TELL IT TO THE WORLD

Mervyn Maxwell

Preface

Seventh-day Adventists do not regard themselves as making up any mere "religious society." They look at their church as a dynamic spiritual movement entrusted with a momentous message and motivated by an impelling sense of mission. Their message is all about Jesus: The "everlasting gospel" of Christ's dying and rising again to give people new hearts; the "advent hope" in Christ's coming again to give people a new home; and the "present truth" about Christ's contemporary ministry in heaven, blotting out sin in a unique sense and offering as never before to make people healthy, holy, and happy.

Their mission is to take such good news and tell it to the world--for it doesn't belong only to the people who happen to be Seventh-day Adventists today. It is a universal message for everyone everywhere. It is to be taken to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"; to all cities, to all villages; to every country, commonwealth, colony, and "creature." That is, "person." (Mark 16:15)

One book cannot tell all there is to know about Seventh-day Adventists. Selectively, this one tells most about how their movement began, because that explains best what makes it go, and how it hopes to end, soon.

Chapter 1

"No, God. I Cannot Preach!"

"No, God. No!

"Thou knowest that I cannot preach.

"I cannot preach!"

Before William Miller surrendered to the Lord and became the leader of the great Second Advent awakening in America, he argued with God and struggled with his conscience for thirteen years. It needs to be emphasized at the outset that he did not want to tell the world that Christ was coming soon. [1]

In an age when nine tenths of the American population lived on farms, William Miller too was a farmer. But he was not an ordinary one. As a boy, after the family had fallen asleep, he had read books, Lincoln style, by the light of pitch knots in his log cabin in Low Hampton, New York. Married

in 1803 and settled among the Green Mountains, in Poultney, Vermont, he quickly exhausted the local library. His new wife, Lucy, did many of the farm chores herself so he could find extra time for study. Sociable and energetic as well as studious, Miller was successively elected constable, deputy sheriff, and justice of the peace. Soon he was wealthy enough to own two horses, wise enough to have close friendships in both political parties of the day--and worldly enough to give up his boyhood faith, such as it was, and turn Deist.

Brought up in a Baptist home, William as a lad had worried seriously for a time about his soul. He tried to find peace by strict obedience to his parents and by sacrificing cherished possessions, but to no avail. He continued to believe the Bible, but he fretted over its seeming ineffectiveness and contradictions. But after his marriage, in the days when America was young, Miller read the books that Jefferson, Franklin, and the other Founding Fathers had read the writings of David Hume, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine. Other thinking people in Poultney read the same books, and soon he

adopted Deism, their attractive but superficial philosophy about the universe.

According to Deism, God created the world and set it in operation under unalterable laws of cause and effect. In harmony with these laws, men ought to live clean, kindly, and honest lives; but to believe in prayer, a Saviour, or life after death was regarded as childish superstition. Miracles, forgiveness, and resurrection would require God to act contrary to His own natural laws, and this was unthinkable. God had wound up the world like a watch and left it to run on its own.

Not Christianity but decent, law-and-order Americanism would bring out the best in a man, Miller concluded; and his house became a regular meeting place for the patriotic but irreligious couples of his new hometown.

Back in Hampton, Miller's mother heard what was going on in Poultney and was deeply concerned. She begged her brother-in-law and her aging father, both of them Baptist clergy, to visit

William from time to time, and she promised that her prayers would go with them. William warmly welcomed Uncle Elihu and Grandfather Phelps, but after they left he mimicked them mischievously to the huge enjoyment of his friends.

Convinced that love of country rather than love for Christ was mankind's greatest hope, Miller volunteered for service in the War of 1812. Forty-seven others also volunteered, on condition that they serve directly under his command!

The War of 1812, America's second military struggle for independence, was a desultory, do-nothing affair most of the time. The Battle of Plattsburg, fought on a shore of Lake Champlain not many miles from Miller's boyhood home, was a brilliant exception.

On the morning of September 11, 1814, the British boasted a land force of 15,000 regulars and a small, well-equipped navy on the lake. The Americans numbered only 5500, gloomily certain of defeat.

The outcome was a total surprise.

"Sir: It is over, it is done," reported an enthusiastic American officer at twenty minutes past two that afternoon. "The British fleet has struck to the American flag. Great slaughter on both sides--they are in plain view, where I am now writing.... The sight was majestic, it was noble, it was grand. This morning, at ten o'clock the British opened a very heavy and destructive fire upon us, both by water and land. Their ... rockets flew like hailstones.... You have no idea of the battle.... You must conceive what we feel, for I cannot describe it."

The officer reviewed with pride the part that he had played. "I am satisfied that I can fight. I know I am no coward.... Three of my men are wounded by a shell which burst within two feet of me."

"Huzza! Huzza!" he exclaimed in his excitement; and then, as twenty or thirty prisoners were led into the fort, he carefully signed his name:

"Yours forever, William Miller."

The war ended in 1815. Captain William Miller had demonstrated his aptitude for leadership years before he involuntarily founded a religious movement.

But as he returned home to milk and plow and sow and reap, his mind probed restlessly into the religion of the patriots. By the law of cause and effect, he reasoned, the victory at Plattsburg ought to have gone to the British. Their troops were veterans who had just defeated Napoleon, and they outnumbered the Americans three to one. A modern historian has called Plattsburg the "decisive action" of the war, [2] and the American commodore, in his report to the war office at the time, gave the glory to God: "The Almighty has been pleased to grant us a signal victory." [3] Was it possible, perhaps, that God had taken a personal interest in America? And what about the shell that exploded at his feet without hurting him or killing his friends? Was there a God who cared?

He moved from Poultney back to Low Hampton. His father having died, he paid off the mortgage on his boyhood home so his mother could live on the place debt free; then he settled on 200 acres nearby.

To be polite, Miller attended the local Baptist church whenever his uncle had the sermon. Otherwise he stayed away.

"We missed you at service last Sunday," said his mother tenderly.

"You can't expect me there when Uncle's gone, Mother."

"Why not, my son?"

"It's the way the deacons read the sermon."

"They do the best they can, I'm sure."

"When Uncle's away, Mother, why don't they let me read it?"

Thus Miller unwittingly set a trap for himself, and the good brethren whom he laughed at so merrily made sure that he was caught in it. The sermons they assigned him to read from Alexander Proudfit's Practical Discourses sobered him.

His doubts about Deism deepened.

September 11, 1816, rolled around, the second anniversary of the victory at Plattsburg. A public dance was scheduled; a sermon, too, on the night before. The visiting evangelist sent the people home bathed in tears. A revival was on and the dance was off. Next Sunday it was Miller's turn to read again, this time a homily in Proudfit called, "The Duty of Parents to Their Children." [4] Overcome by emotion in the middle, he could not make it to the end.

In despair over his sins, Miller imagined how good it would be to throw himself into the arms of a Saviour and trust completely in His grace.

He needed a Saviour. The world needed a Saviour. But did such a wonderful being exist?

Back to the Bible he went; and in its covers he found the Saviour whom he sought. "I was constrained to admit that the Scriptures must be a revelation from God," he wrote later. "They became my delight, and in Jesus I found a friend." [5]

Immediately he began regular family worship. But his worldly friends taunted him now, as before he had often taunted other Christians. "How do you know the Bible is the Word of God?" they teased. "What about its contradictions?"

"If the Bible is the Word of God," Miller responded staunchly, "then everything it contains can be understood, and all its parts made to harmonize. Give me time, and I'll harmonize its apparent contradictions or I'll be a Deist still."

Laying aside every book except the Bible itself and Cruden's Concordance, he began with the first

verse of Genesis 1 and advanced no more quickly than he could handle the problems that arose. Using the margin and the concordance, he let the Bible explain itself. One by one, most of its seemingly insoluble inconsistencies faded away.

Best of all, he found that Jesus, his loving Friend and Saviour, had promised to come again to earth! He found that many other prophetic promises had been fulfilled, so why not this one? Then one day he came across the text that was to mark him for the rest of his life, Daniel 8:14: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

His study intensified dramatically, sometimes lasting all day; sometimes all night. Correctly, he determined (using Ezekiel 4:6 and other texts) that the 2300 days were 2300 years, and that they began in 457 BC. Incorrectly he assumed that the "cleansing of the sanctuary" was the end of the world and the second coming of Christ. In 1818, after two years of undeviating concentration, he came to the startling conclusion that Christ would

return "about the year 1843" (2300 years after 457 BC), and that "in about twenty-five years ... all the affairs of our present state would be wound up."

The end, within twenty-five years? Then others must be warned. A voice burned into his soul, "Go and tell it to the world."

For five years Miller brushed the call aside and vigorously analyzed his position. He was afraid, he wrote later, "lest by some possibility I should be in error, and the means of misleading any." More objections occurred to his mind than any of his opponents brought up later. When years of research removed all doubt, fear of public speaking took its place. "I told the Lord I was diffident and had not the necessary qualifications."

Miller filled an increasingly active role in his local church. He paid ever closer attention to the conversion of sinners. And he shared his convictions about the coming of Christ with acquaintances and correspondents. But nothing could satisfy the persistent inner call to preach. By

August 1831, after thirteen years of procrastination, the burden on his soul seemed suddenly insupportable.

"Go and tell it to the world.

"I have appointed you a watchman. Tell it to the world!"

He looked up from the Bible he was reading, deeply troubled by the call of God. Or was it a call of God? He must know beyond a doubt.

He pounded his fist on his desk. Stood up. Knelt down. And prayed, "No, God. No! Thou knowest that I cannot preach. I cannot preach.

"But perhaps it is Thy will for me to go.

"O Lord, I will enter into a covenant with Thee. If Thou wilt open the way; I mean, if Thou will send an invitation for me to preach, why, then, O God, I'll go."

He settled into his chair at ease. "Now," he mused, "I shall have peace, for if I receive an invitation, I know that God will attend me. But it isn't very likely," and he smiled contentedly, "that anyone will ask a fifty-year old farmer like myself to preach on the second coming of the Lord."

Within thirty minutes a loud knocking at the door aroused him.

"Who can that be, so excited on a Saturday morning?" he asked himself absentmindedly.

The knocking came again. "I had better go and see."

