felt in the writings of Sister White, have made all the capital possible from the fact that these early writings were not obtainable. They have said many things about our "*suppressing*" these writings as if we were ashamed of them. They have tried to make it appear that there was something objectionable about them that we feared would come to the light of day, and that we carefully kept them in the background. These lying insinuations have answered their purpose in deceiving some unwary souls. They now appear in their real character, by the publication of several thousand copies of this "*suppressed*" book, which our enemies pretended we were very anxious to conceal. They have claimed to be very anxious to obtain these writings to show up their supposed errors. They now have the opportunity . . .

A. C. Long of Marion, Iowa, immediately took the opportunity and published a sixteen-page pamphlet entitled "Comparison of the Early Writings of Mrs. White with Later Publications." From the contents of Butler's article, and the preface of *Early Writings* in which it was claimed that "no shadow of change has been made in any idea or sentiment of the original work, and verbal changes have been made under the author's own eye, and with her full approval," Long inferred the following claims:

1. That these "Early Writings" of Mrs. White were published under her eye and with her full approval.
2. That they contain all of her early visions.
3. That those who have claimed that certain portions of her early visions were "suppressed" are liars, since they are now all republished.

Long then proceeded to turn the tables on Butler as well as Mrs. White, accusing them both of mendacity by demonstrating that *Early Writings* did not contain *all* her visions; nor were those included the same as "the first of the published writings of Mrs. White." Long was essentially correct in his accusations, but his wording was a little careless. Butler had claimed that the book contained "the very first of the published writings," not all her early visions. Secondly, Butler did not directly say that *Early Writings* contained all she had written for publication. He said many "greatly desired to have . . . *all* she has written for publication," and that *Early Writings* "meets a want long felt."

The fact remained that *Early Writings* was not a reprint of her very first published writings. Neither did *Early Writings* "meet the want" of many who "greatly desired to have in their possession *all* she had written for publication." Those who wished to have undeleted visions would still have had to find — if they could — rare copies of *A Word to the Little Flock* and *Present Truth*, the precursor to the *Review and Herald*. Butler had evidently written the article in good faith and was shocked

when it backfired. Canright noticed Long's devastating counterattack from his farm and wrote Butler a letter of inquiry regarding the alleged omissions in *Early Writings*. Uriah Smith, meanwhile, was under severe pressure from Ellen White to respond to Long's latest attack:

I have been waiting to see what you would do in putting something in the paper to vindicate the right. You have had ample time . . . Why do you . . . keep entirely silent and let the dragon roar? . . . We are nearing the end . . . What right have they to suppose, to conjecture, to misinterpret my words? To . . . make a false prophet . . . (Letter 3, 1883).

Under the circumstances, Smith read Canright's letter to Butler with some apparent amusement and wrote to Canright on 22 March 1883:

Dear Brother Canright:

I was interested in your queries to Uncle George on the omissions in *Early Writings*. We have the Marion paper in exchange, and I think it must come down on him something like an avalanche; and I have a curiosity to know how he has answered it, I have no doubt the quotations are correct. I

"I have been waiting to see what you would do in putting something in the paper to vindicate the right. You have had ample time.... Why do you...let the dragon roar?" — Ellen White

remember coming across the tome "A Word to the Little Flock" when we were in Rochester, but I have not seen a copy since, and did not know but "Experience and Views" contained the full text of the early visions. It seems to me that the Testimonies, *practically*, have come into such shape, that it is not of any use to try to defend the enormous claims that are now put forth for them. At least, after the unjust treatment I have received the past year, I feel no burden in that direction . . . (Smith to Canright, March 22, 1883, GC archives).

Although embarrassed by Long's revealing response to the publication of *Early Writings*, Butler was in no mood to apologize. In a special *Review and Herald Supplement* issued on August 14, 1883, he and Elder J. H. Waggoner attacked Long for gross misrepresentation. Their articles are preceded by a quotation from Job 21:3: "Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on."

Referring to Long's three previously quoted conclusions, Waggoner wrote:

Except the first statement that the book, *Experience and Views*, was published with the approval of Sister White, the paragraph above quoted is an entire deception.

After exploiting Long's inaccurate wording, Waggoner attempted to defuse the impact of the deletions by flatly denying that there had been any change in church doctrine since the early visions were first published undeleted:

His (Long's) statement of the belief of the early Seventh-day Adventists is not truthful. It was made to show that they had an object in not republishing certain things, and that object was to hide from the public the fact that the visions at first taught certain doctrines (shut door) which are not now held by those who believe the visions. Now if we shall prove that that is not so, and that their statements to that effect are absolutely false, then there will remain no ground whatever for their accusations.

Butler at least conceded that he had been inaccurate in stating that *Early Writings* "were the very first of the published writings of Sister White." He stated that it was an honest mistake in that he had never before seen or known about the existence of *A Word to the Little Flock*. As for the deletions in the visions, he wrote:

But in those visions which had been published, it was thought some passages were personal, or related to matters which at the time of their publication were important, but had now become unimportant because of an entire change of circumstances, or for some other reason.

He denied, however, that there was anything shameful or heretical in

the passages that were omitted. Furthermore, since *A Word to the Little Flock* was now going to be available for sale by the *Review and Herald*, he felt that the charge of suppression should be forever silenced, even though the deletions remained.

Ellen White's Explanation(s) of the Deletions

In the preface to her December 1844 vision as published in the *Review and Herald* of July 21, 1851 (the first time it appeared in deleted form), Ellen White had already made some reference to the deletions that were made:

Here I will give the view that was first published in 1846. In this view I saw only a very few events of the future. More recent views have been more full. I shall therefore leave out a portion and prevent repetition.

When *Experience and Views* was published only a few months after this in 1851, her footnote in the December 1844 vision was a little misleading:

This view was given soon after the great Advent disappointment in 1844, and was first published in 1846. Only a few of the

This was not just another vision; it was her very first vision. It established her as a prophet. Was she unable to detect that 19 percent of her vision was missing . . . ?

events of the future were seen at that time. Later views have been more full (bottom of p. 13).

One might easily form the impression here that with each publication, material would be added to the visions rather than removed. Her only admitted motive for deletions was to "prevent repetition." Meanwhile, back in Healdsburg, California, Ellen White had also read A. C. Long's charges and decided to respond. In what eventually came to be known as Manuscript 4 - 1883, Ellen White made her most detailed and direct response to the deletions in the December 1844 vision. Since it is her most complete statement, and since it is by the author herself, it seems reasonable that this document should be the centerpiece of any discussion of the deletions:

My attention has recently (1883) been called to a sixteen-page pamphlet published by A. C. Long of Marion, Iowa entitled, "Comparison of the Early Writings of Mrs. White With Later Publications." The writer states that portions of my earlier visions, as first printed, have been suppressed in the work recently published under the title *Early Writings of Mrs. E. G. White*, and he conjectures as a reason for such suppression that these passages teach doctrines now repudiated by us as a people.

... Before I notice separately the passages which are said to have been omitted, it is proper that several facts be stated . . .

In our frequent change of location in the earlier history of the publishing work, and then in almost incessant travel . . . I lost all trace of the first published works. When it was decided to publish *Early Writings* at Oakland last fall, we were obliged to send to Michigan to borrow a copy of *Experience and Views*. And in doing this we supposed that we had obtained an exact copy of the earliest visions as first published. This we reprinted, as stated in the preface to *Early Writings*, with only verbal changes from the original work.

And here I will pause to state that any of our people having in their possession a copy of any or all of my first views, as published prior to 1851, will do me a great favor if they will send them to me without delay. I promise to return the same as soon as a copy can be produced.

So far from desiring to withhold anything that I have ever published, I would feel great satisfaction in giving to the public every line of my writings that has ever been printed.

... The articles given in *Early Writings* did pass under my eye; and as the edition of *Experience and Views* published in 1851 was the earliest which we possessed, and as we had no knowledge of anything additional in papers or pamphlets of

earlier date, I am not responsible for the omissions which are said to exist (MS 4-1883, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 59-73).

Ellen White makes the following claims in the preceding document:

1. By 1882 Ellen White and the Oakland members had lost every copy of her writings containing the December 1844 vision, including the 1851 booklet. (She makes specific mention of the deletions in her 1844 vision later on in the MS): "I lost all trace of the first published works. When it was decided to publish *Early Writings* at Oakland last fall, we were obliged to send to Michigan to borrow a copy of *Experience and Views*."

2. Ellen White personally reviewed the 1882 edition of *Early Writings* before it went to press: "The articles given in *Early Writings* did pass under my eye . . ."

3. Ellen White assumed that the 1851 version was unchanged from the earlier accounts: "And in doing this [obtaining a copy of *Experience and Views*] we supposed that we had obtained an exact copy of the earliest visions as first published."

4. Ellen White assumed no responsibility for her memory's failure to recall any deletions in *Early Writings*, since it was her assumption that the 1851 edition reproduced in 1882 contained a faithful and original account of her December vision: "... as we had no knowledge of anything additional in papers or pamphlets of earlier date, I am not responsible for the omissions which are said to exist."

5. Ellen White desired to give the public every line that she had ever printed: "So far from desiring to withhold anything that I have ever published, I would feel great satisfaction in giving to the public every line of my writing that has ever been printed."

We have now seen Ellen White take three different stances in regard to deletions that were made in her early visions:

1. In 1851 she wrote that she was leaving out a portion to prevent repetition (*Review and Herald Extra*, July 21, 1851).

2. In 1883 she denied all responsibility for those same omissions and wanted them restored (MS 4-1883).

3. In 1906 she remembered telling critical members in 1851 that the omissions were unavoidable due to lack of funds (EW letter 225, 1906; *SM I*, p. 53).

Before analyzing these statements, let us first survey the reasons that apologists have given for these same deletions over the years. While it will not be comprehensive, it is believed to be representative.

Explanations Given by Church Apologists

1. *Uriah Smith*, 1866: On June 12, 1866, Uriah Smith began a six-part series entitled "The Visions — Objections Answered," in which he answered thirty-nine objections that had recently been raised by Snook and Brinkerhoff, ex-Seventh-day Adventists from Marion, Iowa. In the July 31 issue he discussed objection 39, which dealt with suppression. He specifically acknowledged the deletions in the December 1844 vision and even gave the page number in *A Word to the Little Flock*. Under point number three of his recapitulation, he provided his explanation for the deletion:

Portions which are claimed to have been suppressed from evil design are simply some things which related to particular and local circumstances, and having accomplished their object, have not been inserted when that which is of general interest has been republished.

What is of particular interest here is the fact that Smith seems to have forgotten in his 1883 letter to Canright the very deletions he had explained away in 1866. It may also be worth noting that his explanation does not agree with either of Ellen White's.

2. *G. I. Butler*, 1883: At the time of the publication, he apparently did not know that there were any deletions, as noted earlier. In the August 14 "Supplement" in which he attempted to refute Long's accusations, he gives the following explanation for the deletions:

But in those visions which had been published it was thought some passages were personal, or related to matters which at the time of their publication were important, but had now become unimportant because of an entire change of circumstances, or for some similar reason. Hence it was not thought these were of sufficient importance to demand their republication, and some omissions were made.

Note again, as with Uriah Smith, Butler's explanation conflicts with

one given by Ellen White, and in the same year (1883). Thus it would appear that he did not consult Ellen White before printing his defense — a curiosity in itself.

3. *A. G. Daniells*, circa 1905: Daniells wrote an undated pamphlet entitled *The Shut Door and the Close of Probation*, but internal evidence suggests that it was written shortly after 1905. On pages 15-17 he specifically addresses the deletions in the December 1844 vision:

The writer [Daniells] sincerely believes that the statement as it reads, "It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the City, as all the wicked world which God had rejected," does not, taken apart from the context, express the view of the author as clearly as was intended. This opinion is strengthened by the action of Mrs. White when, in revising the printed message, she eliminated this sentence.

... Thus it will be seen that the sentence which seems to be so perplexing to some was eliminated by the author herself. She evidently [why didn't he ask her?] saw that it could be misinterpreted to conflict with the rest of the message and eliminated it.

Daniells departs from the traditional line of defense completely by acknowledging that there was something less than satisfactory in the actual wording of the deleted sentence. Up until now, the fault had always been in the eye of the critic. He probably had not seen Mrs. White's MS 4-1883, and therefore contradicts Ellen White's statements completely. On page 9 of the same pamphlet, referring to the same deletion, Daniells inadvertently refutes her claim of making the deletions to avoid repetition:

This statement is all there is in the entire message that can be interpreted to mean that there was no longer salvation for sinners; and this is used by some as evidence that Mrs. White claimed to have been shown in vision that the whole world of sinners had at that time been rejected by the Lord, and that there was no salvation for anyone who was not already within the fold.

... The truth is that such interpretation is not in harmony with the general tenor of the message, as we shall see by a careful examination of all it contains.