"Good morning to you, Uncle William," the boy at the door cried cheerily.

"Nephew Irving!" exclaimed Miller. "And what might you be doing sixteen miles from home so early in the morning?"

"Uncle William, I left before breakfast to tell

you that our Baptist minister in Dresden is unable to speak at services tomorrow. Father sent me to make a request of you. He wants you to come and talk to us about the things you've been studying in the Bible. About the second coming of Christ. You know.

"Will you come?"

Notes:

1. The story of William Miller and the great Second Advent awakening has been told and retold many times by the Advent Shield, by Miller himself, by former Millerite Adventists such as Sylvester Bliss, Isaac C. Wellcome, Joseph Bates, and James White; and by J. N. Loughborough, M. Ellsworth Olsen, Everett N. Dick. F. D. Nichol. LeRoy Edwin Froom, Arthur Whitefield Spalding, Whitney R. Cross. Jerome Clark, David Tallmadge Arthur, and others. Letters, publications, and other primary source materials are preserved in the Orrin Roe Jenks Memorial Collection of Adventual

Materials, Aurora College Library, Aurora, Illinois; in the Heritage Room, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan; in the Ellen G. White Estate; in various other libraries; and (microform) in Vern Carner, ed., The Millerites and Early Adventists (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, forthcoming)

2. Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of the American People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 398
3. In Sylvester Bliss, Memoirs of William Miller (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853), p. 47
4. Bliss, Memoirs, pp. 6 ff, says that Miller was assigned to read a sermon called, "Importance of Parental Duties," from "Proudfoot's Practical Sermons," This seems to be a slip of memory for "The Duty of Parents to Their Children," in Alexander Proudfit, Practical Godliness in Thirteen Discourses (Salem, 1813)
5. The story of Miller's conversion and call is told by himself in his Apology and Defence (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1845)

Chapter 2

The Great Second Advent Awakening

Miller turned on his heel without a word, stormed out through the kitchen door, tumbled into a maple grove that stood nearby, and wrestled with the Lord. He was angry with himself, angry with God, and very much afraid.

For a solid hour he pleaded to be released from his pledge. "O my God, send someone else, I pray!"

Even as a Deist he had kept his word. As a Christian could he do any less? After anguished tears, he gave in to God at last.

Then, the happiness that filled his soul! Thirteen years of reluctance overcome. The joy of surrender! Glory to His name! In a most unaccustomed manner, he hopped up and down,

praising God out loud.

Lucy Ann, his littlest daughter, watching anxiously, fled into the house. "Mother, Mother, come quick!"

Immediately after lunch Miller was on his way with Irving around the neck of Lake Champlain (by whose shores years before he had fought in the Battle of Plattsburg), on to his sister's place in Dresden--and to success. To put him at ease, the meeting convened in the kitchen with Miller seated at the table in a big arm chair. The great Second Advent awakening in America had begun! [1]

So impressive was his deep Bible knowledge, so moving were his homely earnest appeals, that the people in Dresden persuaded him to preach every night for a week. Reports spread from farm to farm. Attendance grew. More than a dozen families were converted to Christ. No doubt they had moved out of the Guildford home into a church.

And when he returned home? An invitation awaited him from a minister who had not yet heard about his first series. Miller's covenant with the Lord was doubly verified. There is no doubt that he was called to his ministry. As surely as Peter, James, and John were called. With the same clarity; by the same Lord.

Right from the start Miller received more invitations than he could fill. Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians vied with each other to draw him away from his farm and into their pulpits. To help stanch the demand he published a pamphlet of his sermons at his own expense. When this only increased the demand by widening people's awareness of his work, a printer published a book of his sermons at his expense.

In 1833 a local Baptist who knew Miller well signed a license for him to preach. Two years later, a certificate recommending him as a lecturer on the prophecies was signed by several Baptist ministers and a number of leaders in other denominations. [2]

Almost everywhere Miller preached, people were converted. Often there were revivals; sometimes whole towns were transformed. "You laugh, Brother Hendryx," he wrote a friend early in his new career, "to think old Brother Miller is preaching! But laugh on; ... it is all right--I deserve it. If I could preach the truth, it is all I could ask."

In those days every village had its infidel; some small communities swarmed with them. Infidels were like Deists but with more radical doubts. In Miller they recognized a man who had asked their questions, and who had answered them. In one place a hundred infidels accepted his message in a single week. [3] Near the end of his life Miller reckoned that he had preached in no fewer than 500 towns from Massachusetts to Michigan, from Montreal to Maryland, in many of them several times, and that he had personally aided in the conversion of over 6000 souls. [4] But we are getting ahead of our story.

For his first eight years, Miller, who made it a

rule to go only where the Lord "opened the way," was kept immensely busy in small churches in little towns. In the fall of 1839 at the close of a service in Exeter, New Hampshire, he met a man who changed the course of his career.

Joshua V. Himes [5] at the age of thirty-four was already widely known in New England as an ardent crusader against slavery, liquor, and war. Seeking in every way to make the world a better place to live, he was deeply moved as he listened to Miller's message on the 2300 days. As soon as the meeting was over, Himes stepped up briskly and invited Miller to repeat the sermon in his chapel on Chardon Street in Boston.

Thus on December 8, 1839, Miller presented his first series in a major city. Interest was so great that meetings were scheduled twice a day, yet hundreds had to be turned away for lack of space.

Himes was impressed. Always a commander in search of troops and a cause, he saw in Miller's appeal to prepare for the earth made new the cause

to end all causes. [6]

"Do you really believe what you have been preaching to us?" he asked Miller one night at his home.

Deliberately and earnestly Miller replied, "I most certainly do, Brother Himes, or I would not be preaching it."

"Then what are you doing to spread it through the world?"

Miller recounted his attempts to reach every town and village that sent him an invitation. Himes was aghast. Every little town and village? What about the cities? Must Baltimore, Rochester, Philadelphia, and New York--indeed, the seventeen million people of the United States--go unwarned? And what of the rest of the world? "If Christ is to come in a few years as you believe," he exploded, "there is no time to lose in sending out the message in thunder tones to arouse them to prepare!"

"I know it, I know it, Brother Himes," Miller replied wearily, "but what can an old farmer do? I was never used to public speaking. I stand quite alone." He sighed. "The ministers like to have me preach and build up their congregations, and there it ends, with most of them as yet. I have been looking for help."

Himes was on fire. Forthwith (he said later) he laid himself, his family, his reputation, and all he had upon the altar of God to help Miller to the limits of his powers until the end. At once he became Miller's manager, advertising agent, and consecrated promotion specialist.

"Will you enter the cities if you get an invitation?"

"Indeed I will, God helping me."

"Then, Father Miller, prepare for the campaign. Doors will open in every city in the union, and the warning will be spread to the ends of the earth." ("Father" was used in those days as a token of

affection and respect for elderly men.)

Himes made good his promise and his prophecy. Soon Miller was holding forth in the most important cities of the country, and his name was famous throughout the nation.

One way Himes got Miller into the larger cities was by persuading the pastors of his own denomination, the Christian Connection, to open up their pulpits to him. One of these ministers was Lorenzo Dow Fleming of Portland, Maine. In Fleming's Casco Street Church Miller's message reached the Robert Harmon family; and thus their teenager, Ellen, a future founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, committed her life to the advent hope.

Himes made many dynamic contributions. Perhaps his greatest was through publications. In February 1840, without money or subscription list, he launched the first Adventist periodical, Signs of the Times. It catapulted Adventism into prominence.

For a while Himes edited the Signs himself. As the movement spread, he got others to stay at the office while he started other journals in other cities or encouraged men of talent to publish papers of their own. Within four years the advent message was proclaimed in different cities by the Midnight Cry, the Glad Tidings, the Advent Chronicle, the Jubilee Trumpet, the Philadelphia Alarm, the Voice of Elijah, the Southern Midnight Cry, the Western Midnight Cry, the True Midnight Cry, and several others--most of them clearly written, ably edited, and well printed on good paper. There were books too, a series of more than forty known as "The Second Advent Library." Before the great disappointment of October 22, 1844, eight million copies of Adventist literature found the people and spread the word.

Magazine subscriptions were normally handled in those days by postmasters. The postmaster in Canton, Iowa, reported that when the Millerite papers arrived there was a "general rush" for any extra copies. Can you send me more? He pleaded.

"You have no idea of the good" they do. [7]

Miller's message was not a "lot of fuss about a date." It was the first angel's message: "the everlasting gospel" and "the hour of his judgment is come." (Revelation 14:6, 7) It was evangelism that sought to help get people ready to meet the Lord. Through it the Methodist churches appear to have gained 40,000 new members by the fall of 1844, and the Baptist 45,000. [8] A single six-week itinerary, by one young Millerite minister, swelled local churches by a thousand! [9]

In Portland, Maine, when Miller was there, a dissolute youth ran breathless into a saloon and shouted to his friends, "Boys, there's a preacher on Casco Street who says the world is coming to an end. Won't you stop your gambling and hear what he has to say?" In Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the revival continued for weeks after Miller left. Church bells rang every day for prayer as if every day were Sunday. Grog shops became meeting rooms. Several hundred were converted, and thousands gathered at the water's edge to see them

baptized.

Ministers of many denominations flocked in to help with the work.

Joshua V. Himes was only one of these. Other notable leaders who joined Miller included Josiah Litch, a Methodist who had already become widely known as an interpreter of the prophecies and who accepted Millerism only after he was sure it did not disagree with Methodism. He preached widely, published a 200-page book on Miller's lectures, and, among other things, helped persuade Charles Fitch to join too. Fitch was a Congregationalist pastor in Boston, who at one time had been an executive assistant to the famous evangelist Charles G. Finney. With the aid of Apollos Hale, a well-known Methodist, he developed the "1843 Chart," which probably all the lecturers used, showing many Bible prophecies converging on 1843. He also designed a Daniel 2 image that came apart, kingdom by kingdom.

Besides these outstanding leaders there were

many more. We think of James White, like Himes a minister of the Christian Connection; and of Joseph Bates, also a member of that denomination, a layman who was regarded as a minister. But no one knows how many helpers there were! Contemporary estimates ran from 700 to 2000. Of 174 known ministers, about half were Methodist, a fourth were Baptist, and the rest included Congregationalists, Christians, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Dutch Reformed, Quakers, and several others.