If the deleted sentence is "all there is" in the entire message related to the shut-door doctrine, then how could Ellen White have justified its elimination to "prevent repetition?"

4. *F. D. Nichol*, 1951: Nichol edited the Defense Literature Committee-sponsored *Ellen White and Her Critics*, the church's foremost defense against detractors. On pages 281-283, Nichol discusses motives for the deletions:

- a. Deletions may be made to save expense. (He then goes on to quote from EW letter 225, 1906.)
- b. The longer an author writes on related themes, the more likely he is to repeat certain ideas. This is inevitable. That Mrs. White did so is no strange thing. And how would a prophet or anyone else remove repetitions? By deletions! (Then he goes on to quote from her preface to her vision as printed in the July 21, 1851, *Review and Herald Extra*.)

Nichol reasons that since there were many other visions which dealt with the same theme (the shut door?), this passage could justifiably be considered repetitious. He denies, however, that any of the visions actually teach or confirm shut-door theology.

5. *Arthur White*, 1971: In 1971 Arthur White prepared an appendix to his upcoming six-volume biography of his grandmother, entitled *Ellen White and the Shut Door Question*, which as of 1984 has not yet been officially released. In that document White provides his attempt to explain the deletions:

Then, it may be asked, why were the three lines omitted from the printing of the vision in Mrs. White's first book? In introducing it she gives a very general reason for all omissions in the account as published in 1851. The author herself had the right, yea more, the responsibility, to choose that which she would present in her book in order to correctly convey what was revealed to her. If there were phrases which were capable of distortion or interpretation to mean that which she did not intend to teach, she had the privilege and even duty of handling the matter in such a way that that which was printed should correctly

reflect her intentions. We cannot overlook the care which was taken by our early workers to avoid the inclusion in permanent publications of phrases which could be, and probably by some were being misinterpreted (p. 37).

Arthur White essentially agrees with Daniells but contradicts Nichol by asserting that the deletions were made, not to prevent repetition, but to avoid misunderstandings. He also appears to contradict *all* his grandmother's explanations.

6. *Robert Olson*, 1981: When his *One Hundred and One Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White* was published in 1981, he became the church's first spokesman to admit that Ellen White's early visions were, after all, interpreted by the pioneers (including Ellen White herself) as teaching the shut-door doctrine. He mater-of-factly explains the deletions by saying:

In order to avoid further misunderstanding when she published her 1846 broadside in her first book in 1851, she dropped out the 'wicked world' phrase (p. 61).

Olson insists, however, that it was not the visions themselves which taught the shut door, but faulty interpretations of them by Ellen White.

An Analysis of the Evidence

1. One striking observation is that none of these apologists ever took Ellen White's explanations for the deletions seriously while she was living, or after she died. It is remarkable that neither Smith, Butler, nor Daniells evidently felt it was necessary or relevant to ask the author about the deletions in her own published works. Nichol, White, and Olson all wrote after her death; but all were undoubtedly familiar with MS 4-1883 (the MS may not have been circulated until 1934, when it was included in Wilcox's *Testimony of Jesus*), in which she denied responsibility for the deletions and claimed that she wished to give the public every line she had ever printed. Yet they authoritatively assert that she made the deletions, and did so because she did not wish for the public to have certain lines she had printed because they were causing embarrassment.

2. It appears almost incomprehensible that by 1882 there was not one leader in the church who was familiar with the events and literature of the movement's early history. This is a church that glories in the recounting, however glossed, of its history; and yet the united testimony of Smith, Butler, and Ellen White is that they had a hard time finding *Experience and Views* published in 1851 — let alone any documents that preceded it. Ellen White was not even able to procure a copy of *A Word to the Little Flock* by the time she was writing her 1883 response. Uriah Smith confessed in his 1866 series (July 31) that the Review and Herald office did not have copies of *Present Truth*, which was the

None of these apologists ever took Ellen White's explanations for the deletions seriously while she was living, or after she died.

forerunner of the *Review and Herald* (1849-1850). Yet the word "review" in the title *Review and Herald*, referred to the fact that its function was to constantly review how God had led in the movement's past.

3. There can be little doubt that this dearth of early documents made it easier for church leaders to promote a revised mystical history more befitting God's remnant church. By the time the old documents were unwillingly rediscovered thirty years later, the mythical history of the church was so entrenched in the minds of the believers that their misunderstanding was superimposed on the early documents.

4. It is one thing for Smith and Butler to forget that there had been deletions made in *Experience and Views* (1851); it is quite another for Ellen White, the author, to forget. This was not just another vision; it was her very first vision. It established her as a prophet. Was she unable to detect that 19 percent of her vision was missing as it "passed under her eye?" Since no one bothered to consult her afterward in regard to the deletions, is it likely that those same men would solicit her review *before* publishing *Early Writings*?

5. It is an interesting coincidence that all of this came to a head the

(concluded on page 40)

From Shut Door to Investigative Judgment: Legacy of Guilt

by Wes Ringer

The Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the *investigative judgment* did not evolve into its present form until the late 1850s. Its birth came out of the Millerite's expectation that Christ would come October 22, 1844; and it grew during the *great disappointment* as the Adventist pioneers attempted to explain the significance of October 22. Indeed the force of their experience leading up to October 22 caused the pioneers to interpret several key passages of Scripture in totally new ways.

This paper will trace the developing and interlocking chain of logic that finally produced the concept of an investigative judgment. If the pioneers' interpretation of key passages of Daniel, Matthew, Hebrews, and the Revelation were incorrect, then the whole logical basis for the traditional understanding of a preadvent judgment would unravel. For example, in the consensus document that came out of Glacier View (August 1980), scholars were willing to concede that the term "within the veil" of Hebrews 6:19 applied to the most holy place; at the same time they sought to defend the traditional sanctuary doctrine.¹ However the Adventist pioneers in the 1840s could not have understood Hebrews in this way and still given birth to their belief in an investigative judgment.

Ellen Harmon, James White, Joseph Bates, and Hiram Edison were all active participants in the great advent awakening that swept across New England in the late summer and fall of 1844. They experienced the emotions and fervor that all advent believers experienced as they anticipated Christ appearing to cleanse the earth with fire at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14. By resorting to various methods of speculation and calculation, they became convinced that Christ would come on October 22, 1844, in fulfillment of the antitypical Day of Atonement. Furthermore, they saw the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25 as being fulfilled in every detail through their pre-advent experience. Thus the delay of Christ's coming in the spring of 1844 was understood as the tarrying time. S.S. Snow's proclamation of the exact day of Christ's return was seen as fulfilling the midnight cry: "Behold the bridegroom comes, go ye out to meet him." They regarded this midnight cry — that Christ would return on October 22 — to be the cry that awoke the sleeping virgins. They were confident that each person's destiny would be forever determined when Christ shut the door at his return on October 22, 1844.

Turning to Revelation 14, they applied the judgment-hour message to the ending of the 2300-day prophecy. The churches that failed to accept the Millerite teaching were regarded as constituting Babylon, the fallen church depicted in the second angel's message of Revelation 14. Adventists came to see the acceptance of the October 22 date as a salvation test. All true Christians would leave these fallen churches and join the Advent bands prior to October 22.

The unity within the Adventist ranks was rent — like the temple veil at Christ's death — in the wake of the great disappointment that followed Christ's failure to return. The largest group, led by J. V. Himes and, later, William Miller, became known as open-door Adventists. They viewed the attempt to pinpoint an exact date for Christ's appearing as a mistake. Acknowledging the human factor in calculating the end of the 2300 days, they reasoned that the 2300 days might not end for several more years. Thus, since Christ had not returned, the shutting of the door in the parable of the ten virgins could not have occurred on October 22, 1844. They therefore felt that their present duty was to preach the soon coming of Christ to "... both saints and sinners, that the first may rejoice, knowing their redemption draweth nigh, and the last to be warned to flee from the wrath to come, before the Master of the house shall rise up and shut the door."²

All of the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers came from the opposing group known as shut-door Adventists. Major parts of the eventual sanctuary doctrine were first formulated by these believers in an attempt to prove that probation had closed when Christ shut the door, as mentioned in the parable of the ten virgins, on October 22, 1844. They viewed the intense emotional experience immediately prior to October 22 as a sign of the Holy Spirit's involvement in, and validation of, the seventh-month movement that had proclaimed that Christ would come on October 22. If this movement had given the true midnight cry, then it seemed logical that October 22 was the correct termination for the 2300-day prophecy.

It was not merely the preaching of a literal and soon-coming Christ that led these shut-door believers to conclude that God had separated them out as a distinct people. This, they conceded, was believed by thousands of non-Millerite Christians. No, rather it was the preaching of a definite time that they felt had been "authorized by the Most High."³ Ellen White concurred with this belief that God had tested and separated out a people for himself based on the preaching of definite time.⁴ She, with other shut-door believers, maintained this despite the fact that non-Adventists repeatedly objected that Christ had taught that no man would know the day or hour of his return. Ellen White categorically judged all ministers who objected to the preaching of definite time as doing so because "they know that their unChristian lives would not stand the test."⁵

Ellen White categorically judged all ministers who objected to the preaching of definite time as doing so because "they know that their unchristian lives would not stand the test."

This belief that God had tested and separated people based on their acceptance or rejection of the preaching of definite time was incorporated into Ellen Harmon's first (December 1844) vision and was to play an important role in the development of the sanctuary doctrine. In her December vision an angel told her that the light on the path behind the traveling advent band was the midnight cry (the teaching that Christ would come October 22, 1844). Those Adventists traveling to the heavenly city who denied the correctness of the midnight cry stumbled and

... fell off the path down in the dark and wicked world below. It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the city as all the wicked world which God had rejected.⁶

The italicized portion of this vision was deleted when it was republished in *Experience and Views* in 1851 and later in *Early Writings* (see Hokama). This was because by 1851 the Whites had begun to give up the belief that sinners could no longer be saved. However, in December 1844 the phrase "all the wicked world which God had rejected" would have been understood by all Adventists to mean that sinners could no longer be saved after the shutting of the door two months earlier.

Ellen White later denied that her visions had ever taught that sinners could no longer be saved, while continuing to maintain throughout her life that those who heard and rejected the Adventist message prior to October 22, 1844, and those Adventists who gave up belief in the significance of October 22 "... thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer plead with them."⁷ Even though William Miller rejected the truth, as shut-door Adventists understood it, Ellen granted an exception

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in his case. But those who she felt influenced him against her understanding of truth would be held accountable.⁸

Ellen White seemed never to realize the tension that existed between her early judgment against those who objected to the preaching of definite time and her later statements warning against the teaching of definite time for Christ's return. Writing in the *Desire of Ages* she admonishes:

But the day and hour of His coming Christ has not revealed . . .

There are those who claim to know the very day and hour of our Lord's appearing . . . But the Lord has warned them off the ground they occupy. The exact time of the Second Coming of the Son of Man is God's mystery.⁹

With the shut-door believers fixed on the certainty that God was behind the preaching of definite time, there yet remained the question of what exactly had occurred on October 22 that constituted the cleansing of the sanctuary described in Daniel 8:14. Since Miller had interpreted the cleansing of the sanctuary to be Christ's second coming, and they still expected Christ's appearing at any moment, it is perhaps not surprising that they turned first to the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25 for an explanation of October 22, 1844. Having already applied this parable exclusively to the Millerite movement, they felt convinced that the wicked and the fallen churches were not the foolish virgins, since they had already rejected God's final call. It was felt rather that there needed to be a little time after October 22 for the foolish virgins' (adventist) lamps to go out.¹⁰ In November 1844 William Miller wrote of his conviction that October 22 marked the decisive point in time when a division and separation was made between the righteous and the wicked.¹¹

The parable concluded with the coming of the bridegroom who took the five wise virgins with him into the marriage. He then shut the door and would not open it, saying to the foolish virgins, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (Matthew 25:10). While the Millerites prior to October 22 had correctly applied the coming of the bridegroom and the shutting of the door to the close of probation at the second coming, the shut-door Adventists insisted that the bridegroom (Christ) had come to the heavenly marriage (in heaven) and shut the door on October 22, 1844. Joseph Turner, a fellow believer with Ellen Harmon in Portland, Maine, was the first to fully expound these views in the *Advent Mirror* of January 1845. Turner argued that Christ had come as the bridegroom to the heavenly marriage in fulfillment of the parable of the ten virgins, and that His coming as the bridegroom was separate from His coming in power and glory to the earth. He concluded that after October 22, 1844, the door in the parable was shut. "But can any sinners be converted if the door is shut? Of course they can not, though change that may appear to be conversions may take place."¹² Turner allowed for the possibility that some who feared God and worked righteousness might grow in their understanding of truth. But it was with this class and this class only that shut-door believers should now labor.