It cannot be overstressed that Miller was not the only leading Millerite! A large company of able, thinking men from the major denominations supported him, not a few of whom had been blessed with considerable academic training. It was an impressive testimonial for the "old farmer." Millerism was a Christ-centered reformation that was warmly accepted by many, both laymen and leaders, in the respected churches of the day, and by thousands of infidels, deists, and indifferent souls in the restless world outside.

Ever wider grew the interest until Miller, Himes, and other leaders were circulating almost incessantly between New York and Boston, Albany and Utica, Rochester and Buffalo, up north to Montreal, out west to Cincinnati, Saint Louis, and Louisville, and down south to Washington and Baltimore. Robert Winters took the word to England. The mails carried it to every post office in the United States and to every known mission station around the world. [10]

In Washington, D.C., even a hoax announcement brought out 5000. In Philadelphia the secular press reported an "immense" Adventist crowd of 15,000.

The presence in the Millerite movement of many leaders from many different churches made workers' conferences essential. Beginning in the fall of 1840, more than twenty [11] "general conferences" were convened in a variety of places, sometimes at the rate of two or three a month.

The first general conference was held in Joshua

V. Himes's Chardon Street Chapel in October. A bout of typhoid fever kept Miller away and the meeting was held successfully without him, as were also the second, third, and fourth. (The fifth conference was brought to Low Hampton so he could attend.) Disappointed at having to stay away, Miller began to understand that the movement he had started at the call of God was growing far beyond him, in the power of God.

General conferences were held in the form of great public rallies. As attendance at these and other Millerite meetings soared, the conference held in Boston under Joseph Bates's leadership in May 1842 voted to try holding camp meetings and scheduled three for the summer.

The camp meeting which began on June 28 at East Kingston, New Hampshire, found Joshua V. Himes in charge and seven to ten thousand persons on the grounds. The Boston Daily Mail covered the event and congratulated the crowds on their decorum. Even the poet John Greenleaf Whittier dropped in for an hour or two. Years later he still

remembered the eloquent preachers burdened with the symbolic language of the Bible, the canvas paintings Nebuchadnezzar's image and the beasts of Revelation--and the dim woodland arches, the white circle of tents, the smoke from the campfires rising like incense, and the upturned, earnest faces.

Soon camp meetings were being held in many places, often summoned by local volunteer committees. Men, women, and children flocked in from every direction, crowding steamboats, overflowing railroad cars, and jamming stagecoaches; pedestrians trudged in from every side road, as one and all, the pious and the curious, made their way to the important meetings at the Second Advent campground. It seemed that almost every believer carried a Bible in his hand. [12]

The overwhelming success of the camp meetings led the Millerites to contribute means for a tent big enough for large crowds in communities where camp meetings were impossible and halls were too small. They ordered the largest tent made in America up to that time and dubbed it the "great

tent." It required a permanent team of four to pitch and strike it. Its center pole was 55 feet, its diameter 120 feet, and there was room inside for 4000. [13]

The great tent was ordered, pitched, and in use within thirty days. There was no time to lose if Christ was coming "about the year 1843." Newspapers were astonished at the speed with which it was dismantled, transported by wagon, steamboat, or train, and raised in another town. When it was pitched, people wagered that it wouldn't fill. When meetings began, they were stunned to see it jammed. Railroads scheduled special trains to accommodate the crowds.

In Rochester a sudden squall snapped fifteen chains and settled the great tent--gently--onto the heads of the people. Citizens in appreciation raised cash to repair it, on condition that the series be continued. Meanwhile, on Sunday Himes preached in the city market to three groups for eight hours.

Adventists attended their own churches on

Sundays but met frequently in interdenominational conferences and prayer meetings during the week. Soon in Boston, Akron, CinCinnati, and Cleveland, they constructed sturdy but economical "tabernacles" seating thousands. When scoffers said that the buildings denied their faith in Christ's soon return, the believers quoted Jesus: Occupy till I come."

The May 1842 general conference had voted three camp meetings that year. Thirty-one were held. In 1843, forty. In 1844, fifty-four, a total of 125. Total attendance, at least half a million, besides thousands and thousands who attended other gatherings in the "great tent" and in churches, tabernacles, and rented halls.

God wanted the first angel's message preached to "every kindred, and tongue, and people." He called Miller to "tell it to the world." He did not want it confined to a corner!

Notes:

1. See Arthur Whitefield Spalding, Pioneer Stories of the Advent Message, rev. ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1942), pp. 40-49. Spalding claims to base his details on a conversation with an eyewitness
2. Miller, Apology, pp. 19, 20
3. See James White, Sketches of the Christian Life and Public Labors of William Miller (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1875), pp. 111, 112
4. Miller, Apology, pp. 22, 23
5. The best biography now of Himes is David Tallmadge Arthur, "Joshua V. Himes and the Cause of Adventism, 1839-1845" (master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1961).
6. The characterizations are from Arthur, "Joshua V. Himes," pp. 168, 51
7. Midnight Cry, May 25, 1843. p. 74
8. Everett N. Dick arrived at these figures by comparing the growth of the Methodists and Baptists in the early 1840s with their normal growth curve and with the decline which they

suffered immediately after 1844. He concluded cautiously that those who fell away had been influenced by Millerism. The evidence is striking. See Dick, "William Miller and the Advent Crisis, 1831-1844" (doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1930), pp. 263, 264.

9. The young minister was James White. See his Life Incidents, in Connection With the Great Advent Movement, as Illustrated by the Three Angels of Revelation XIV (Battle Creek, Mich.) Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1868), p. 96
10. Midnight Cry, August 24,1843, p. 1
11. See Arthur, "Joshua V. Himes," pp. 61, 62. Arthur disagrees with the 16 counted by LeRoy Edwin Froom and thinks he can find between 23 and 26. See Froom, Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946-1954), vol. 4, p. 555
12. See Joseph Bates, Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps (New Bedford, Mass.: Press of Benjamin Lindsey, 1847), pp. 11, 12

13. It may be that the Adventists didn't have to pay for the great tent. In 1892 Loughborough wrote that E. C. Williams of Rochester, New York, told him in the 1850s that he presented the tent to Miller as a gift. But there are difficulties in the details of the account. See J. N. Loughborough, Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists (Battle Creek, Mich.: General Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, 1892), p. 41

Chapter 3

The Tarrying Time

Not everyone, of course, agreed with William Miller or took him seriously. Some said he was out for money. A legislator introduced a bill to postpone the end of the world till 1860. A spoof offered reserved seats on an escape balloon at $200. An advertisement announced, "The Time Has Come"--the time, that is, to take "Winstar's Balsam of Wild Cherry." A cartoon portrayed the "Grand Ascension of the Miller Tabernacle" while the devil grabbed Himes and yelled, "Joshua V., you must stay with me."

Optimism prevailed in America when Miller began to preach, and, to many minds, talk about the approaching end of the world came as a new thought. Jacksonian democracy seemed to herald the ultimate perfection of the human race, and so did the multiplication of missionary societies, Bible societies, and Sunday Schools. Almost incredible inventions added evidence that the world stood on

the threshold of a golden age.

Traveling by steamboat down the Hudson River on his way to an appointment in the spring of 1833, William Miller overheard a group of men marvelling over the developments of recent years. Gas lights! Cotton gins! Canned foods! Photography! McCormick's reaper! Steam trains! Even the throbbing, splashing, smoke-belching steamboat they were sailing on.

"Things can't go on like this," one of the men remarked in awe, "or in thirty years man will become more than human."

Miller moved in close. "Sirs," he observed, "these inventions remind me of Daniel 12:4. In the last days, 'many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' "Seeing they were interested, he gave them a survey of history in the light of the prophecies of Daniel 11 and 12. Then abruptly he caught himself. "I did not mean, gentlemen, to trespass so long on your patience."

But as he walked to the opposite end of the boat, the entire group followed and asked for more. There upon he taught them the whole book of Daniel--head of gold, little horn, 2300 days, virtually everything from the four kingdoms to the judgment and the second coming. "Have you written this up?" they asked; and when he produced printed copies of his sermons, they grabbed every one he had. [1]

Whether Miller's fellow travelers ultimately accepted his doctrine, most contemporary ministers and theologians did not. Led instead by the fantastic "postmillenialism" popularized by Daniel Whitby, they pointed to the inventions and missionary developments around them and said, "Look, the world is getting better and better. The second coming of Christ is even now taking place, spiritually, in the hearts of the people. We are at the commencement of a thousand years of peace!"

Surprising as it may seem, not a few of these ministers believed more or less in the 2300 days. Some of them said that the new age would actually

begin in the 1840s. The Reverend George Bush, professor of Hebrew and Oriental literature at New York City University, was typical of many. Admitting that Miller's understanding of the 2300 days was essentially correct, he nonetheless insisted that "the great event before the world is not its physical conflagration, but its moral regeneration." [2]

Miller replied by quoting Scripture: "In the last days," he said "evil men ... shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:1, 13); but not every minister wanted to hear such Scripture. As time progressed, these began to oppose Miller vigorously in their pulpits. Other men opposed in other ways.

Phrenology was popular in the 1840s. It claimed that a person's character could be read from the shape of his head, and it was quite the thing in those days to go and have one's head examined. In March 1842, when Miller was preaching in Medford, Massachusetts, not far from Boston, a Christian who had adopted Adventist

views persuaded Miller to visit a phrenologist friend of his, hoping, no doubt, to convert him. The phrenologist, who had no use for Adventism, had never met Miller and did not recognize him.

"Ah, here is a well-balanced, well-developed head," he remarked as he ran his practiced fingers over Miller's skull. "I'll tell you, sir, Mr. Miller would have a hard time making a convert out of this man!" Stepping forward and looking into Miller's face, he remarked, "You have far too much common sense to swallow Mr. Miller's hare-brained nonsense!"

The phrenologist continued, making a series of salty comparisons between the head he was examining and the head of Miller as he assumed it to be. "Oh, how I would like to examine Mr. Miller's head," he sighed to the men seated in the row of chairs along the wall. "I would surely give it a squeezing!" Then placing his hand over the "lobe of fanaticism," he chortled, "I'll bet you anything that old William Miller has a bump of fanaticism on his head as big that as my fist."

As the phrenologist doubled up his fist by way of illustration, the row of hangers-on laughed merrily with him, slapped their thighs, and felt one another's heads, making fists of their own in imitation of the doctor's. The phrenologist laughed loudest of all.

The examination completed, the phrenologist asked politely, "Sir, may I have your name, please, to write on your chart?" "Oh," replied Miller with compassion, "my name's of no consequence. Let it pass."

"But sir, I really would like to attach a name to so splendid a head as yours. Besides, I need it for my records."

"Very well," conceded the examinee reluctantly, "you may call it Miller, if you choose."

"Miller? Miller?" stuttered the phrenologist. "But what, may I ask, is your first name?"

"They call me William Miller."

"The gentleman who lectures on the prophecies?"

"The very one."

Whereupon the phrenologist settled down into his chair, trembling with astonishment and dismay. [3]

But if some of the people opposed Miller and some made fun of him, others, though disagreeing with him, stoutly defended his honesty. And there were a great many--farmers, housewives, factory workers, educated people--who, though they did not want to believe him, nonetheless felt uneasy.

Eye witness reports of mysterious phenomena cluttered the newspapers. Jupiter circled with a halo. A horse and its rider on the moon. A black cross on a bloody moon. Singing in the sky. People walking in the heavens. Three angels crying, "Woe, Woe, Woe."

Not all these strange phenomena were reported by the Millerites. With their eyes on Scripture, they scarcely noticed them! Unbelievers reported them and published them widely in the press.

In 1833, two years after Miller began to preach, the stars fell like snowflakes. Now, in the chill twilight of late February 1843, there appeared unannounced in the southwestern sky a flaming comet. Visible in daylight. A messenger from outer space. The eye of doom. Even skeptics trembled. [4]

Notes:

1. Adapted from Bliss, Memoirs, p. 106
2. George Bush, Reasons for Rejecting Mr. Miller's Views on the Advent, with Mr., Miller's Reply (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, April 15, 1844), p. 11
3. Adapted from Midnight Cry, November 23, 1843, p. 2. Reprinted without adaptation in Francis D. Nichol, The Midnight Cry

(Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1944), pp. 98, 99

4. William Miller, Evidence From Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, About the Year 1843; Exhibited in a Course of Lectures (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1842), pp. 174, 175

Chapter 4

The Midnight Cry

At an unforgettable camp meeting at Exeter, New Hampshire, in August 1844, the cry at midnight was heard at last. [1]

Former sea captain Joseph Bates, a man who had invested his fortune in the cause, was half-heartedly exhorting the Millerites to hold on and encouraging them with allusions to his old seafaring days.

The congregation fidgeted in the sultry heat, uncomfortable, and unconvinced. When a rider appeared on horseback, dismounted, and took his seat at the end of a pew, everyone turned to watch. Those who were closest engaged him in spirited conversation. But Joseph Bates droned on.

Suddenly Mrs. John Couch stood determinedly to her feet. She was sister to Samuel Snow, the rider who had just arrived. She spoke courteously

but with conviction.

"Brother Bates! It is too late to spend our time upon these truths with which we are familiar. Time is short. The Lord has servants here who have meat in due season for His household. Let them speak, and let the people hear them."

As she spoke, an eyewitness reports, the Spirit of the Lord moved over the assembly like a breeze rippling a becalmed lake. Hungry cries of, "Amen, Sister; yes, yes," rose all around. Here and there men and women broke into spontaneous tears, anticipating an answer to their prayers.

Bates gallantly relinquished the pulpit. "If Brother Snow has truth for us from the Lord, let him come and deliver his message." On the train to Exeter he had been impressed that just such a development would take place.

Snow was ready; but it was agreed to give him the freshness of the early morning meeting.

"Our blessed Lord has promised that He will come again and receive His people unto Himself," Snow reminded his thousands of listeners gathered in the cool air the following morning. [2]

"As to the time of His return, Jesus told the disciples that 'that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.' (Mark 13:32) It is thought by many," Snow continued, "that this passage proves that men will ever know the time. But if it proves that, it likewise proves that the Son will never know the time, for it makes the same statement about the Son that it does concerning men and angels! But if this verse does not prove that Christ will never know the time of His return, it does not prove either that men and angels will never know!

"When Jesus came the first time," Snow went on, "He came on time and He had a message about time. He declared, 'The time is fulfilled.' (Mark 1:15) I ask you, brethren an sisters, what time was fulfilled?"

"Prophetic time," replied the crowd. "The sixty-ninth of Daniel's seventy weeks."

"Right, right," Snow encouraged them. "We all know the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9 about the 2300 year-days and about the seventy weeks of years that were 'determined (or 'cut off') from them. And it has been common among us to carry the 2300 years down to 'about the year 1843.'

"But we have overlooked some things! We have said that the 2300 years began in the spring of 457 BC and ended in the spring of 1844, but the 2300 years were not to commence with the beginning of the year but with the 'going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.' (Daniel 9:25) Now Ezra 7:8 tells us that this decree did not reach Jerusalem until the fifth month of the year! My brethren, if Bible years began and ended in the spring, and if the decree did not go into effect until five months after the beginning of the year, must not the 2300 years extend at least five months beyond the beginning of spring?"

"Amen." "That's right." "Indeed they must," responded the people.

"Then we were wrong to expect Christ's return in the spring of 1844!"

"Yes, yes! Thank God!"

"The next truth which bears on the time of Christ's return"?--Snow advanced in his argument with eager assurance--" is a fuller understanding of the spring and autumn types in the law of Moses.

"The principal festival of the spring ceremonies was the Passover, held in the 'first month' of the Bible year. The principal festival of the autumn ceremonies was the Day of Atonement, in the 'seventh month' of the year. Now, what day was it on which Jesus died on the cross?"

"The Passover," replied the crowd, intently following him.

"Correct! 'Christ our Passover' was crucified for us (1 Corinthians 5:7) in the first month, in the spring of the year, on the very day when the Passover lamb was slain. But that is not all. At what time of day was the Passover lamb slain?"

"In the evening," the people replied.

"Yes; more precisely, 'between the evenings' as the Hebrew has it; not at sundown, but at midafternoon. Tell me, at what hour did Christ our Passover yield up His life for us?"

"At three o'clock," came the response.

Referring to the ancient Jewish historian Josephus and to the able chronologist William Hales, Snow established the date of Christ's death as the spring of AD 31, in the midst of Daniel's seventieth week of years. "I declare to you, brethren, from the Word of God, that when Jesus came the first time, He died as our Passover Lamb in the very year foretold in Daniel's prophecy and on the very day prescribed in the ceremonial law--

in fact, at the very hour prescribed in that law. Not one point of the law failed. Every jot and tittle was fulfilled. Time was most strictly regarded!

"Now, brethren, just as the Passover was the principal spring type, so the Day of Atonement was the principal autumn type. And what did the high priest do on the Day of Atonement?"

"He cleansed the sanctuary."

"Yes, indeed! And what work will Jesus complete at the end of the 2300 year-days of Daniel 8:14?"

"The cleansing of the sanctuary!" came back the crowd again.

"Exactly! Now if time was most strictly regarded when Jesus died as our Passover sacrifice, does it not follow that time will be just as strictly regarded when our High Priest fulfills the cleansing of the sanctuary? Is it not clear that Jesus will fulfill the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 not only in the

year of Daniel 8 but, more precisely, on the exact date of the Day of Atonement?"

The Millerites looked at their Bibles, at Snow, at each other, in amazement and in deep gratitude.

Snow continued, driving his point home. "And when, brethren, does the Day of Atonement fall in the Bible ceremonial calendar?"

"On the tenth day of the seventh month," they replied, almost in unison.

"Right again! Leviticus 23:27 says, 'On the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement.' Brethren, if the type of the cleansing came on the tenth day of the seventh month, when in the antitype will Jesus complete the cleansing of the sanctuary?" His eagerness was overwhelming.

And the crowd rolled back its reply: "On the tenth day of the seventh month."

Snow paused and drew a breath before

delivering his final evidence. "By the most careful reckoning preserved in the Lord's providence by the Karaite Jews, the tenth day of the seventh month falls this year on October 22."

He paused; then he launched his climactic appeal.

"Brethren, think of it. It is now the second week in August. In less than three months the Lord will complete the atonement and come out of the sanctuary to bless His waiting people. (Leviticus 9:22, 23) In less than three months the work of God will be completed. Never another winter on this cold, old earth. In less than three months the Bridegroom will be here to take His waiting bride. Is it not time now for the midnight cry, the midnight cry, 'Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him'?"

Tears of gratitude and joy flowed freely. Snow was asked to repeat his discourse the following day so all could make certain they understood. Other leaders exhorted the people to use well the limited

number of days that remained.

Solemn, humble, but electrified, the believers took to the trains, steamboats, and wagons as they made their ways back home. Everywhere they carried the tidings. Camp meeting after camp meeting witnessed the same quiet but thrilling response.

The granite hills of New England soon rang with the "midnight cry." With almost irresistible power it leaped on the wings of the wind from one part of the land to another. From Canada to Maryland, from the Atlantic to the Middle West, simultaneously and almost unanimously, the "seventh-month movement" spread until every city, village, and hamlet heard the news. Himes challenged it, but then took his stand, assured that God was in it. William Miller studied it meticulously, prayed over it intensely, and then wrote about it joyously: "I see a glory in the 'seventh month' which I never saw before. I am almost home. Glory! Glory! Glory!"

October 22! Only days until the end.

What a time to be alive!

As the last days of time run out, Adventist businessmen close their stores; mechanics lock their shops; employees give up their jobs. At the camp meetings, scores confess their faults and flock forward for prayers. Large sums are donated so the poor can settle their debts and so the papers can be published--until the publishers say they can use no more, and would-be donors turn away in grief.

In the country some farmers abandon their harvest to prove their faith. Potatoes remain in the ground, [3] apples rot in the orchards, hay falls down in the fields. In the cities people--many school teachers, several justices of the peace, even a Norfolk magistrate--resign their posts.