Open-door Adventists objected to Turner's interpretation of this parable. They maintained that Christ's coming as the bridegroom referred to his second coming, and, therefore, the shutting of the door was still future. Nevertheless, Ellen Harmon found that her first vision in December 1844 was in agreement with Turner's article.¹³ In her second vision (February 1845), she saw Christ going as the bridegroom to the heavenly marriage by entering the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.¹⁴ As a result of Ellen Harmon's relating this vision to the Advent band in Exeter, Maine, they became united in their conviction that the door was shut.¹⁵ It is interesting to note that in *Christ's Object Lessons* Ellen White interpreted the parable of the ten virgins in the manner of the open-door Adventists, by applying this shut door to the future close of probation and the coming of the "bridegroom" at the second coming.¹⁶ The paradox remains that if in the 1840s Ellen White had understood the parable of the ten virgins in the manner of *Christ's Object Lessons*, she would have found herself in agreement with the very open-door Adventists whom her early visions so vehemently denounced.

Prior to October 22, 1844, the Millerites had accepted the general consensus of Bible commentators concerning the book of Hebrews. They held that Christ, by virtue of His once-for-all atonement for sins, became our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Because of His blood, believers could come with boldness through the veil into the very presence of God. They believed that Christ would leave the most holy place on October

22, 1844, in fulfillment of the antitypical Day of Atonement and come in the clouds of heaven. When Christ failed to return, J. Turner and A. Hale contended that instead of leaving the most holy place on October 22, He entered it for the first time.

The Coming of the bridegroom would point out some change of work or office, on the part of our Lord, in the invisible world, and the going in with him a corresponding change on the part of his true people. With him it is within the veil — where he has gone to prepare a place for us; with them it is outside the veil, where they wait and keep themselves ready till they pass in to the marriage supper.¹⁷

Likewise, Ellen Harmon saw in her second vision (February 1845) that Jesus had left His throne and entered the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary. Those who failed to accept the light of the Advent message were unaware that Christ had left the holy place. Of these Ellen recalled, ". . . I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after he rose up, and they were left in perfect darkness."¹⁸ Those who continued to pray before the now-empty throne received deceptive and unholy influences from Satan. The effect of this vision was to further convince believers in the certainty of the shut door.¹⁹

These early shut-door believers were fully aware that their views ran counter to the generally accepted understanding of Hebrews. Hale had argued that the "heavenly things" mentioned in Hebrews 9:23 that must be cleansed with a better sacrifice than animals' blood referred to Christ's cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary beginning on October 22, 1844.²⁰ Bliss, an open-door Adventist, countered that Hebrews 7:27, 9:12, 24, and 10:12-14 clearly taught that Christ had already cleansed the heavenly things mentioned in Hebrew 9:23 with the sacrifice of himself 1800 years ago.²¹

The first to attempt a complete explanation of this new understanding of Christ's cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary was O. R. L. Crosier in his February 7, 1846, *Day Star* article. His article, written in support of the

. . . if in the 1840s Ellen White had understood the parable of the ten virgins in the manner of *Christ's Object Lessons*, she would have found herself in agreement with the . . . open-door Adventists.

shut-door position, stated that no more sinners could now be converted.²² Ellen White endorsed his article saying, "The Lord shew me in vision more than one year ago that Brother Crosier had the true light on the cleansing of the sanctuary . . ."²³

Crosier based his interpretation of Hebrews largely on an analogy of the typical sanctuary service and on his understanding of Daniel 8:14. He assumed that every aspect of the type must have a corresponding and exact antitypical fulfillment. The weakness of Crosier's reasoning rests on the fact that the typical earthly sanctuary service was only a shadow and not the reality (Hebrews 10:1). Using his reasoning, it could be argued that Christ would have to be offered again and again to fulfill all the various sacrifices in the type. Hebrews, on the other hand, seeks again and again to contrast and show the superiority of Christ's high priestly work and one sacrifice over that of the earthly high priests' work and many sacrifices.

Christ as high priest	Earthly high priest
1. Without sin.	1. Sinful.
2. Lives forever.	2. Died.
3. His one sacrifice completely dealt with sin.	3. Many animal sacrifices could not remove sin.
4. Has complete and full access to God.	4. Limited access but once a year.
5. His atonement finished He sits down at Gods right hand.	5. Stands continually offering sacrifices that can never take away sin.

Crosier, using the analogy of the typical sanctuary, argued that Hebrews 9:11, 12, 23, 24 referred to a two-apartment heavenly sanctuary. Christ began his ministry in the holy place after His ascension and continued to minister there until 1844. He then entered the most holy

place for the first time to begin the antitypical Day of Atonement by blotting out the sins of the righteous.²⁴ J. N. Andrews, likewise, argued in the February 9, 1853, *Advent Review* that Hebrew 9:8 and 10:19 do not refer to the most holy place but rather to holy places. From this he concluded "... that the heavenly sanctuary consists of two holy places."²⁵ The Seventh-day Adventist pioneers built their whole sanctuary doctrine on this conviction that Hebrews taught a two-apartment heavenly sanctuary. Thus it is interesting to note that Richard Davidson, writing in the current *Ministry* magazine concedes, "Our discussion thus far has not concluded that the author of Hebrews is trying to prove the existence of a bipartite heavenly sanctuary that corresponded to the earthly counterpart."²⁶

Crosier, likewise, insisted that Hebrew 6:19-20 could not refer to Christ's entrance within the veil of the most holy place at His ascension. This denial came largely from his conviction that Christ could not enter the most holy place until after the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14.²⁷ However Seventh-day Adventist New Testament scholar Norman Young has demonstrated decisively that careful exegesis of Hebrews 6:19-20 does, in fact, support the view that the phrase "within the veil" refers to the most holy place.²⁸

Apparently the Adventist pioneers, while attempting to understand the typological symbolism of every other aspect of the sanctuary, never seemed to ask what the veil symbolized. In Leviticus 16:2 God specifically warned Aaron not to come into the most holy place behind the veil lest he die, because it was there that God would appear in glory over the mercy seat. Even on the Day of Atonement the high priest had to fill the most holy place with a cloud of incense that would conceal the

Apparently the Adventist pioneers, while attempting to understand the typological symbolism of every other aspect of the sanctuary, never seemed to ask what the veil symbolized.

mercy seat lest he die (Leviticus 16:13). Hebrews chapter nine likewise notes that the high priest could enter the most holy place but once a year. This limited and partial access into the very presence of God is then contrasted by Christ's full, complete, and final access into the very presence of God by virtue of His one sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9:12, 10:12). The veil thus symbolized the barrier or separation that existed between God and man. This barrier existed in the Old Testament era because the blood of goats and bulls could not remove sin (Hebrews 10:4). But now through Christ the barrier has been removed. The veil represents Christ's body. By faith in Christ and his blood, the believer may come with boldness into the very presence of God (Hebrews 10:20).

Had Crosier and the other Adventist pioneers correctly understood the message of Hebrews, they would have had to totally revise their understanding of Christ's high priestly work. Their failure to understand Hebrews led to major parts of Crosier's article becoming incorporated into the doctrine of the investigative judgment. These were: 1. The sanctuary to be cleansed in Daniel 8:14 was the heavenly sanctuary mentioned in Hebrews, rather than the temple in Jerusalem in Old Testament times (as understood by most Bible commentators today), or the earth by fire (as believed by the Millerites).²⁹ 2. The heavenly sanctuary is composed of two parts — the holy and most holy places.³⁰ 3. Each of the Jewish festivals must have a distinct anti-typical fulfillment. Christ's death fulfilled Passover, and Pentecost was fulfilled by the sending of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, Crosier believed that the Day of Atonement was antitypically fulfilled on October 22, 1844, when Christ began to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary. On that day he stopped ministry in the holy place by shutting the door and went within the veil to the most holy place.³¹ 4. Prior to 1844 Christ had only *forgiven* man's sins. These confessed and forgiven sins had polluted the heavenly sanctuary. Christ began in 1844 to make atonement for sins by *blotting* them out. This blotting out of sins cleansed the heavenly sanctuary.³²

The concept of a future blotting out of sins became a central concept in the doctrine of the investigative judgment. Crosier based this future blotting out of sin on a single Bible reference in Acts 3:19. But was Peter,

as he preached to the crowd in the temple after the healing of the lame man, intending to point to a future blotting out of sins in 1844? W. W. Fletcher, an S.D.A. missionary and Bible teacher, left the church in the early 1930s because of his conviction that the investigative judgment was unbiblical. He noted that Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost parallels that of the one he made in the temple after the healing of the blind man:

Acts 2:38

Acts 3:19

"Repent ye

"Repent ye, therefore

and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ

turn again

unto the remission of your sins

that your sins may be blotted out,

and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

that there may come seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord."

Peter's use of blotting out of sins had the same meaning as remission of sins. The clear intent of Peter's words pointed not to a future blotting out of sins in 1844, but to a present blotting out, or remission, of sins in A.D. 31 for all who on the day they heard Peter speak accepted Christ as Messiah.³³

James White in the May 1850 *Present Truth* restated the basic arguments first advanced by Crosier in 1846. In the autumn of 1844 "... the Midnight Cry was given, the work for the world was closed up, and Jesus passed into the Most Holy Place to receive the kingdom, and cleanse the sanctuary."³⁴ James White further stated that after October 1844, "... all our sympathy, burden and prayers for sinners ceased, and the unanimous feeling and testimony was, that our work for the world was finished forever."³⁵ The reason for this change of feeling on the part of shut-door believers on earth was that Christ had shut the door in the holy place and had gone into the most holy place when the 2300 days ended.

James White objected to the argument that the door of mercy being shut in 1844 was unbiblical.

God's mercy endureth forever." Ps. 136; 106, 118. He is still merciful to his saints, and ever will be; and Jesus is still their advocate and priest. But the sinner, to whom Jesus had stretched out his arms all the day long, and who had rejected the offers of salvation, was left without an advocate, when Jesus passed from the Holy Place, and shut the door in 1844.³⁶

The churches that rejected this shut-door truth,

"... go to seek the Lord" as still an advocate for sinners; but says the prophet, Hosea 5:6, 7 "They shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord: for they have begotten strange children."³⁷

Both James and Ellen White used Hosea 5:6, 7 as if it proved that the door was shut in 1844, and all reported conversion of sinners after 1844 were false.³⁸ They evidence no awareness that Hosea had applied this text to Israel in his day. The December 1849 *Present Truth* sums up their concern: "Many will point us to one who is said to be converted for positive proof that the door is not shut, thus yielding the Word of God for the feelings of an individual."³⁹

Ellen White's March 24, 1849, vision must be understood in light of this conviction that conversions of sinners would be in contradiction of the Word of God; for she saw that Satan was attempting to deceive God's people during this sealing time by false reports of conversions:

The reformations that were shown me, were not reformations from error to truth, but from bad to worse; for those who professed a change of heart had only wrapt about them a religious garb, which covered up the iniquity of a wicked heart. Some appeared to have been really converted, so as to deceive God's people; but if their hearts could be seen, they would appear as black as ever. My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked, but could not see it, for the time of their salvation is past.⁴⁰

James White's May 1850 *Present Truth* article makes it plain that the

reason shut-door Adventists no longer felt "travail of soul for sinners" was because of their conviction that their work for the world was forever finished in 1844. However, when James and Ellen White published *Experience and Views* in August 1851 — a time in which they were beginning to reinterpret their former shut-door views and to acknowledge sinners could be saved — they deleted the italicized portion of the March 24 vision. In fact, a footnote was added in which an attempt was made to reinterpret that vision. Thus, while the original vision states that after 1844 sinners were converted in appearance only, since the time of their salvation was past, the footnote asserts that the time for the false shepherds' (open-door Adventist preachers) salvation was past. Consequently, these false shepherds did not feel a genuine "travail of soul for sinners."⁴¹

A further factor that convinced the Adventist pioneers that reported conversions of sinners were false was that these new converts did not keep the seventh-day Sabbath. In the same March 24, 1849, vision mentioned earlier, Ellen White contended that man could no longer find access to God in the same way as he had prior to the shutting of the door in 1844.

I saw that the enemies of the present truth have been trying to open the door to the Holy Place that Jesus shut, and to close the door of the Most Holy Place which he opened in 1844, where the Ark is, containing the two tables of stone on which are written the ten commandments by the finger of Jehovah.⁴²

Joseph Bates in the December 1850 *Review and Herald* likewise discounted all reported conversions by open-door Adventists because they did not keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

We say, that as long as they continue rebellious against their lawful Prince it is morally impossible for them to beget for him one peaceful subject. God has a true test, by which to try every individual since the Midnight Cry. It is the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.⁴³

The following month Bates wrote that the names of all honest believers and children who had not yet reached the age of accountability were written on Christ's breastplate of judgment.

The names of all who fully keep the commandments are retained. Those that do not, will have their names erased before Jesus leaves the Holiest . . . Sinners and backsliders cannot get their names on the breastplate of judgment now.⁴⁴

That the Ten Commandments and especially the Sabbath had become a test after 1844 was also held by Ellen White. She reasoned that prior to 1844 people could be saved without Sabbath observance because the door into the most holy place had not yet been opened. However, after 1844 man could no longer gain access to God through the holy place. She likened 1844 to 31 A.D., and compared non-Sabbath keeping Christians to Jews who had rejected Christ as their Messiah. By rejecting Christ, these Jews experienced a shut door. Only by accepting Christ as Messiah could they gain the "benefits of His mediation."⁴⁵

The condition of the unbelieving Jews illustrates the condition of the careless and unbelieving among professed Christians, who are willingly ignorant of the work of our merciful High Priest. In the typical service, when the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, all Israel were required to gather about the sanctuary and in most solemn manner humble their souls before God, that they might receive pardon of their sins and not be cut off from the congregation. How much more essential in this antitypical Day of Atonement that we understand what duties are required of us.⁴⁶

The new duty she saw was the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath.⁴⁷

Thus by the early 1850s all the pieces to what later was to become the doctrine of the investigative judgment were in place; yet James White continued to be adamantly opposed to the concept of a preadvent investigative judgment. In *A Word to the Little Flock*, written in 1847, he asserted that such a judgment was not needed.

It is not necessary that the final sentence should be given before the first resurrection, as some have taught; for the names of the saints are written in heaven, and Jesus, and the angels will certainly know who to raise, and gather to the New Jerusalem.⁴⁸

Just who was urging the concept of an investigative judgment in 1847 is unclear. However by 1850 it is clear that Joseph Bates held such a view.

How evident that both the Father and the Son here left the

throne in the Holy and moved into the Most Holy . . . to set in judgment, first to decide who is and who is not worthy to enter the gates of the Holy City; which the Bridegroom, High Priest, Mediator and crowned King of Israel stands before him advocating the cause of all presented on his breastplate of judgment. As Daniel now sees it the judgment is now set and the books open.⁴⁹

James White, however, continued to oppose the concept of a preadvent judgment. Writing in the September 1850 *Advent Review*, he summarized his understanding of the events that would occur on the day of judgment. (1) "It would be introduced by the second advent . . . to gather the elect only — the righteous both living and those who sleep."⁵⁰ (2) The righteous will then sit on judgment thrones to judge the world, fallen angels and the devil.⁵¹ (3) The judgment scene in Daniel 7 refers to the saints sitting in judgment after the second coming, not to a preadvent judgment.⁵² (4) Quoting 2 Timothy 4:1, White inserted the following parenthesis: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at (not before) his appearing and his kingdom."⁵³ (5) Revelations 14:6, 7 which says, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of judgment is come," does not prove that the day of judgment came in 1840 or 1844 or that it will come prior to the second advent. The testimony of that angel could only signify that the period had come for this generation to be tested by second advent truth."⁵⁴ (6) Finally, regarding the biblical basis for a preadvent judgment, White concludes: "Some have contended that the day of judgment was prior to the second advent. This view is certainly without foundation in the Word of God."⁵⁵

James White and other shut-door believers had from 1844-1851 regarded the significance of Christ's entrance into the most holy place as the shut door that left the wicked world, fallen churches, and those who heard and rejected the advent message without a mediator. It was regarded as denial of the shut door to hold during this time that sinners could be saved. However from the summer of 1851 onward they began to reinterpret their shut-door views. Certain of Ellen White's early visions were republished in *Experience and Views* in August 1851, with the strongest shut-door phrases omitted. By 1853 James White had redefined the shut door as applying only to those who participated in the Advent

Prior to 1844 Christ had only **forgiven** man's sins . . . Christ began in 1844 to make atonement for sins by **blotting** them out. This blotting out of sins cleansed the heavenly sanctuary.

Movement and then rejected its light. "Those who were not in the movement and did not reject its light, stand on the same ground for salvation, as though such a movement had never taken place"⁵⁶ Further on in the same article he continued, "O, that precious souls would come to this open door (Most Holy Place) and share the Savior's pardoning love."⁵⁷

With this change from a shut to open door for sinners, 1844 was in danger of becoming a historic footnote. There was now a pressing need to show that Christ's entrance into the most holy place continued to have ongoing importance to believers in the 1850s.

Uriah Smith — writing in the October 2, 1855, *Review and Herald* — adopted some of the same arguments that Joseph Bates had used earlier to attempt to prove that a preadvent judgment had commenced in 1844 as a fulfillment of the antitypical Day of Atonement. He stated that Christ, like Aaron, had carried the names of all professed believers into the most holy place on his breastplate of judgment.⁵⁸ Exodus 28 does speak of such a breastplate that Aaron wore as he ministered before the Lord in the holy place. But in Leviticus 16 a full description is made of the clothing, the ritual, and sacrifices that the high priest was to perform on the Day of Atonement. No mention is made that the high priest carried the breastplate into the most holy place on the Day of Atonement.

Thus a major part of Uriah Smith's argument rests on the unproven assumption that in the type, the high priest carried this breastplate with him into the most holy place. "This prefigured a solemn fact; namely, that in the great plan of salvation, a time of decision was coming for the whole

human race; a work of atonement, which being accomplished, God's people, the true Israel, should stand acquitted, and cleansed from all sin."⁵⁹

As was previously noted, much of Crosier's and later Adventist sanctuary doctrine was built by drawing analogies from the typical sanctuary and its service. However whenever the typical service did not fit into what the pioneers wished to prove, they felt the freedom to discard the type. First Uriah Smith attempts to prove from the types that Christ must have begun a preadvent judgment in 1844. Then he asserts that contrary to the type:

Atonement was then made for the people of Israel as a body; here the work has to be with individuals; for as individuals we must stand condemned or acquitted at the judgment seat of Christ.⁶⁰

Smith used 1 Peter 4:17 as biblical support for a preadvent judgment beginning in 1844. Peter wrote in the present tense "The time is come,"

"It is not necessary that the final sentence should be given before the first resurrection . . . Jesus, and the angels will certainly know who to raise, and gather to the New Jerusalem." — James White

with the clear implication that his words had a present application to his hearers. But even if it could be argued that 1 Peter 4:17 did not apply to Peter's day, Christ could still judge the righteous first at his coming. Smith concluded that this preadvent judgment

. . . must embrace the examination of individual character; and we conclude that the lives of the children of God, not only those who are living, but all who have ever lived, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, will during this time pass in final review before that great tribunal.⁶¹

James White's original objection in *A Word to the Little Flock* that such an investigative judgment was unnecessary remained unanswered by Uriah Smith. Christ affirmed, "I am the good Shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me" (John 10:14). Smith had already noted that this judgment includes only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Paul affirms that first-century believers' names were already written in the Lamb's book of life. The very mention of names included in the Lamb's book of life indicates that believers are already, during their life, known in heaven by God and Christ as having eternal life. An investigative judgment would only be meaningful if somehow God was uncertain as to who really was his child and who was not.

Finally, in the January 29, 1857, *Review and Herald* James White himself embraced the concept and used for the first time the term "investigative judgment." After noting that 1 Peter 4:17, 18 refers to two classes to be judged — the righteous and the wicked — James White asserted, "Both classes will be judged before they are raised from the dead."⁶² He also used Revelation 20 to show that the wicked will be judged prior to their being raised from the dead. To prove a preadvent judgment of the righteous, White quoted 1 Timothy 5:24, with parentheses supplied: "Some men's sins (the righteous) are open before the Lord, going before to judgment, and some men (the wicked) they follow after."⁶³ However, in context Paul is referring to open versus hidden sin, and not to a preadvent judgment. This becomes clear through a consideration of the passage, particularly as it is rendered in the *New International Version*:

The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not can not be hidden (1 Timothy 5:24-28).

Thus, it appears that James White offers no biblical support capable of overturning his original conviction that 1 Timothy 4:1 clearly pointed to the correct time of judgment: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at (not before) his appearing . . ."⁶⁴ (parentheses supplied by White).

In 1847 White had been certain that Christ and the holy angels would know whom to raise at Christ's coming. Now he argues:

To place the investigative judgment of the saints after the resurrection of the just supposes the possibility of a mistake in the resurrection, hence the necessity of an investigation to see if all who are raised were really worthy of the first resurrection.⁶⁵

The importance of this investigative judgment for professed Christians was the fact that they could never know at what point in time their names would come up in judgment. James White feared that the living saints faced the real possibility of having their names blotted out in the judgment because their consecration and victory over sin was not complete enough.⁶⁶

With James White's article, the concept of an investigative judgment was now fully formed. All that remained for closure was the prophetic endorsement of Ellen White. This came in the form of her most complete explanation of such a judgment in the chapter entitled "The Investigative Judgment" in *The Great Controversy*. Here she states that Christ in 1844 entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary "... to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits."⁶⁷

Just what is it that entitles a believer to have Christ blot out his sins? Ellen White goes on to describe the need for total consecration, the forsaking of sin, and the development in sanctification that borders on perfection: "The Law of God is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the judgment."⁶⁸ She noted that in the heavenly books are recorded

. . . every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for or against evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel.⁶⁹

While noting that sins are forgiven through the blood of Christ, Ellen White stresses the need for sanctification if one's name is to be cleared in the judgment. She writes:

All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life.⁷⁰

For those who are alive just before Christ's second coming, Ellen White warns:

The very mention of names included in the Lamb's book of life indicates that believers are already, during their life, known in heaven by God and Christ as having eternal life.

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their character must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the Grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle of evil.⁷¹

Ellen White's emphasis on the believer having his character in full harmony with the law of God, coupled with the uncertainty of never knowing when one's name might come up in the judgment, has been responsible for leaving several generations of Seventh-day Adventists uncertain of their salvation. Instead of having complete confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19), they look within themselves to see if their characters are sufficiently sanctified. The more introspective they become, the more character defects, sin, and failure they see. Many feel overwhelmed with a sense of guilt and failure. They conclude that as much as they might desire to be Christians, they just will never make it. Others struggle on, ever guilty and uncertain as to whether or not their names will be cleared in the judgment. It is in these believers' guilt and fear that the legacy of the investigative judgment lives on.

(Footnotes on page 41)

The Shut Door Ellen White Never Abandoned

by Dennis Hokama

Introduction

This is no attempt to prove that Ellen White once upon a time had visions which directed her and the early church to hold fast to the shut-door doctrine. That is already a matter of record. A fact that is not so well known is that Ellen White carried a slightly modified shut-door belief to her grave. What is more, the Seventh-day Adventist church is on record as believing that shut-door doctrine to this day, by their endorsement of Ellen White's statements. Is this shut-door belief an improvement on the shut-door doctrine that united the forerunners of the Seventh-day Adventist church during the zenith of its notorious shut-door period (1844-1851)? But first, a little background.

It is now an open secret among informed Adventists that Ellen White had early visions that convinced the Adventist forerunners of the truth of the shut-door doctrine. Stated simply, this was the belief that the gospel dispensation had come to an end because Jesus had ceased his work on behalf of sinners in final preparation for his second coming.

Before the 1970s, Adventist apologists had always denied that Ellen White's visions had contained any shut-door teachings. To admit it would have seemed tantamount to conceding that her visions had not come from God, since it would be difficult if not blasphemous to say that God had sent erroneous visions — and antigospel ones at that.

The leaking of the now notorious "Bates letter" to objective scholars beyond the sometimes secretive White Estate staff suddenly made the unthinkable unavoidable. Not only did it explode the carefully nurtured myth that Ellen White's written-out visions were always safe to follow; but it cast a pall over the integrity of the White Estate, which had for generations kept the critical portions of the letter secret while quoting generously from the rest of it. *Life Sketches*, published in 1915, included on page 104 a photograph of the innocuous first page of the letter. A *Review and Herald* article (14 March 1935) written by Willie White drew heavily on the letter and quoted various portions of it in describing the early years of James and Ellen White's ministry. Francis Nichol's *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (1951), written with considerable help from A. L. White, does not once mention the letter in its entire 100-plus page defense of Ellen White's visions against the charge that they contained shut-door teachings, but does reference it as an obscure footnote on page 621 to establish the date of her first vision.

It can no longer logically be denied that Ellen White's accounts of her early visions (at least seven or eight) taught the shut-door doctrine. Adventist apologetic has since had to content itself with the task of reconciling the apparently incompatible notions of doctrinal heresy with divine revelation or inspiration. Robert Olson of the White Estate has chosen to place the blame on Ellen White's shoulders, claiming that "Ellen misinterpreted the vision" (*101 Questions* . . . , p. 58). Others see a danger in admitting that Mrs. White could misinterpret under inspiration, since most of what she wrote consists of her interpretations.

The one thing that all apologists and most critics have been able to agree upon so far is the conclusion that Ellen White and the Seventh-day Adventist church subsequently repudiated the shut-door doctrine. This would appear self-evident from the fact that Adventists came to detest the "shut-door" label (which they had earlier borne with such pride), together with the fact that they began general evangelism in the mid-1850s. Eventually Ellen White and the Seventh-day Adventist church encompassed sea and land, circling the entire globe in search of proselytes. Could such behavior be compatible with a shut-door

mentality? Surprisingly, the answer appears to be yes.