In Philadelphia a tailor on Fifth Street closes his shop "in honor of the King of kings who will appear about the twenty-second of October." A

large concern in Brooklyn discharges its employees. Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians hasten to the waters of baptism.

Steam presses run night and day turning out the Midnight Cry and other papers. Hundreds of thousands of copies are published in New York and Boston in the last three weeks. Besides other thousands in Rochester, Topsham, Philadelphia, Lancaster, Utica, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Detroit, and Toronto.

Anticipation. Publication. Preparation. Consecration. The climax at the close.

October 15, seven days to go. October 16, six days. October 17. October 18. October 19.

On October 19 the presses stopped running. The great tent had already been rolled up for the last time. The speakers had returned to their homes to be with their families. Joshua V. Himes hurried to Low Hampton to be with Miller.

Within the movement the believers waited with joyous longing. Teen-ager Ellen Harmon later wrote, "This was the happiest year of my life. My heart was full of glad expectation." [4]

Outside, the world waited in suspense. Thousands who had never joined the movement searched their hearts for fear it might be true.

October 20. October 21. October 22, 1844.

As October 22 dawned, Millerites collected in companies large and small; in their tabernacles, in churches, in meeting tents, in private homes; in meetings solemn with prayer arid joyous with praise. At Low Hampton, New York, Miller's friends gathered by the maple grove beside his house, on what are known today as the Ascension Rocks. They watched all day, for they knew not what hour their Lord doth come.

The sun arose in the east, as "a bridegroom coming out of his chamber." But the Bridegroom did not appear.

It stood at the meridian, warm and lifegiving "with healing in his wings." But the Sun of Righteousness failed to shine forth.

It set in the west, blazing, fierce, "terrible as an army with banners." But He that sat upon the white horse did not return as the leader of the hosts of heaven.

Evening shadows stretched still and cool across the land. The hours of night ticked slowly past. In disconsolate Millerite homes, clocks tolled twelve at midnight. October 22 had ended. Jesus hadn't come. He hadn't come!

Notes:

1. The story is well told in James White, Life Incidents, pp, 153-168
2. Snow's studies in Exeter climaxed a development that had been emerging in so many ways and places that the Millerites considered it supernatural. See J. N.

Loughborough, The Great Second Advent Movement (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1905), pp. 157-159. Snow's presentation as given here is adapted from his own articles in the True Midnight Cry and in the Advent Review and Signs of the Times Reporter, October 16, 1844, and from James White, Life Incidents, pp. 159-168, and Joseph Bates, Second Advent Way Marks, pp. 30, 31

3. Heaven watched over the potatoes. In one instance in New Ipswich, New Hampshire, a blight affected the potatoes dug at the usual time, but the potatoes dug late by Leonard Hastings were protected in the soil and sold for an extra-good price.
4. Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1885-1909, 1948), vol. 1, p. 54

Chapter 5

"Why Didn't Daddy Come?"

Ardent Millerite Charles Fitch was not disappointed. He had already died--eight days before--on October 14, 1844. He was thirty-eight years old, the father of six.

Fitch, you remember, was the Millerite minister (Congregational) who designed the Daniel 2 image that could be taken apart, and the "1843 Chart."

Fitch joined the advent movement twice. In 1838 he was one of the first ministers to take a public stand on Miller's side. He admired Miller's prophetic interpretations; but when he saw that opposition would deprive him of his fashionable church in Boston, he backed away. Shortly after, however, when he moved to a parish in New jersey, he discovered Jesus as a true, personal Saviour. Then he gladly sacrificed his congregation in order to bring the good news about Christ and His righteousness to many other congregations. His

affectionate letters to his wife, written while traveling, show how naturally he mingled love for people with love for Jesus.

When Josiah Litch now called Fitch's attention to Miller's lectures for a second time, Fitch saw in the 2300 days a beautiful message about the return of his wonderful Lord, and he threw himself into its proclamation heart and soul. The tragic death of four of his six children heightened his longing for the second coming.

Not long before October 22, 1844, Fitch baptized three successive groups of converts outdoors on a chilly day. Apparently as a result, he fell ill and, on Monday, October 14, he died. [1]

The Millerite periodical, Midnight Cry, reported that "his widow and fatherless children are now at Cleveland, confidently expecting the coming of our Lord to gather the scattered members of the family" in a few days. "Sister Fitch is ... smiling and happy." [2]

It is not hard to imagine the two surviving children asking through their tears after the funeral, "Mother, will we see Daddy again?"

"Yes, dears," Mrs. Fitch replies bravely. "In just a few days, when Jesus comes back, He'll wake up Daddy, and your sleeping brothers and sisters too, and then we'll be a whole, happy family again, forever!"

On Monday night, October 21, the children asked, "Mother, will we see Daddy again tomorrow?"

"Yes, dears!"

On Tuesday night they sobbed, "Why didn't Daddy come to-day?"

There were many families like that in those days. With children or young parents who had died of consumption, cholera, whooping cough, and other dread diseases, many anticipated a glad reunion when Jesus would come again. It is not

without reason that October 22, 1844, went down in history as the day of the "great disappointment."

Wrote James White years later, "When Elder Himes visited Portland, Maine, a few days after the passing of the time, and stated that the brethren should prepare for another cold winter, my feelings were almost uncontrollable. I left the place of meeting and wept like a child." [3]

In another town, seventy stunned Adventists stayed together in the large house where they had assembled to meet the Lord, encouraging one another to cast not away their confidence, and sharing expenses by putting all their remaining cash into a common milkpan. A Millerite leader successfully persuaded them to return home and resume a normal life. [4]

A good number of Millerites, however, could not easily adjust. They no longer owned homes to return to. They had sold their farms and donated the proceeds to the cause. In Paris, Maine, Edward Andrews invited the destitute Stowell family to

come and settle with him, an act of generosity which God amply rewarded, as we shall see in a later chapter.

Everywhere disappointed Millerites asked each other, "Where are we now? What have we misunderstood?"

Miller and the other leaders frankly admitted that they had made a mistake; but they were mystified by the crystal clear evidence that the "midnight cry" (that Christ would come on October 22) and the "seventh-month movement" (the eager spread of this message and the peoples' earnest response to it) had been marvellously blessed by God.

Himes spoke for Miller and for many others: "We have been mistaken in a belief to which we thought ourselves conducted by the word and Spirit, and Providence of God." In the seventh-month movement "there seemed to be an irresistible power ... which prostrated all before it." Its message "reached hearts in different and distant

places almost simultaneously, and in a manner which can be accounted for only on the supposition that God was in it. It produced everywhere the most deep searching of heart and humiliation of soul before the God of high heaven. It caused a weaning of affections from the things of this world--a healing of controversies and animosities--a confession of wrongs--a breaking down before God, and penitent broken-hearted supplications to Him for pardon and acceptance." "We could but exclaim, 'What were we, that we should resist Cod?' " [5]

"The great God has dealt wonderfully with us," wrote F. G. Brown, another prominent Adventist. "Our prejudices, education, tastes, both intellectual and moral, were all opposed to this doctrine of the Lord's coming. ... The Holy Ghost wrought ... in our inmost souls," till the second coming became "our hope, our joy, our all." "The Bible reads it, every page is full of the Lord's immediate coming." [6]

When Brown said that every page of the Bible

is full of the Lord's immediate coming, he exaggerated only slightly. The New Testament alone mentions it 300 times! Jesus promised, "If I go ... , I will come again." (John 14:3) Angels predicted, "This same Jesus ... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go." (Acts 1:11) Peter spoke of the time when "the chief Shepherd shall appear." (1 Peter 5:4) Paul said, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven." (1 Thessalonians 4:16) John stated plainly, "He cometh with clouds." (Revelation 1:7)

Even if the promise were nowhere explicit, it could be readily inferred from all the other things the Bible says about God. The loving, all-powerful God of the Bible will not leave wrong on earth's throne forever. Someday He will make a change!

Miller was unquestionably right in preaching the second coming. He was unquestionably right, too, when he urged people to get ready. Jesus said, "Wherefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh." (Matthew 24:44)

Emphasis on getting ready was so prominent in Miller's mind, that for him the time for Christ's return, though important, was secondary. "My whole object was a desire to convert souls to God," he wrote after the disappointment, "and to induce my fellow men to make that preparation of heart which will enable them to meet their God in peace." [7] On one of his early itineraries she poured out his burden for the folk back home. "O God do awaken the people of God in Hampton. ... Do, my Father, convert my children!" [8] Many of his neighbors did accept Christ; and as for his family, by 1843 he could rejoice, "I have a wife and eight children; I have great reason to believe they are all the children of God and believers in the same doctrine with myself." [9]

So much greater was Miller's emphasis on preparation of heart than on calculation of time, that when Jesus did not come on October 22, he could say in all honesty, "I wish to enquire whether my teachings have been materially affected" by the disappointment. [10] Miller was, of course, wrong

about the event that fulfilled the "cleansing of the sanctuary" at the end of the 2300 days; but he need not have been modest about his calculation of the time. His interpretation of the 2300 days as 2300 years was rooted in the concept (Ezekiel 4:6) that symbolic days in prophecy equal whole years. Many prophecies in the Bible contain similar symbolic language.

Women represent churches, animals represent empires, bodies of water represent people, and so on. Even Miller's vigorous opponents, like the Reverend George Bush, admitted to him that "in taking a day as the prophetical term for a year, ... you are sustained by the soundest exegesis, as well as fortified by the high names of Mede, Sir I. Newton, Bishop Newton, Kirby, Scott, Keith, and a host of others." [11]

In making this admission, Bush was right. The 2300 days had been recognized as 2300 years by many men before Miller, stretching back to Nahawendi in the early ninth century, nearly a thousand years before William Miller was born!

[12]

Martin Luther and a good many other Reformers believed in the year-day principle, as did Sir Isaac Newton, one of history's greatest scientists. Newton indeed studied theology and church history all his life and wrote more words (1,300,000) on these subjects than in the realm of science. [13] To his mathematical mind, the long-time prophecies held a special fascination.