Ellen White's final shut-door position

In 1883, nearly forty years after the commencement of Ellen's prophetic ministry and more than thirty years after the early church began to repudiate the shut-door label, White defended her early visions by reaffirming that:

I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door in 1844. All those who saw the light of the first and second angel's messages and rejected that light, were left in darkness. And those who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them.

. . . These might have a form of godliness, but having no living connection with God, they would be taken captive by the delusions of Satan. (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 63).

Let us analyze the contents of the spiritually mature Ellen White's confession of faith. This was Ellen White's final position, which she took to her grave. Robert Olson agrees with her and calls it "correct" (*101 Questions* . . . , p. 58).

The first angel's message is, according to Ellen White, the Advent movement of 1840-1844 (*The Great Controversy*, 1844, p. 125). It was,

. . . after relocation to theologically virgin territory and the passage of several generations, one could act just like the Babylonian churches, with their emphasis on preaching the gospel

in other words, the Millerite message that Christ was coming, finally, on October 22, 1844.

The second angel's message was, according to Ellen White, "an announcement of the moral fall of the churches in consequence of their rejection of the first message." (*The Great Controversy*, 1884, p. 131).

What Ellen White is saying here is that anyone who heard and rejected the Millerite message — either before or after October 22, 1844 — committed the unpardonable sin and lost eternal life. By 1883 Ellen White must have known that the central "truth" of the Millerite message was wrong, since Christ had not come in 1844. It follows, then, that a significant proportion of Americans lost their souls because they rejected what even Ellen White considered to be error. A good Bible student who read Matthew 25:13 and concluded that Miller could not be correct because Jesus said you will not know the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh, would have lost his soul. Why? For *correctly* interpreting and believing Christ's warning. This gives fresh and fearful meaning to taking up the cross.

Would this version have made a difference?

This shut-door position may represent change from the early "shut-door era," but does it represent progress? To answer this question, let us superimpose these "modified" shut-door beliefs on the shut-door era to determine how it would have changed their behavior, if at all.

There was one trait that all hard-core, shut-door believers possessed in the years immediately following the great disappointment. It was an

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extremely egocentric conception of the world. Without this mentality it is doubtful that they could have retained their shut-door convictions.

It was this mentality that made it possible for them to conclude that the "dark day" of Matthew 24:29 and Revelation 6:12, ushering in the "great day of the Lord," had been fulfilled when smoke from local brushfires darkened *their* skies. When the same smoke obscured the moon that night, it was seen as a fulfillment of "... and the moon shall not give her light." When in November of 1833 the Leonids made their cyclical pass over North America, it was interpreted as *the* falling of the stars prophesied in Matthew 24:29. When the Millerite Movement gripped the New England states, it was seen as though it had shaken the entire world. When all their acquaintances and neighbors had been "evangelized" about the Lord's returning date, it was assumed that it had been preached "in all the world"; for only then could the "end" come. Thus, we constantly read of how they felt that "their work for the world was finished" when in reality the speaker or writer of those words had scarcely been outside of New England.

Current shut-door belief says that William Miller's generation was lost because of what *it* did (reject an erroneous doctrine) and not because of what Christ ceased to do.

When the date came and only a relatively small number truly believed, it then followed that the rest were "all the wicked world which God had rejected." Because of their egocentric conception of the world, virtually everyone from their perspective had had the opportunity to decide for or against the Millerite message. The terms "sinner" and "wicked world" as used by the shut-door believer meant those who had scorned the Millerite message, which was often called "the everlasting gospel" or the first angel's message. Thus, when a shut-door writer spoke of "no more salvation for sinners," one must also read between the lines and realize that the writer assumed that all "sinners" had rejected the "universally" preached Millerite message.

All of this does not mean, however, that staunch shut-door believers made no provisions in their theory for those exceptional cases where the person did not really have a chance to accept the Millerite message. Even Joseph Turner, widely regarded as the most fanatical of the shut-door teachers, wrote in the *Advent Mirror* of January 1845, that:

We know that at the closing of the door of mercy, all who fear God and work righteousness, according to the Light they have, must be embraced by his arms of mercy; . . . That such may be found, for whom we should labour, there can be no doubt; and in fact it is with such a class only, few indeed is their number, that our labours are in any sense successful.

Joseph Bates articulated how it was possible that some who had not been believers (of the Millerite date) prior to October 22, 1844, could be saved in spite of the fact that Christ had already shut the door:

When the Master of the house (the Lord Jesus) rose up and shut the door, all honest believers that had submitted to his will, and children that had not arrived to the years of accountability, were undoubtedly borne in on his breast-plate of Judgment which is over his heart. The names of all that fully keep the commandments are retained . . . (*Review and Herald*, January 1851).

This is why we constantly read that our early pioneers were looking for "honest souls" in their proselytizing efforts. As the years passed, the shut-door enthusiasts were to discover, much to their delight, that the Millerite message had not been as universal as they had once thought; and that, as a consequence, there were *many* "honest believers."

It now becomes apparent that Ellen White's "mature" shut-door beliefs would have led her to conduct herself in much the same manner that she did when she held her old shut-door beliefs. In the shut-door years, she would have been surrounded with lost souls who had rejected error; therefore with her egocentric conception of the world, the whole world would have been lost as far as she was concerned. In New England she could only have had sympathy for young children and "honest" souls living up to all the light that they had.

In either case, as the Whites moved farther West, they would have found more and more "honest" souls who had never had a chance to reject the Millerite message. As the years passed, more and more new souls would come to the age of accountability, allowing for more and more open evangelism. Eventually, after relocation to theologically virgin territory and the passage of several generations, one could act just like the Babylonian churches, with their emphasis on preaching the gospel while retaining one's shut-door beliefs virtually intact. This appears to have been the case with Ellen White and the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The Whites (and the *Review and Herald*) moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1855. This westward move enabled them to camouflage many of their shut-door beliefs at a time when the shut door and Ellen White's credibility were under severe pressure. As years passed, the "lost generation" began dying off; and Ellen White's and the Seventh-day Adventist church's shut-door theology became a somewhat moot point practice wise.

Did it have a different theoretical basis?

While it is difficult to see how Ellen White's final shut-door position would have made any difference in her behavior, there appear to be some notable differences in her theoretical justifications. In the original shut-door doctrine, the world was lost not so much because of what they had done as much as it was because of what *Christ* had *ceased* to do for the world. Current shut-door belief says that William Miller's generation was lost because of what *it* did (reject an erroneous doctrine) and not because of what Christ ceased to do.

Since the original shut-door believers truly believed that probation for mankind had ended, William Miller's generation was lost — with the exception of William Miller (see *Early Writings* pages 257, 258) — because of something which they truly believed had happened. Current shut-door doctrine teaches that William Miller's generation was lost because it refused to believe in an error, this despite the subsequent acknowledgement that probation for mankind did not close in 1844.

The latter view appears hopelessly nonsensical to anyone but a Seventh-day Adventist. We rationalize that the Holy Spirit must have been in the Millerite Movement — despite its patently unscriptural date setting — because of the exhilaration experienced by its participants (see The "Shut Door" Discussed).

Both views have the world of their day shut out from heaven for the sin of rejecting error. But the early view stressed that the reason that it was unforgivable was that Christ had finished his work of forgiving. One can only assume that if Christ would resume his work of forgiving, even the serious sin of rejecting error could also be forgiven. While this would seem to follow logically from the assumptions of the early shut-door doctrine, the current shut-door doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist church does not allow this. Rejection of the Millerite error is equated with grieving away the Holy Spirit. In this view, although probation generally will close for mankind in the future, some individuals closed theirs prematurely by rejecting error.

Summary and conclusion

Ellen White launched her prophetic career with visions that convinced her little band that probation had really closed for the world. Because of this belief, the "little flock" did not actively and openly evangelize for nearly seven years. Later, the Whites moved West — first to Rochester, New York, and then to Battle Creek, Michigan — all the while appearing to have given up one of their original testing truths, the shut door. However, in 1883 Ellen White reaffirmed her belief in the closing of probation in 1844 for all who heard the Millerite message and rejected it, or accepted it and later gave it up.

An analysis of this version of the shut-door doctrine shows that it probably would have had little impact on the behavior of the shut-door believers during the shut-door era. This is because their naive, egocentric conception of the world would have made the difference purely academic. In their minds, the Millerite message had been given to the whole world; and therefore the whole world at that time was guilty of rejecting it and was hopelessly lost. *In effect*, there would have been a universal shut door whether God arbitrarily closed it or sinners closed it on themselves by rejecting the Millerite message.

(Concluded on Page 40)

The "Shut Door" Discussed

Between April 11 and 15 of 1982, the Ellen G. White Estate hosted the four-day International Prophetic Workshop for approximately seventy church scholars and administrators. Among many interesting presentations was one on the shut-door documents by White Estate secretary Robert Olson.

Olson's running catalog of shut-door related quotations is available on request from the White Estate. The discussion that followed Olson's presentation indicates that the shut-door problem is not the fabrication of church critics.

ARTHUR WHITE: I do want to say to this group that you have just listened to the finest and the most correct presentation that has ever been made on the shut-door question in such a brief period of time. I speak thus, having some knowledge of the question.

DALTON BALDWIN: You and I should put our heads together and struggle with where do I have some evidence. I think that the burden of proof should be on the person — if you think that Ellen White's understanding of the shut door is different from the majority of the community — the burden of proof is on the person who holds such a view. And if you can show me from statements that she makes through the period [1845-1851] that her view of the shut door is ahead of them, then I'll yield.

In another point in our general discussion, we have been wanting to say that Ellen White did not initiate these doctrines. That is, that the brethren studied the material very carefully from the Scriptures; and after it had been presented to the group, then a vision would confirm. So, that's also in the back of my mind.

ROBERT OLSON: Now, let me say I can't agree with your presupposition. Your presupposition is that Ellen White agreed with her husband, and I have to prove to you that this is not the case; otherwise you won't believe it. Now I go the other way around. I say you have to prove to me that she did agree with her husband; otherwise, I will believe that she did her own thinking.

BALDWIN: If that's what I was saying, then, with you, I would reject it. Let me try to say what I think I'm saying. What I am saying is that if Ellen White uses a word, the meaning of that word for her should be the same as the meaning for the whole community.

OLSON: But Dalt —

BALDWIN: Unless . . .

OLSON: Its meaning [he's talking about the shut-door] is changing though, see. And so one [person] might have a certain meaning [for the shut-door] in 1846 and another, in that same year, might have already swung his thinking around.

BALDWIN: All I want to do is have evidence of its [meaning] being changed.

OLSON: The evidence can only come from looking at the documents as they move through the years.

BALDWIN: That's what I want to do, too. Then the next thing I think is that in some cases you have taken material from a significantly later period; and the meaning you find, I think, is not

there; because it didn't develop until quite a while later.

Shut-door discussants and their titles in 1982

Arthur White, board member, Ellen G. White Estate
 Dalton Baldwin, professor of Christian theology, Loma Linda University
 Robert Olson, secretary, Ellen G. White Estate
 Gordon Bietz, pastor, Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church
 Helmut Ott, associate professor of Religion, Southern College
 Ronald Graybill, associate secretary, Ellen G. White Estate
 Charles Teel, Jr., associate Professor of Religion, Loma Linda University
 D. A. Delafield, board member, Ellen G. White Estate
 Roger Coon, associate secretary, Ellen G. White Estate

OLSON: You're at liberty to draw your own conclusions.

BALDWIN: Now [inaudible word] did tell us one incident where this did occur — and I think most of us would agree with it; namely, that Ellen White remembered a certain man's name who took a certain position on a certain date. And later on we find from the *Review and Herald* that James and Ellen did not meet him until three or four years later; that, therefore, the evidence from that particular incident is not historically sound. And so there are some

analyzing the documents that we can get a meaning from the later period and [keep from] projecting [it] into the earlier period illegitimately from the historical standpoint. And that is influencing your conclusions, and let's do that.

OLSON: So I decided in the end that what I would do is to outline it as I have, and anybody who reads it can draw his own conclusions. You can give as much weight to the 1884 statement as you wish, see. And if you don't wish to give much weight to that statement, well, that's your privilege.

GORDON BIETZ: I guess I have a concern about what we do affirm about the shut door, if I understand it correctly — and maybe I don't; and that is that there was a shut door for people who rejected the [inaudible word] the Millerite message? And I guess I have a hard time understanding how if I was living there and heard Miller's sermon and rejected it because "no man knows the day or the hour," uh, that I would be shut out because I didn't believe basically what was a false message.