In the eighteenth century a monumental discovery was made under God's direction by Johann Petri (1718-1792), a pastor in Germany of the Reformed Church. [14] Petri was the first (1768) to recognize that the 2300 days of Daniel 8 began at the same time as the seventy-week prophecy of Daniel 9, thus making it possible at last to calculate with some reliability when they would end.

The validity of Petri's argument--which does make good sense--is attested by the independent discovery of similar lines of reasoning by Hans

Wood in Ireland (1787), John A. Brown in England (1810), and W. C. Davis, a Presbyterian minister in South Carolina (1811) [15]--all before William Miller, a Baptist layman in New York, came to the same general conclusion independently in 1818. Depending on their starting points and the precision of their mathematics, all these men concluded that the 2300 days would close in the 1840s or (in the case of Hans Wood) in the 1880s.

Manuel de Lacunza, a Jesuit Priest; Joseph Wolffe, a Christian Jew; Henry Drummond, an English banker and member of parliament; William Cunningham; Heinrich Richter; Mortimer O'Sullivan; Louis Gaussen; William Pym; George Croly; Henry Manning; Alexander Keith; James A. Begg; George Stanley Faber; and a great many others in Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, South America, the Middle East, and (the largest number) in England wrote books, preached sermons, published journals, and held conferences in a second advent awakening that more or less paralleled Miller's second advent awakening in North America.

The European awakening did not have the unity of America's, and it did not discover the precise date, October 22, 1844; but by 1844 a large number of ministers, including 700 Anglican priests, [16] were proclaiming the second advent in stone churches and little chapels all over the English countryside, taking as their text the first angel's message, "The hour of his judgment is come." Thomas B. Macaulay, the famous historian and member of parliament, recorded in 1844 that the number of those who believed in an imminent return of Christ included men "distinguished by rank, wealth, and ability. ... Noblemen," he added, "and members of parliament have written in defence of it." [17]

Equally impressive in its own way was the appearance at this time of "child preachers" in Sweden. Beginning about 1841 and continuing till the summer of 1844, young people and even little children confidently called for reformation in preparation for the return of Christ.

By law, no adult could preach in Sweden without permission of the state church. To circumvent this, God called children. Even so, some were persecuted. Ole Boqvist, for example, was unmercifully thrashed in the presence of his sister, then unexpectedly released to carry on.

One very small girl regularly played with her toys while neighbors gathered in her home. Then she preached with authority for an hour or so, afterward returning to her dolls.

Dr. Sven Erik Sköldberg, a government medical officer for thirty years, examined the "preaching sickness," as its enemies called it, and reported that some of the children preached lying down with their eyes closed, unconscious, and apparently not breathing. Lis Andersdotter, Mary Swensdotter, and perhaps other teen-agers, if their lips and nostrils were compressed while they were singing, continued to hum the melody. Dr. Sköldberg reported that the children proclaimed the essentials of Christianity--Christ, prayer, repentance, and conversion--but he offered no

explanation of their physical manifestations. When the children were asked to provide their own explanation, they quoted Joel 2:28, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."

And what was the theme of their message? Basically the same as Miller's and the English Adventists', the first angel's message of Revelation 14: "The hour of his judgment is come." [18]

Whatever the reason may have been why "Daddy didn't come" to the Charles Fitch family on October 22, 1844, it was not that Miller had invented a harebrained theory based on interpretations peculiar to himself. His message was in most of its essentials absolutely right. And it was part of the great Second Advent awakening--an intercontinental, interdenominational movement which proclaimed a grand prophetic truth whose time had come.

Notes:

1. Arthur Whitefield Spalding, Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1961), vol. 1, p. 113, note 4; Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (hereafter, SDA Encyclopedia), art, "Fitch, Charles."
2. Midnight Cry, October 31, 1844, p. 142.
3. James White, Life Incidents, p. 182
4. Luther Boutelle, Sketch of the Life and Religious Experience of Elder Luther Boutelle ([Boston]: Advent Christian Publishing Society, 1891), pp. 68, 69, in Arthur, "Joshua V. Himes," pp. 146, 147
5. Midnight Cry, October 31, 1844, p. 140
6. Letter of November 11, to Advent Herald
7. Miller, Apology, p. 24
8. William Miller to his son William, November 17, 1838, in Nichol, The Midnight Cry, pp. 65, 66
9. William Miller, February 4, 1843, to Signs of the Times, in Bliss, Memoirs, pp. 180,181

10. Miller, Apology, p. 34
11. Rush, Reasons for Rejecting, p. 6
12. Nahawendi began the 2300 years in 942 BC with the destruction of the tabernacle at Shilohand ended it at the projected coming of the Messiah in AD 1358. See Froom, Prophetic Faith, vol.1, p. 713; Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 54
13. H. McLachlan, ed., Sir Isaac Newton: Theological Manuscripts (Liverpool: University Press, 1950), pp. 1-25
14. Petri began the 70 weeks in 453 BC, ending the 2300 days in 1847. See Froom, Prophetic Faith, vol. 2, pp. 713-719
15. Froom, Prophetic Faith, vol. 2, pp. 719-722; vol. 4, pp. 210-221
16. Mourant Brock, Glorification (American Millennial Association reprint, 1845), p. 134, in Froom, Prophetic Faith, vol. 3, pp. 705, 706
17. Thomas B. Macaulay, Critical and Miscellaneous Essays (Philadelphia: Cary and Hart), vol. 5, p. 324, in Froom, Prophetic Faith, vol. 3, p. 268
18. Ellen G. White, "Notes of Travel," Historical

Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists (Basle: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), pp. 201-207; Ole Boqvist, Review and Herald, October 7, 1890, p. 612; Froom, Prophetic Faith, vol. 3, pp. 671-686

Chapter 6

Triumphal Entry II

"We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel." (Luke 24:21, NASB)

It is helpful to remind ourselves that the tragedy of October 22, 1844, was not the first great disappointment experienced by God's children. Think of the sadness when Jesus died on the cross!

On the Sunday immediately after the cross, unaware that Jesus had risen from the dead, two of His followers were walking into the country when Jesus caught up with them. Not expecting ever to see Him again, they failed to recognize Him and talked gloomily about the crucifixion. Cleopas, one of the travelers, sighed mournfully, "We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel."

Two thousand years and thousands of miles removed from that time and place, we still catch

the sob in the sad traveler's voice.

And his were not the only tears.

Imagine a young couple a few days earlier bringing their stricken child to the Passover. Everything depended on keeping him alive a few more weary miles, a few more anxious hours, till they could be in Jerusalem in the presence of the great Healer, who for a number of years had regularly attended the feast. And they made it through those tiring miles, those dreadful hours. They arrived with the child still alive, only to learn that the Healer Himself was dead, Thousands shared their sorrow. "On every side the cry was heard, We want Christ the Healer! ... But the people were driven back from the temple courts, and soldiers were stationed at the gates. ... The sufferers ... sank under their disappointment. ... Physicians were consulted in vain; there was no skill like that of Him who lay in Joseph's tomb." [1]

"We were hoping that it was He who was going

to redeem Israel." Here, if you will, was "Great Disappointment !" Now, the sorrow of crucifixion weekend was heightened by the fact that, only a few days prior to His death, Jesus staged the exciting celebration known as the triumphal entry.

We must not overlook this. It helps a great deal in our understanding of the Millerite disappointment.

On the Sunday before His death Jesus sent two of his disciples to find a donkey, untie it, and bring it to Him. When they looked surprised, Jesus told them to tell the owners, "The Lord needs it." So the disciples fetched the donkey, and Jesus rode Into Jerusalem on it--in fulfillment, the Bible says, of the Old Testament prophecy: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh unto thee : he is Just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." (Zechariah 9:9)

As the people watched Him ride a donkey in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, they became

certain that He was about to set Himself up as an earthly king, drive the hated Romans off their backs, and make Jerusalem, not Rome, the capital of the world. Plainly, Christ took the initiative in an enterprise that left the people with a very wrong impression of Him, one which in consequence was followed by a tragic disappointment.

How could Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, be party to so calculated a deception? How could the Prince of Peace so purposefully set the stage for the heartbreak that followed?

Or are these questions misleading? Was Jesus "He who was going to redeem Israel"? Indeed! He was the Saviour of the whole world! Was Jesus, as He sat on the donkey, really a king? He was King of the universe!

Then when Jesus led the people to look on Him as a king, did He deceive them? Of course not!

Then what made them so confused about Him and, a little later, so disappointed in Him? It was

their own misunderstanding.

To make it perfectly clear in our minds that Jesus was not responsible for their misapprehension and subsequent disappointment, let us ask another question: Did Jesus ever warn His followers that He was not the kind of king they thought He was and that He was going to be killed? The answer is that about nine months before the crucifixion "began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Matthew 16:21)

Christ could scarcely have been more explicit! Yet heaven did even more than this to let people know the truth in advance. Jesus was introduced by John the Baptist at the first moment of His official ministry as the Lamb of God. (John 1:29) Everyone knew that in the sanctuary service lambs of God died as sacrifices every day of the year and annually at the Passover. Daniel 9, written 500 years before Christ's birth, revealed that in the

"midst" of the last week of the seventy weeks of years, Messiah would be "cutoff." Isaiah 53, written some 700 years before the birth of Christ, foretold that God's Servant would, like a lamb, be "led to the slaughter." (Verse 7, RSV) Genesis 3:15, the very first promise of a Saviour, warned that the enemy would "bruise" the woman's seed. Thus for 4000 years heaven did its best to prevent the people's misapprehension and consequent disappointment!

But why did Jesus stage the triumphal entry at all? Why didn't He stay at His carpentry bench in Nazareth and avoid all occasion for misunderstanding?

You know the reason! The time had come for Him to perform the most significant act in all history. He was to die on the cross as atonement for the sins of the world, to make forgiveness possible for every human being on earth, and to restore confidence in God's character and government throughout the starry universe. On that Sunday morning of the triumphal entry Jesus knew that in

the midst of the seventieth and final prophetic week of years foretold in Daniel 9--specifically, on that upcoming Passover Friday at the very hour, three o'clock in the afternoon, when the Passover lamb was slain--He, the Creator of heaven and earth, was to expire on a cross outside the walls of old Jerusalem. He knew that by this act He would demonstrate God's love unmistakably, opening the way for man's redemption and making eternal life possible for every guilty sinner. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

But what use would it be to demonstrate such love if no one ever heard about it? Such goodness demanded the widest publicity so that guilty man might learn, and believe, and live.