OLSON: Well, look at Revelation 10, Gordon; "I heard seven thunders and I was about to write." So John understood what was in the seven thunders, because he was about to write it out. The angel said, "Now don't. Don't you write that out." So he didn't. And then there was a bitter disappointment, obviously, because here's this book he ate; and he thought it was sweet in the mouth. And then when it got in the belly and digested, it was bitter. So, if he could only have written out what was in the seven thunders, it would have saved this disappointment. So, as I understand Revelation 10, God deliberately kept the people from understanding a certain truth because He wanted them to be tested on the October 22 point, you see.

"Why should the door of mercy be closed to a person who rejected a message . . . that was false?" — Helmut Ott

instances in which, it seems to me, you have taken some evidence from material that is written quite a while later and projected it back — when in fact those ideas are not present in the community at that [earlier] time. So, the summary of the statement is [that] we can't really go through this nitpicky stuff if we can't do it all together. We should get together and go through it one passage at a time. I think from carefully

I look at it this way, too. If the Lord is to begin a special ministry in heaven on October 22, 1844, how will he tell the people in this world about it? Will he use the method of first calling everyone's attention to the date? And then, when the world is looking at that date, he tells them what happened. and it's the best way you can imagine of our knowing in this world what's happening in heaven.

BIETZ: Any attempt to call attention to a change in heaven would have drawn the attention of people.

OLSON: Not like this method.

HELMUT OTT: It seems to me that while we are on the one hand saying that we don't expect or believe that Sister White is infallible, nonetheless, we take such pains in attempting to prove that she was. I wonder if we could save ourselves a little of this pain and admit that yes, she believed it wrongly; and then move on. After all, how much more did Sister White know in theology than everybody else after those visions than before?

Throughout her ministry she grew in all areas of theological understanding. And there's no point throughout her ministry when we can say, "Well, at this point she had a full understanding of this particular doctrine." I think we'd be hard put to prove that; because she, like a human being — like everybody else — we are all dependent on God for truth.

As far as theology is concerned, I'd still like to refer back to Elder Bietz's point: They [the SDA pioneers] still believed that the door had shut for those washouts, for those who rejected the Millerite message. It's like probation had ended for hundreds of thousands of people. I don't know if we can say that We have not really solved the problem theologically when we shift from one [interpretation] and we say, "Well, she didn't mean the whole world. She only meant those who had rejected the Millerite message." We have really not solved the theological problem; we have, in a sense, created another one.

OLSON: Helmut, on that first point, I am quite willing to acknowledge that Ellen White made some mistakes. I've already done that this week, and I've given examples. But I gave you no examples of theological error, because I don't believe I have found Mrs. White to teach heresy at any point. I've never found one heretical statement in her writings, as I understand it. In fact she makes the statement, "In all of my writings there is not one heretical sentence." Now, if she had taught that the door of mercy was closed for the whole world on October 22, 1844, irrevocably, that, in my mind, would be theological error. And this is something I have not found. The mistakes that I have found in her writings, and in the Bible, do not deal with theology; they deal with unimportant areas. So, I'm quite willing to admit Mrs. White made mistakes; but I am not going to admit something that isn't true, and that I don't believe is true. I don't find a mistake in her writing, here; I do find that she was mistaken in her understanding. But I think that those are two completely different things.

OTT: The problem I see is that if we make the shift from [teaching that] the entire world [was lost] to [teaching that only] those who [heard and] reject [ed] the Millerite message [were lost], we are still having a close of probation for hundreds of thousands [of New Englanders].

OLSON: Alright. Now this is your second point here. But, as she [Ellen White] pointed out — and I read this — there was a probation at the time of the Flood for many people, and there

have been other periods (Sodom and Gomorrah) [in which] there was a close of probation for certain ones. And I could close my probation today by rejecting the Holy Spirit so he could no longer reach me. Well, if there is something on which many of us are being tested, and we all reject it together, then many individuals will close their probations at the same time. It's not that God has arbitrarily said, "Well, I'm [going to] close probation for fifteen hundred people." Fifteen hundred people are making this decision, and God can't reach them anymore in the future. So I see a general close [of probation] for many people when they are tested on certain points, and Mrs. White gave these examples. So I don't find a problem in that.

OTT: The essential message of Miller that Christ is coming October 22 [1844] was false. So how — and that's what Elder Bietz was trying to point out — why should the door of mercy be closed to a person who rejected a message which had such a major element in it that was false? See what I mean?

OLSON: Well, that's a very reasonable question. You see on August 12 of 1844, at Exeter, New Hampshire, this the campmeeting [gap] . . .

"In no other way could everybody understand at the time that Christ . . . had actually made a change in ministry." — Robert Olson

. . . and so brother Snow [a Millerite evangelist] gets up, explains the meaning of the annual services, and shows how the Day of Atonement services really indicated an October 22 date for the coming of Christ. I won't go through that because we all understand this. Well, F. D. Nichol in describing this (how does he put it?), "It went with the velocity of a tornado." And he's using someone else's language. He's quoting from one of the other folk in those early days. Apparently there was a power of the Holy Spirit connected with this, you see, that took it even out of their own hands. William Miller wasn't even there at the campmeeting, and he opposed it at home for some weeks. But, finally, about the sixth of October, why, he accepts it also. And he says, "I see a glory in the seventh month that I never saw before, and I now expect Christ to come in two weeks time." So, there was a very evident power of God in that movement. God was in it even though they were headed for a disappointment. The Lord was in it. And it may be that some people will say how could God do this to them? How could he lead them this way to expect his coming when he knew there would be a disappointment. And my answer is the one I gave Gordon here a few minutes ago: this was God's method of leading everyone in this world to the date; and then when they saw he didn't come, they would be given the correct interpretation, and they would understand what Jesus is doing in heaven. In no other way could everybody understand at the time that Christ in heaven had actually made a change in ministry. We can't see heaven; we

have to be told in some way, and this is the way he brought it to their attention. So I don't see God as tricking the people. I don't see a theological problem in that.

RONALD GRAYBILL: Yeah, but there's been condemnation of people; condemnation of people who rejected a message which had a large element of error. That's the problem. We agree that God led, but these people who said: "Here's another [inaudible] saying Jesus will come on that day. I read in my Bible, 'No man knows the hour or the day.'" And they're correct, you see. Miller was wrong about the event. They rejected that the event would take place on that day; they rejected the Millerite message, and they lost their salvation for rejecting something which had a large element of error in it. That's the problem people are perceiving. That's what Mark Patterson had up in Yountville, and I tried to answer that.

CHARLES TEEL, JR.: The door is still closed, but it's closed on a smaller room.

OLSON: Well, here is the Holy Spirit working on the hearts of these people bringing overpowering conviction. And these people say, "Well, according to my Bible we won't know

the day or the hour." And they fight the conviction of the Holy Spirit — that's what they're doing, see. And they're putting their own understanding of the Bible ahead of this impression of the Spirit that is telling them that you should accept the interpretation of these folk.

GRAYBILL: Yes, but shouldn't we follow the Bible and not the impression? See, that's what I told Mark; we don't know those individual cases. We don't know what was in their hearts and minds. We don't know they understandingly rejected something that they honestly believed was God's message to them.

[Voice, probably] D. A. **DELAFIELD:** Yes, they did.

GRAYBILL: And those were the people that were lost. I think there must have been hundreds of thousands of people that heard Miller preach that would not have the door shut on them, that didn't understandingly

OLSON: I believe that exactly too. Because the comprehension of it never came to them. They never knowingly rejected truth. I believe that.

DELAFIELD: Sister White makes clear that there were two classes: one who were Millerites and who turned against the further evidence explaining the disappointment; and, number two, those that had heard the message, believed it was true and had never accepted it.

ROGER COON: Brother Delafield, I'm going to have to rule you out of order.

DELAFIELD: Well, I'm finished anyway.

COON: I waited until you were.

The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers

by Paul A. Gordon — critiqued by Skip Baker

In 1983 the Review and Herald Publishing Association printed a book entitled *The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers*, by Paul A. Gordon, undersecretary and trustee of the Ellen G. White Estate. Under a heading “The Investigative Judgment and Shut Door,” Gordon writes:

And though, at the beginning, there was some confusion regarding the “shut door,” only a few years passed before Adventists generally agreed that the door of mercy for the world still stood open for those who had not clearly rejected the Advent message.

While admitting in his book that, early on, the term “shut door” meant “that the door of mercy” was shut, Gordon makes no mention of the fact that it was Ellen Harmon’s visions that had reestablished the shut door.

Gordon’s next heading read, “The Shut Door Changes Meaning.” This in itself is a true statement, as it meant one thing before 1851, and then something a little different thereafter. However, the time period he addresses is pre-1851 and I believe this is highly misleading. Gordon writes:

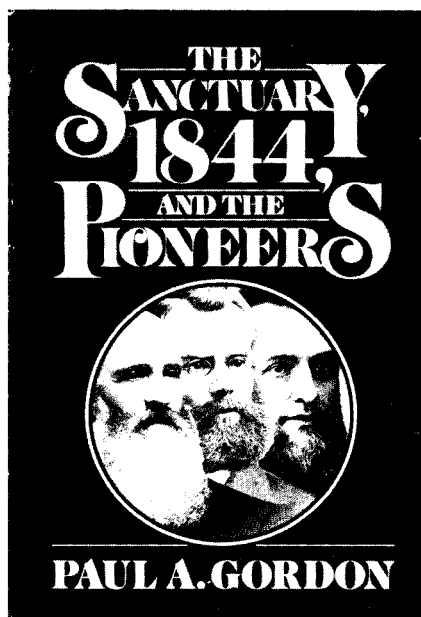
The parable of the ten virgins formed the basis of the use of the term “shut door” at the beginning. The Millerites applied the parable to the close of probation for the world at Christ’s return. For a short time after the 1844 disappointment many Adventists, including Ellen White, continued to hold a similar belief. But not for long.

Then, instead of quoting from “the secret letter” which was written by Ellen White to Joseph Bates in the middle of the shut-door period (13 July 1847), Gordon leaps thirty-six long years to quote Ellen White’s 1883 statement published in *Selected Messages*, volume one. Is that what he calls “but not for long” — thirty-six years? By quoting White’s 1883 statement, Gordon admits that she believed in the shut door *before* her first vision; but he suppresses the fact that according to her 1847 letter to Bates it was her first vision which led the little band *back into* the shut-door belief. Then, despite what Mrs. White wrote to Bates in 1847, Gordon states on page 18:

Observe that Ellen White, before a vision corrected her, believed that probation had ended for the world. . . . But we find evidence that she soon changed her position.

Misleading and false! Gordon implies that her account in 1883 was correct — that she discarded the shut door in December 1844, after her first vision. But contemporary exhibits prove beyond all reasonable doubt that just the opposite was the case. Hence the truth is that she continued to believe for a number of years that probation for

[Gordon] suppresses the fact that according to her 1847 letter to Bates it was her first vision which led the little band *back into* the shut-door belief.



Gordon implies that her account in 1883 was correct — that she discarded the shut door in 1844, after her first vision.

the world had closed and did not “soon” change her mind.

Gordon goes on to cite another Ellen White letter to Brother and Sister Hastings, written in 1849, and asks the question, “What does Ellen White mean when she refers to ‘the shut door?’” This is a futile attempt to rescue her from the facts — as if by 1849 the little band had already changed significantly their definition of the term.

In *A Word to the Little Flock*, James White wrote in 1847, a month before his wife’s revealing letter to Bates, that “from the ascension to the shutting of the door, October 1844, Jesus stood with widespread arms of love and mercy, ready to receive, and plead the cause of every sinner, who would come to God by Him.” Then, in the 5 May 1850 issue of *Present Truth*, a year after the letter that Gordon quotes from as proof that the definition had already been changed, James White wrote:

But the sinner, to whom Jesus had stretched out His arms all the day long, and who had rejected the offers of salvation, was left without an advocate, when Jesus passed from the holy place, and shut that door in 1844 (emphasis supplied).

A year after the letter cited by Gordon, it is obvious that James White’s definition of the shut door remained that probation had closed in 1844. This book pretends that the term had changed meaning by 1849.

Gordon goes on to say on page 18, “Observe that Ellen White applied the term ‘shut door’ not to the close of probation, but rather to the shut door of the first apartment of heaven’s sanctuary.” But Gordon conveniently ignores the documentation cited above, which indicates that she meant the same thing her husband did when she used the term in the 1840s. It was only much later, as reality slowly set in, that the term acquired a revised or modified definition. Otherwise, why did Mrs. White say that she “was very very sad” to discover that Sister Durbin had “great sympathy” for the world of sinners, and could not believe that the door was shut, two-and-a-half years after her first vision?

Gordon refers us to *Early Writings* but fails to mention that the book had all clear references to the shut door edited out of it. If we are to take seriously Ellen White’s statement about “even the intentional suppression of truth” constituting “falsehood,” we must admit that we have not been dealt with truthfully in print by our church’s leaders, regarding the shut door. And, judging by his treatment of the shut door, Paul Gordon’s *The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers* should not go down as either fiction or bad apologetics. It should simply go down.