This is why Jesus staged the triumphal entry. He did all that He could to keep people from misunderstanding. But when they persisted in their misapprehension, He went ahead anyway, knowing that in time many would come to understand

clearly who otherwise would never have cared.

But before we leave "Triumphal Entry I," we must ask ourselves two more questions about it and about "Great Disappointment" that followed it. On the Emmaus road, to whom and by what means did Jesus explain what had happened?

Can you name the two disciples who went walking into the country? You know Cleopas. You don't remember the other person's name? No, the Bible doesn't give it.

After the great disappointment of crucifixion weekend, Jesus made the most significant revelation of Himself, the most helpful explanation of what had gone wrong, not to the leading disciples, Peter, James, and John, but to two otherwise unknown, dedicated Christian laymen.

And in what way did Jesus explain the disappointment to them? "He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have

suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses? and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:25-27)

There it is. Apparently He reminded them of such Bible verses as we mentioned a moment ago--Genesis 3:15, about the serpent's bruising the woman's seed; Isaiah 53, about the lamb's being led to the slaughter in the ceremonial sanctuary system; Daniel 9, about Messiah's being "cut off"; and no doubt many other passages. As He did this, Cleopas and his companion must have exclaimed, "We've heard that a hundred times! Why couldn't we see it before?"

And their hearts burned within them as He opened unto them the Scriptures.

A little later, after they recognized Jesus, He left them. Then how they raced back to Jerusalem, stumbling up the rocky trail in the light of the Passover moon, rushing to tell the leading disciples what they had learned and Whom they had seen!

The leaders carefully restudied the Scriptures for themselves. Soon, empowered by the grace of God, they founded a great new religious movement, the Christian church.

Triumphal Entry II

So much for "Triumphal Entry I" and its sequel, "Great Disappointment I." But just as we may, if you will, call the sorrow of October 22, 1844, "Great Disappointment II," so we may think of the great Second Advent awakening as "Triumphal Entry II."

As we shall see in subsequent chapters, on October 22, 1844, Jesus commenced a new work of atonement as essential in its way as the atonement at Calvary. In the orderliness of God's grace, just as Jesus died on the cross at three pm on Passover Friday near the end of the seventy weeks, so Jesus began this other ministry of atonement on the ceremonial Day of Atonement on Tuesday, October 22, 1844, at the close of the 2300 year-

days of Daniel 8:14. And just as on the first occasion He was nailed to a cross outside old Jerusalem, so this time He took His stand at a specific location beside the tables of the law in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary in New Jerusalem. This new ministry of atonement is, as we shall see, an exquisitely gracious process sometimes called the "blotting out of sins," a ministry designed to remove all sin from the hearts and lives and records of Christ's dear believers and to prepare them for eternal unity, eternal "at-one-ment" with the Father.

So great and gracious an act of atonement demanded the widest publicity, so that again men could learn, and believe, and live.

And wide publicity it received, as we have seen, in both the Old World and the New.

But how could God call Miller and so many others to preach a message that wasn't true?

We have seen that Miller's message was very

nearly true. On the literalness of the second coming, the kind of preparation needed, the vital importance of winning souls, and the calculation of the 2300 days, he was far more right than his contemporaries.

He was wrong only in thinking that the sanctuary to be cleansed in Daniel 8:14 was on earth, and in concluding that Christ's cleansing of the sanctuary would be fulfilled in His coming to earth to cleanse the world and judge the church as King of kings.

He made no greater mistake than the disciples made when they thought that the prophecies foretold Christ's coming as a king in the year AD 31.

But if this is so, why didn't Jesus clarify the issue with Miller and make sure he had his message straight?

The answer is that He tried, just as He tried with His own disciples before the first triumphal

entry. Phrases in Daniel 7, Luke 12, Hebrews 8 and 9, Revelation 10, and Revelation 11, rightly understood, would have prevented the disappointment of 1844, just as other phrases in the Old Testament could have saved the disciples from their disappointment.

Also, there is an amazing analogy to Jesus' warning His disciples that He would suffer many things, die, and rise again on the third day. In the early 1840s He selected two Millerites, William Foy (a light-skinned black minister) and Hazen Foss, and in prophetic vision warned them that time would continue beyond October 22, 1844! [2] Once again the misapprehension was in the minds of the people--not in the will of God.

But if in these particulars Miller was wrong, why did God have him preach at all? Why didn't He leave him sowing grain and milking cows for the rest of his life? After all, that was the way Miller wanted it. Then there would have been no great disappointment.

We just gave the reason. Jesus was about to enter upon a great process of atonement equal in grace and effectiveness to His death on the cross--and the world needed to know about it so that men could learn and believe and live.

And to whom, where, and how did Jesus first explain the misunderstanding after the disappointment?

On October 23, the very morning following October 22, an active but almost unknown Adventist, Hiram Edson by name, was taking a shortcut across a cornfield in the company of a friend, when all at once there flashed into his mind the true, consistent explanation of the key phrases in Daniel 7, Luke 12, Revelation 10 and 11, and (a few hours later, back home) in Hebrews 8 and 9, which the Millerites had thus far overlooked or mistaken.

In other words, Jesus opened to him out of the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Hiram Edson was Adventism's "cornfield Cleopas,"

traveling into the country with a companion as Christ drew near!

Edson's new insight was studied and restudied. Out of it arose, in due course, a great new worldwide religious movement, the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Note:

1. Ellen G, White, The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898, 1940), p. 776
2. See T. Housel Jemison, A Prophet Among You (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1955), pp. 485-489.

Chapter 7

"Cornfield Cleopas"

"Daddy, could I be baptized tonight? Please?" "It's already late, you know, Ophelia, and we have twelve miles to ride in an open sleigh before you can get to bed!"

"I know, Daddy; but I really would like to be baptized before we go home."

"Do you realize that the lake is probably frozen around the edges, and that we would have to travel two or three cold miles there and back?"

"Yes; but that's all right," the girl responded. "I can take it."

Seeing her resolution, a minister in the group turned to a friend and asked, "Elder, would you mind going out to the lake with Ophelia and her father and baptizing her?"

"I'd be glad to do it," the good man replied. And thereupon Hiram Edson accompanied his twelve-year old daughter to the icy water, witnessed her baptism in the dark, and arrived home at a very late hour, chilled through no doubt, but very happy in the Lord. [1]

This incident, which happened at the close of a revival in 1855, eleven years after the great disappointment, introduces Hiram Edson to us as a devout Christian father. He had six children all together, counting one who died as an infant. At this same revival Edson was ordained, apparently as a local elder--which introduces him to us as an active Christian layman. For many years after the disappointment, for as many as his health permitted, Edson explored new truth, sacrificed to publish it, and traveled to spread it. In the early 1850s he accompanied Joseph Bates, John Andrews, John Loughborough, and a number of other ministers, tirelessly seeking interested prospects, often covering hundreds of miles, frequently on foot, usually in winter. Summers he farmed to pay expenses. Twice he sold a farm,

once a flock of sheep, to help the cause. When he grew old, he was awarded ministerial credentials. He died in 1882. [2]

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Edson's first wife died in 1839, when he was thirty-two. To provide her three little children with a new mother, he soon brought another Mrs. Edson to his farm near Port Gibson, New York (a landing on the Erie Canal). In 1843 the advent message came to Rochester, some thirty miles distant. Soon it spread to Port Gibson. Edson, a Methodist at the time, accepted it during an evangelistic series.

On the same night that this series closed, Edson was impressed by what seemed an audible voice telling him to go to the home of a dying neighbor and heal him in the name of the Lord. This troubled him, for he thought that miracles of healing ended in Bible times. Unable, however, to shake off the conviction, he entered his friend's house late at night. Edson made his way by candlelight to the bedside, laid his hands on the sick man, and said, "Brother, the Lord Jesus makes you whole." To

Edson's great joy, the man sat up at once, threw back the blankets, swung his feet to the edge of the bed, and walked around the room praising God. Soon all the rest of the family were up, praising God. [3]

That very same evening Edson heard a voice telling him, "Go talk the [advent] truth to your neighbors and fellowmen." He thought it even harder to witness than to help heal! He struggled for days. But when he at last surrendered, he, like William Miller, found that God could make good use of him. He visited homes all day, assisted with meetings at night, and soon saw three or four hundred of his neighbors and fellowmen accept Jesus and join the advent movement.

Thus occupied, he and his family came up to October 22. As that fateful day wore on into night, and the relentless ticking of the clock warned that time was running out, we can be sure that they and the friends who had joined them for the occasion earnestly reviewed the evidences for their faith: the 2300 days stretching from the fall of 457 BC to the

fall of 1844; the advent awakening as a fulfillment of the first and second angels' messages; the "tarrying time" after the spring disappointment, and the "midnight cry" at the camp meeting in August; and especially Samuel Snow's clear exposition of the cleansing of the sanctuary in the light of the Day of Atonement.

Today, they told themselves, October 22, the "tenth day of the seventh month," Jesus was completing his final work of atonement in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and without doubt would yet leave that place and come to earth to bless His waiting people.

"We confidently expected to see Jesus Christ and all the holy angels with Him," Edson wrote later, "and that His voice would call up Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the ancient worthies, and near and dear friends which had been torn from us by death. ... Our expectations were raised high, and thus we looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled twelve at midnight."

As the timepiece chimed the hour, Edson's family and friends, like Millerites everywhere, counted the beats with rapidly sinking hearts. When nothing could be heard but the doleful rhythm of its steady tick, they knew that "the day had then passed" and their "disappointment became a certainty." Said Edson, "Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. ... We wept, and wept, till the day dawn."