The Great Controversy Over Deletions, concluded

year after James White died (1881). Or is it? If Canright's account is accurate, James White seemed uneasy about Butler's 1880 desire to publish the earliest writings of his wife as originally printed. *Early Writings* was the first crisis Ellen White had to face after her husband died. Was it James who had quietly kept the early documents from surfacing all those years? Did James have a major role in making the deletions, perhaps almost without his wife's active participation? If so, then her bewilderment in 1883 over the deletions is more readily understandable.

6. What control did Ellen White exercise over the publication of her own writings? Assuming that MS 4-1883 expressed her true feelings about the deletions in *Early Writings*, then the answer appears to be "very little." For the editions that have come forth since 1882 have all ignored her wish to give the public every line she wrote in her first published visions. Considering that apparently no one even consulted her in the crisis over her visions in 1883, and that if they had, they would have found her just as much in the dark as the rest of the leaders, it is not likely that she was in a position to control her writings.

7. Why was MS 4 — 1883 not made public until 1934? It may not be known for sure, of course, but a few things seem evident. It would have been embarrassing for the members to discover that *Early Writings*, published to refute the charge of suppression, was itself full of deletions that were unauthorized by their prophet. It would have also been embarrassing to let the critics discover that Ellen White herself was claiming surprise at the deletions that had been found. Perhaps her manuscript was unsolicited and therefore rejected by the *Review and Herald*. Finally, it is possible that they didn't believe her.

The Shut Door Ellen White Never Abandoned, concluded

In effect, Ellen White never repented or apologized for her shut-door activities or attitude during the shut-door era. She only admitted to a substitution in the *basis* for her shut-door position: the world was just as damned, but damned for a different reason. In the former case it was because Christ ceased his mediatorial work for all sinners. In the latter it was because Christ would not forgive anyone who disbelieved the

"midnight cry." Evidently it was not easy to be saved in William Miller's generation.

A vital lesson that is taught by this doctrine is that it is a dangerous thing to point out errors in doctrines that are endorsed by the Holy Spirit. You may win your case but lose your soul. Rather than ask whether something is scriptural, we are taught to consider whether we feel the Holy Spirit in the movement. This was Ellen White's consistent position on matters concerning 1844 and the doctrines that arose out of it; in short, everything that is truly Seventh-day Adventist. It would seem to follow that anyone who questions 1844-related doctrines on the basis of scripture spiritually identifies with William Miller's wicked generation and imperils his eternal salvation. The shut door of 1844 would then actually be a trap door that capriciously closes on the probation of the doubter.

Questions to ponder

What does it mean if a Seventh-day Adventist cannot wholeheartedly endorse the shut-door beliefs of the *mature* Ellen White? Does this not mean that (s)he would be spiritually partaking of the sin of Miller's generation?

Does the shut-door doctrine remain the essence of the Adventist experience?

Should exhilarating feelings be elevated over clear scriptural teachings? Can one commit the unpardonable sin by refusing to do so?

Do Ellen White's visions contain salvation-related errors? Did God give Ellen White her final shut-door position? If so, was God fair with Miller's generation? If not, can Ellen White harbor other salvation-related theological errors? If Ellen White's visions taught salvation-related errors, did they come from God? Does it make much difference whether the visions were erroneous or whether Ellen White misinterpreted them?

Have the church and the White Estate been honest with the world and with its membership concerning its own history? Has Ellen White been honest in this regard? If you had known all about the shut-door history of the Seventh-day Adventist church before you joined, would you have been convinced that this was the "remnant church?" Is a frank discussion of the shut-door history of the church and Ellen White compatible with a church membership drive? Do potential members have a right to know about this before they join?

Bulletin

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Still deleting

As if to provide a final argument for the case made by Dennis Hokama in his article "The Great Controversy Over Deletions in the Vision of 1844," Arthur L. White, writing in the 12 July 1984 *Adventist Review*, has supplied the Seventh-day Adventist reading family with another shut-door deletion.

In his article entitled "Why Seventh-day Adventists have no creed," White quotes from a letter that his grandmother wrote to Eli Curtis, editor of the *Day-Dawn*, on 12 April 1847; but in the following sentence White replaces four of Mrs. White's words with ellipses:

The Lord has shown me in vision, that Jesus rose up, . . . and entered the Holy of Holies, at the seventh month, 1844; but Michael standing up [Dan. 12:1] to deliver his people, is in the future

....
The four words missing from the middle of the sentence just quoted are "and shut the door."

At the 1982, four-day International Prophetic Workshop Arthur White informed the invitees that

Ellen White was capable of using the English language effectively. In all my study of the Ellen G. White writings — published and unpublished

— I find that she was very capable of communicating orally and in writing and spoke out in [a]



Arthur L. White

forthright manner, which leaves no room for the feeling that her writings are obscured or must be

interpreted. The average reader can detect right well what she is attempting to say.

Unless her meaning is obscured by ellipses.

Zackrison cleared

Just as *Currents* was going to press, a grievance committee was to have met (12 July 1984) to hear certain "charges" against Southern College religion faculty professor Edwin Zackrison.

Five faculty members were slated to speak against Zackrison and thirty-four were set to testify in his behalf. Two of the five against backed out at the last minute, and then the hearing was cancelled.

On July 11 Southern College president John Wagner and Zackrison met, with no attorneys present, and drew up the following "official statement."

To whom it may concern:

On July 11, 1984, the charges against Edwin Zackrison, made in connection with John Wagner's proposed recommendation for termination of Edwin Zackrison's employment with

Picking the Lock FOOTNOTES

1. James White, *Life Sketches* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1880), p. 82.
2. *SDA Encyclopedia* (Wash., D.C.: R & H, 1966), p. 540.
3. Portland, ME, 1845, p. 24.
4. White Estate Document File 231, *William Foy - A Statement by E. G. White*, "Interview with Dores Robinson about 1912," p. 2.
5. J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement* (Nashville, TN: SP, 1905), pp. 145-147.
6. DF 231.
7. EGW, *Selected Messages*, vol. III (Wash., D.C.: R & H, 1980), Appendix C, p. 460.
8. *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 418, 419.
9. DF 231.
10. James White, *Day Star* (11 October 1845).
11. John Robertson, *The White Truth* (Wash., D.C.: R & H, 1981), pp. 102, 105, 106.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
13. Robert W. Olson, *One Hundred and One Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White* (Wash., D.C.: EGW Estate, March 1981), p. 58.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
15. Robert W. Olson, *The "Shut Door" Documents* (Wash., D.C.: EGW Estate, 11 April 1982), p. 9.
16. EGW to Joseph Bates, 13 July 1847.
17. Olson, *The "Shut Door" Documents*, p. 4.
18. Olson, *101 Questions*, p. 58.
19. EGW, *Early Writings* (Wash., D.C.: R & H, 1945), p. 285.
20. EGW, *The Great Controversy* (Oakland, CA: PP, 1891), p. 61.
21. EGW to Joseph Bates, 13 July 1847.
22. Ingemar Linden, *The Last Trump* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1978), pp. 94-96.
23. F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (Wash., D.C.: R & H, 1951), asterisked footnote, p. 193.
24. *Ibid.*
25. James White, ed., *A Word to the Little Flock* (Brunswick, ME.: private printing, May 1847), R & H facsimile reproduction, p. 21.
26. Joseph Bates, *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps* (April 1847), pp. 67, 68.
27. EGW to Joseph Bates, 13 July 1847.
28. James White, *A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 22.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
30. James White, *Day Star* 6, no. 7 (20 September 1845), p. 26.
31. Quoted in Robert Olson, *The "Shut Door" Documents*, p. 13. Ellen White later excused William Miller for giving up on the significance of 22 October 1844 by placing the blame on bad company.
32. Ronald D. Graybill, *"The Power of Prophecy: Ellen G. White and the Women Religious Founders of the Nineteenth Century"* (doctoral dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1983), pp. 92-96.
33. EGW, MS 4, 1883, or *Selected Messages*, vol. I (Wash., D.C.: R & H, 1958), p. 63.
34. EGW to J. N. Loughborough, 24 August 1874, quoted in *Selected Messages* vol. 1, p. 74.
35. MS 4, 1883, italics supplied.
36. EGW to J. N. Loughborough, 24 August 1874.

37. EGW, *Early Writings* (Wash., D.C.: R & H, 1945), pp. 42-45.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
39. EGW to J. N. Loughborough, 24 August 1874.
40. EGW, *The Present Truth* 1, no. 3 (August 1849), pp. 21, 22.
41. H. E. Carver, Mrs. E. G. White's *Claims to Divine Inspiration Examined* (Marion, IA: Advent and Sabbath Advocate Press, 1877), p. 11.
42. J. N. Loughborough to Uriah Smith, published in *Review & Herald* (25 September 1866), pp. 133, 134.
43. J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement*, p. 222.
44. James White, *Life Sketches*, pp. 329, 328.
45. James White, *A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 22.

Legacy of Guilt FOOTNOTES

1. "Consensus Document from Glacier View", *Ministry*, Oct. 1980, p. 17.
2. "Mutual Conference of Adventists at Albany", *The Morning Watch*, vol. 8, no. 19, May 8, 1845, p. 150.
3. "No Union with the World," *The Day Star*, vol. 5, no. 3, March 4, 1845, p. 11.
4. E. G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 232.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Ellen Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harmon," *The Day Star*, Vol. 9, no. 7-8, Jan. 24, 1846, p. 31.
7. E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 63.
8. E. G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, 1858, p. 168.
9. E. G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 632-633.
10. H. F. Hill, "The Ten Virgins," *Voice of Truth and Glad Tidings*, vol. 4, no. 7, Dec. 11, 1844, p. 104.
11. William Miller, *The Advent Herald*, vol. 8, no. 18, Dec. 11, 1844, p. 142.
12. A. Hale, J. Turner, *The Advent Mirror*, vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 1845, pp. 3-4.
13. E. G. White, "Letter to Joseph Bates," July 13, 1847.
14. E. G. Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harmon," *The Day Star*, vol. 10, no. 7, March 14, 1846, p. 7.
15. E. G. White, "Letter to Joseph Bates," July 13, 1847.
16. E. G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 422-423.
17. A. Hale, J. Turner, *The Advent Mirror*, vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 1845, pp. 3-4.
18. Ellen Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harmon," *The Day Star*, vol. 10, no. 7, March 14, 1846, p. 7.
19. E. G. White, "Letter to Joseph Bates," July 13, 1847.
20. A. Hale, "Has the Bridegroom Come?", *The Advent Herald*, March 5, 1845, p. 26.
21. G. Bliss, *Ibid.*, p. 28.
22. O.R.L. Crosier, "Letter to A. F. Dugger," Feb. 20, 1899.
23. E. G. White, "Letter to Eli Curtis," *A Word to the Little Flock*, 1847, p. 12.
24. O.R.L. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," *The Day Star Extra*, vol. 9, Feb. 7, 1846, p. 41.
25. J. N. Andrews, "The Sanctuary," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 3, no. 19, Feb. 3, 1853, p. 145.
26. Richard M. Davidson, "Typology and the Levitical System - 2", *Ministry*, vol. 57, no. 4, p. 12.
27. O.R.L. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," *The Day Star Extra*, vol. 9, Feb. 7, 1846, p. 41.

28. Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14 The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment*, 1980, A-18.
29. O.R.L. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," *The Day Star Extra*, vol. 9, Feb. 7, 1846, p. 38.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
33. W. W. Fletcher, *The Doctrine of the Investigative Judgment Examined and Refuted*, pp. 15-19.
34. James White, "The Sanctuary, 2300 Days, and the Shut Door," *The Present Truth*, vol. 1, no. 10, May 1850, p. 78.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*
38. E. G. White, *The Present Truth*, vol. 1, no. 8, p. 84.
39. James White, *The Present Truth*, vol. 1, no. 6, p. 47.
40. E. G. White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," *The Present Truth* vol. 1, no. 3, Aug. 1849, p. 22.
41. E. G. White, *Experience and Views*, Aug. 1853, p. 37.
42. E. G. White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," *The Present Truth*, vol. 1, no. 3, Aug. 1849, p. 4.
43. Joseph Bates, *The Review and Herald*, vol. 1, no. 3, Dec. 1850, p. 24.
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46. *Ibid.*, pp. 430-431.
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49. Joseph Bates, *An Explanation of the Typical and Antitypical Sanctuary*, 1850, p. 10.
50. James White, "The Day of Judgment," *The Advent Review*, vol. 1, no. 4, Sept. 1850, p. 49.
51. *Ibid.*
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55. *Ibid.*
56. James White, "The Shut Door," *The Review and Herald*, April 14, 1853.
57. *Ibid.*
58. Uriah Smith, "The Cleansing of the Sanctuary," *The Review and Herald*, vol. 7, October 2, 1855, p. 52.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*
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62. James White, "The Judgment," *The Review and Herald*, vol. 9, Jan. 29, 1857, p. 100.
63. *Ibid.*
64. James White, "The Day of Judgment," *The Advent Review*, vol. 1, no. 4, September 1850, p. 49.
65. James White, "The Judgment," *The Review and Herald*, vol. 9, Jan. 29, 1857, p. 100.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
67. E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 480.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 482.
69. *Ibid.*
70. *Ibid.*, p. 483.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 425.

Bulletin

Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, were withdrawn.

Withdrawal of the charges was accomplished following a thorough discussion between Edwin Zackrisson and John Wagner in an amiable atmosphere characterized by Christian cooperation and fellowship.

Edwin Zackrisson has been granted a sabbatical to pursue postdoctoral studies effective August 1, 1984.

[signed] Edwin Zackrisson
John Wagner

Zackrisson's sabbatical is for two years and amounts to termination from the college with an out-of-court settlement for what might otherwise have become a legal suit over wrongful dismissal. The elusive "charges" have never been specified, and *Currents* has learned that one of them was "insubordination" for refusing a call to inner city work in Chicago.

CURRENTLY POSTED

February 7, 1984

Editor

Some weeks ago I read your interesting review of the Graybill dissertation and could hardly wait to get my hands on a copy of the complete work. I recently had that privilege and could not see why the GC leadership has driven Graybill from the White Estate! There is little there we did not already know. If there is anything the church needs at this time, it is more honesty — not more cover-up activity.

I agree with most of your view on the Graybill work. I, too, wondered why he wrote no conclusion. I just graduated with the doctorate in history from the small Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN (just outside Nash-

ville), and they required a rather lengthy conclusion. My work was also a type of biography, with emphasis on a particular part of a person's life.

As far as the length of Graybill's work, graduate schools are now encouraging students to cut the old practice of 400-600-page dissertations in order to encourage more individuals to read them. Most papers tend to gather age and dust on the shelf, and the attempt to shorten them to more practical length is indeed a wise move.

Sincerely,

Dr. George A. Miller

Ooltewah, TN 37363

CURRENTLY POSTED

Dear Editor,

Like many others I enjoyed the interview concerning the pilgrimage (space-flight?) of my friend Bob Brinsmead. He is an honest and courageous raconteur. Nevertheless, as on so many occasions over the years of our fellowship, I will venture to suggest some alternative conclusions.

The impression one gains from Bob's account as he tells of our talk at the beach and the total irrelevance of apocalyptic themes to passersby is that such Scriptures are unfortunate excrescences. This is underlined by Bob's account about our discussion in the sixties as to the order of events associated with the Revelation 13 crisis.

But as one of the greatest of N.T. scholars has pointed, our "Jewish apocalyptic was no ignoble thing." Moderns, like Pannenberg and F.R. Barry have said of Christ:

... He ... was not an apocalyptic, although the views of the apocalyptic tradition are everywhere the presuppositions of what He said and did. Jesus certainly thought in apocalyptic categories.¹

His message can only be understood within the horizon of apocalyptic expectations.²

The whole story [the life of Jesus] moves in an atmosphere of wonder, fringed, as it were, with a numinous corona, whose flames leap up in immeasurable splendour into spaces which we cannot chart. We cannot tear it out of that setting. Apart from it there is no story to tell. And it is the triumph of the eschatologists to have recovered that atmosphere.³

Apocalyptic Scripture was given to assure believers in times of crisis that ultimately God would have His way and by sudden irruption into time and space right wrong and establish a new heavens and a new earth wherein all nature from the greatest world to the minutest atom (to plagiarize a well-known author) will echo with the theme that God is love.

When Bob and I discussed apocalyptic twenty years ago, the real issue was even then the gospel. He believed that saints would be rendered sinless in nature by the miraculous working of the

Spirit in the Latter Rain. I believed (to quote page 75 of my critique at that time) that "repentance is a daily, continuous exercise and must be so until mortality is swallowed up in immortality. Repentance and humiliation and sorrow of soul must be our daily meat and drink until we cease to carry with us so many imperfections and failures" (Group D. p. 72 EGW). The test of Revelation 13 makes it clear that saints are capable of surrendering to the rebellion against God right up to the close of time. We are ever righteous only by faith because of residual sinful tendencies till glorification.

Nevertheless I, along with many others, have profited from Bob's insights. From my first teaching at Avondale in 1961 I taught when exeging Romans that the righteousness of faith was the gift righteousness of justification, but simultaneously I made the typical Adventist mistake of including sanctification in that phrase when preaching. (Tapes of my camp meeting talks on Romans in the early sixties give evidence for both points). Reading Bob's protests, I rejoiced in their biblical accuracy and sanity and corrected my slack homiletic usage. Having long urged Bob to read Luther and Calvin and others rather than Waggoner and Jones and EGW only, it was now clear to me that the admonition was unnecessary.

Just before reading the *Currents* interview, I had read the biography of another Bob — Bob Hawke, Australia's Prime Minister. He told of his experience in the seventies in Israel when shuttling between there and Moscow. When the Israelis were threatened from the south by Egypt and the north by Syria they became desperate. Towards the end they said to Bob Hawke, "Tell them at the Kremlin, next time it will be nukes." That tiny nation was ready to draw the shades on the whole world by using nuclear weapons.

And that's the point. Within a few years countries like Iraq, Libya, and other effervescent societies will have the nuclear bomb. From all human appearances, the race teeters on the edge of oblivion as the riots in Europe and America show. I would disagree with Bob's conviction that the passersby at the beach needed nothing to do with matters associated with apocalyptic. Because all humanity is "on the beach" (as N. Shute rightly saw); and because the tide is coming in, there is nothing

more relevant in 1984 than apocalyptic themes couched in the fabric of the gospel.

We wish Bob well as he continues his quest, and we are grateful to *Currents* for chronicling the saga so far.

Yours in Him,

Desmond Ford

P.S.

My brief for apocalyptic study is no endorsement of certain traditional Adventist views such as an Investigative Judgment beginning in 1844. I am rather suggesting that people riding a good horse in a right direction need not be ashamed if their steed at times deviates to the right or the left. God judges movements (and their individual members) by their direction not their perfection. No Methodist church historian would endorse the early vagaries of that great revival. The same is true of the greater and more basic religious revolutions in the first and sixteenth centuries.

Despite some eccentricities (almost inevitable for religious reformers without erudition), our Adventist forebears focused on certain eschatological truths which have been vindicated in this century, and which are particularly pertinent for an ailing world. For example, at a time when almost all philosophers, politicians, educators, and religionists believed in the inevitability of human progress (and especially *moral* progress till there would be a thousand years of peace), Millerites and later Adventists on the basis of Scripture foretold the reverse. Secondly, while again almost all around them believed in the Platonic view of man as scriptural, Adventists set forth what is now almost universally recognized by N.T. exegetes as the biblical view, thus lifting the awful shadow of eternal hell-fire which obscured the face of a God Who is love. No generation facing the possibility of a cosmic nuclear holocaust could ever be reconciled to its parallel — the traditional hell rejected by Adventists.

Warmest regards,

1. W. Pannenberg, *Jesus — God and Man* (E.T., London, 1968), 217.

2. *Ibid.*, 32.

3. F. R. Barry, *The Relevance of Christianity* (London, 1931), 98.

A QUESTION OF HONESTY

by Nic Samojluk

One of my most cherished childhood memories involves Friday evening worship, with my mother leading the song service and my father reading from the Bible and from Ellen White's writings. We children would listen intently as he read, and interrupt him with many questions about life in heaven — a topic that intrigued us immensely.

I grew up in an atmosphere where Ellen White's books were treated with almost as much respect as the Bible. Eventually, I received an Adventist education followed by many years of denominational service. Therefore, my present confession of faith represents many hours of research and soul search, prompted by the desire to find an honest way out of our current dilemma.

The accumulating information regarding Ellen White's dependency on human sources seems to contradict her own assertions to the contrary (5T, p. 683; MS 7, 1867; *White Lie*, p. 171). Consequently, some Adventists have rejected her writings altogether and are no longer with us. Most however, have simply closed their eyes to the evidence. I wish to suggest a third alternative; but first, a few frank and painful admissions.

Ellen White copyrighted what she wrote with the assistance of her editorial helpers — including what had been “borrowed” from others without permission or credit. Yet, strange to say, she asserted the author's right to the enjoyment of the fruits of his/her labor (CWE, pp. 164, 165). (Isn't this the reason why she copyrighted all her books?). She sent many “straight” — which interpreted means “cutting” — testimonies to others during her ministry, including her editorial assistants; but when her secretaries responded by confronting her with the necessity of literary honesty and her urgent need to acknowledge her human sources, their concern was immediately branded as coming directly from the devil in an attempt to destroy her influence. She did not accept suggestions directed to her the way she expected others to accept her testimonies to them. Her reaction was to have a vision, label her helper an enemy, and fire her on the spot (Alice Gregg, “Fannie's Folly,” *Adventist Currents* 1, No. 2, pp. 24-27, 34).

When I was a college student at Loma Linda University, I once submitted a term paper without the proper acknowledgments of my sources. I received an F. I was shocked; but I learned that careless literary “borrowing” could have serious consequences. If I borrow somebody else's car without permission, but return it with

the proper apology, I have done a wrong act; but if I keep the car and register it under my own name and refuse to admit my wrongdoing, then I am not only a liar but also a thief (see *Review & Herald* 23 March 1922 pp. 21, 32).

How does all this relate to Mrs. White's writings? Does it mean that we must reject what she has written? No. A Cadillac automobile is still a Cadillac after it has been stolen; a stolen Stradivarius well played may still sing. We do not reject Balaam's Messianic prophecies because he apostacized, do we? (A. Graham Maxwell, SS presentation, Loma Linda, first quarter, 1984). He failed as an individual; yet we love his poetic description of the Messiah. The message God spoke through him did not lose its truthfulness in the process. We do not reject Jonah's writings because he was disobedient to God's clear command to go to Nineveh. We do not reject the Psalms on the basis that David committed two awful sins. Neither do we reject Abraham and Jacob as prophets of God because they engaged in deception. Moses was guilty of homicide and of directly disobeying God's command to speak to the rock. Do we reject his writings because his life's record was stained?

Truth is truth regardless of its origin. In the final analysis, the source of all truth is God; and human beings are only channels. Salvation has never been a collective transaction; therefore, acceptance or rejection of truth is an individual matter. We must individually determine what

out of context and contradicting what is clearly stated in Hebrews, then we must make our own choice — not wholesale, but piecemeal fashion. We cannot believe both and still retain our intellectual honesty and sanity (G C pp. 409-430 vs Heb. 9:8, 24; 10:12, 19).

We must resist the temptation to base our faith on mere claims — or on miracles, for that matter. Otherwise, Jesus would have resorted to miracles when He met two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection, rather than presenting to them evidences of His Messiahship from Scripture (5T, p. 691).

It should also be remembered that truth is not based on age. We give Jesus priority over Moses not because He came after Moses, but because His evidence was stronger — it made more sense in the light of an increased knowledge of God's character. Otherwise Paul's writings might be considered of greater authority than Jesus' teachings.

Ellen White does not have veto power over the Bible (GC, pp. 594, 595). All her writings must be carefully scrutinized to see if they harmonize with the rest of revealed truth. If there is anything that doesn't, she herself admonished us to reject it (5T, p. 691). We cannot afford to make the mistake made by our Mormon friends who hold that the last revelation is the most authoritative and that it supercedes and interprets all previous revelation. There is, however, a hierarchy of revelation in the sense that all

The accumulating information regarding Ellen White's dependance on human sources seems to contradict her own assertions to the contrary.

we are to accept as truth on the basis of whether it is in harmony with other truths we have accepted — always remembering that the cornerstone of all truth is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Truth must be acquired item by item. We do not follow everything Moses prescribed for human behavior. We accept, reject, or interpret his writings on the basis of what Jesus (God's greatest revelation of Himself) said and did (see Matt. 5:31, 32, 38, 39, 43, 44, 46). We reject Paul's argument in favor of predestination and do not feel guilty about it, but we cherish his other writings (Romans 9:11-23).

We must treat Ellen White's writings likewise. If her interpretation of Daniel 8:14 does violence to sound hermeneutical principles by taking it

inspired writing must harmonize with the clearest revelation presented to us: the life and teachings of Jesus. This is the task assigned to the “noble Bereans” of all ages.

The attempt to present Ellen White's writings as unadulterated truth is wishful thinking. Revelation was given for practical purposes; and for all practical purposes, for example, substances like alcohol and gold are considered pure when they reach a reasonable percentage of purity. Can we expect more from Ellen? Would we reject the gift of a gold watch because the gold was not 100 percent pure? Let's be practical. Ellen was a human being like other inspired prophets. She had a problem with honesty; but her writings are, for all practical purposes, “pure” gold.

Nic Samojluk is the owner of Flamingo Real Estate in Loma Linda, California.



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