But as the hours continued to pass, Edson found his mind reviewing the ways in which God had blessed him since he had accepted the advent hope. He had been given the power to heal in Christ's name; he had seen hundreds of lives changed for the better; he had enjoyed a wonderful peace. His confidence began to return. "Let us go to the barn," he said to the men who were still at his house. And in the cool gray of that late October dawning a group of common men, baffled but still struggling to believe, entered the granary, shut the door, and knelt to pray. "We continued in earnest prayer until the witness of the Spirit was given that

our prayer was accepted, and that light should be given, our disappointment be explained, and made clear and satisfactory.

"No explanation came just at that time; but a certainty sprang up in their hearts that God is love, and that though they did not understand what had happened, He would make it plain someday.

Feeling better, they filed back into the kitchen and ate breakfast. Edson suggested to one of his friends, O.R.L. Crosier evidently, that they visit some of the Millerite neighbors whom they had helped win to Christ, so that they could encourage them with their own new confidence. Perhaps to save time they took a shortcut across a field of corn standing in shocks.

While passing through the cornfield, Edson tells us, "I was stopped about midway of the field. Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly and clearly, that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth (on October 22], ...

that he for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary; and that he had work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth."

So simple; yet it rates among the most dramatic moments in religious history.

Abraham was but a nomad cattle herder when God called him to father His chosen people.

Daniel received his special calf as a youthful captive in a foreign land. Jesus was an itinerant rabbi in a remote Roman province when His death saved the world.

Cleopas was an almost unknown disciple when Christ gave him Bible insights that led to the foundation of the Christian church.

And Hiram Edson, Adventism's "cornfield Cleopas," was an upstate New York farmer--and a devoted, Bible-studying, soul-winning layman--when God gave him an understanding of Christ's

heavenly ministry that was brand-new in the history of theology. In a very special sense the Seventh-day Adventist Church was born at that moment, in that field, as that farmer contemplated Christ.

Notes:

1. Review and Herald, December 27, 1855, p. 101; J. N. Loughborough to Elder H. M. Kelley, December 23, 1919, p. 1
2. The chapters on Hiram Edson are based in part on an undated, untitled manuscript fragment by Hiram Edson deposited in the Heritage Room, James White Library, Andrews University, and in part on other materials collected and analyzed in James Nix, "The Life and Work of Hiram Edson" (research paper, Andrews University, 1971)
3. P. Z. Kinne to F. E. Bowen, January 21, 1930, in W. A. Spicer, Pioneer Days of the Advent Movement (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1941), pp. 219, 220

Chapter 8

New Light from God's Word

Seventh-day Adventism is basically a message about Jesus, about what He is doing now to give men and women, boys and girls, freedom from sin and to transform them into radiant, generous, helpful persons like Himself.

All Bible Christians believe that Jesus died for sinners on the cross and that since His resurrection He "ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25) Most theologians, if they have given the matter particular thought at all, have assumed that He has always carried on this intercession in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. Seventh-day Adventists, however, believe that after His ascension He began His work of intercession in the holy place, the first area of the heavenly sanctuary, and that only in 1844 did He move on into the second, inner area, the most holy place.

This difference is by no means confined to geography. Not at all! Whereas the high-priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly holy place was always unspeakably wonderful, His special new work in the most holy place transcends it by far in transforming grace and power. We shall devote several chapters to it now and return to it often in this book.

As Cleopas and his companion walked into the country, Jesus chided them for not believing "all" that the prophets had spoken about Himself. (Luke 24:25) Disciples and Millerites alike, though highly commendable for discovering truths about Christ which most people opposed or ignored, nonetheless overlooked or misunderstood phrases which had stood for centuries In Holy Writ. The special truth about Christ which Hiram Edson and others discovered likewise stood in the Bible undiscovered for ages. Every Christian owes it to himself to understand.

Did Hiram Edson, as some suggest, have a prophetic vision in the cornfield? He may have. He

does not, however, state that he actually saw Jesus enter the most holy place. Instead, in his best-known account, he says that he saw "that" Jesus entered it on October 22. In a different account he says nothing about "seeing" anything, but recalls instead that he heard a voice speaking to him. Possibly he himself did not know exactly how his valuable insights came to him, but trying to settle exactly what happened is unnecessary. What matters is that he learned something that we, too, can learn, from the Bible (from yours and mine, as well as his).

Let us quote a little more from what he says and then analyze it. "I saw ... that he [Christ] came to the marriage at that time [October 22, 1844]; in other words, to the Ancient of days, to receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory; and we must wait for his return from the wedding; and my mind was directed to the tenth chapter of Revelation where I could see the vision had spoken and did not lie; the seventh angel had begun to sound; we had eaten the little book; it had been sweet in our mouth, and it had now become bitter in our belly, embittering

our whole being, That we must prophesy again, etc., and that when the seventh angel began to sound, the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament, etc."

When the Millerites read Daniel 8:14 ("Unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed"), they assumed that the sanctuary was on earth and that such a long time prophecy as the 2300 days reached down to the end of the world.

In second Timothy 4:1 they read that Christ will "judge the quick and the dead at his appearing," and they assumed that this judgment at the second coming is the only judgment that will ever take place, Then they turned to Daniel 7:10-13 and read incorrectly, "The judgment was set. ... One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven [to the earth]."

In the cornfield, however, Edson suddenly realized that Daniel 7:13 does not say, "to the

earth" but "to the Ancient of days"! Although a judgment will certainly occur when Christ comes to earth (2 Timothy 4;1), the Bible here foretells another judgment that will take place prior to the end, at which Jesus, after coming to the Father on the clouds of heaven, receives "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom." This is so important that we shall take it up again in the next chapter.

The Millerites concentrated their attention so much on Christ's parable (in Matthew 25) of the ten virgins waiting for the bridegroom to come to the wedding, that they scarcely noticed Christ's other wedding parable in Luke 12. The "tarrying time" after the spring disappointment, the "midnight cry" in August, and the "trimming of lamps" during the deeply spiritual seventh-month movement all fitted the parable of the virgins so convincingly that of course they believed the Bridegroom would come on October 22.

And He did come--but not to the earth. He came to the wedding, as the parable said He would. He came on the clouds to the Father to receive His

kingdom, that is to "marry" it. (It's an old Bible idiom.)

Out there in the cornfield, with his excited breath making puffs of steam in the frosty air, Edson had his mind directed to Christ's words in Luke 12:35, 36: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding."

Edson was so astonished that when he wrote down the account he underlined the words, "return from the wedding." One can imagine him fairly shouting in the field, "We are to wait till Jesus return from the wedding! The wedding is Christ's marriage to His bride the new Jerusalem, the capital of His new kingdom (Revelation 21). On October 22 we were supposed to enter the wedding with him by faith, When the wedding is over, then He will come to take us to the marriage supper (Revelation 19). If only we had noticed this, we would have been spared our disappointment!"

They didn't notice it, of course, and they were disappointed; but the great disappointment itself was actually proof that they were on course! The Bible says so in Revelation 10, the passage to which Edson's attention was attracted next.

In Revelation 10 a mighty angel stands on land and sea, symbolizing a worldwide prophetic movement. In one hand he holds a "little book open"; the other hand he lifts to heaven, and he swears that "there should be time no longer.' Quite properly the Millerites saw the little book as a symbol of the time prophecies of the book of Daniel which had been inadequately understood ("closed"; see Daniel 12) until their own day, but which during the great second advent awakening were proclaimed by an intercontinental prophetic movement.

In the first part of Revelation 10:10, John says that in his vision "I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey." Plainly this prefigured the joy of the Adventists as they looked for the coming of the

King. "Yours in the blessed hope," they signed their letters. "The happiest year of my life," remembered Ellen White.

In their happiness they failed to comprehend the words that followed: "And as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter," But on the morning following October 22, these words no longer seemed incomprehensible. Wrote Edson, "I could see the vision had spoken and did not lie; ... we had eaten the little book; it had been sweet in our mouth, and it had now become bitter in our belly, embittering our whole being."

So the great disappointment of October 22, 1844, had been predicted nearly? 2000 years in advance! Far from disproving the advent awakening, it served to verify it as a genuine fulfillment of prophecy!

After the words about the bitter belly, Revelation 10 closes with this verse: "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." Here was a statement that

even Edson was not prepared for. Indeed, Adventists would not fully understand it for many years. But at the moment it was enough to notice, as Edson did, that we must prophesy again, etc." Prophetic time periods ended on October 22, but real time to preach the gospel would continue till the mystery of God was finished.

Finally, Edson tells us, he noticed in the cornfield that "when the seventh angel began to sound, the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." This is a reference to Revelation 11:15-19. When the seventh angel blows his trumpet, "the kingdoms of this world" become the kingdoms of Christ. The "time of the dead" arrives, when they are to be "Judged." And the "temple of God" is opened in heaven, and the "ark of his testament" is seen. The Millerites applied all of this to the judgment at the second coming on October 22. Edson saw that far more was involved; and he began to wonder, now that Jesus had for the first time entered the most holy place of the heavenly temple where the Ten Commandments are stored

inside the ark of the testament, if perhaps new light would soon be forth-coming about the keeping of the commandments. It was a pregnant thought, but it was not clear to him just then.

All this time, while Edson was standing in the cornfield tingling with excitement over his new understanding of the Bible, his companion was walking on, too engrossed in his own thoughts to notice that he was alone. All at once he halted, turned quizzically, and shouted back, "Hiram, why are you stopping so long?"

To which Edson replied, "The Lord is answering our morning prayer, giving light with regard to our disappointment."

Chapter 9

"Look a Little Higher"

"While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me and I seemed to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world. I turned to look for the Advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, 'Look again, and look a little higher.' "

It was not to Hiram Edson alone that Christ brought new light after the disappointment. Following His crucifixion and resurrection Jesus appeared not only to Cleopas and his companion on the country road, but also to Mary in the garden, to the eleven disciples at supper, to 500 believers in Galilee, to Paul in a vision, and to others. Likewise, after October 22 He brought new light to Edson in a cornfield, to Joseph Turner in (apparently) the quiet of his study, and to Ellen Harmon in prophetic vision.

Joseph Turner edited a Millerite periodical. By

December 1844 he too came to see that the saints must wait till the Bridegrom returns from the wedding. He and Apollos Hale, another prominent Adventist, quickly published their light in the Advent Mirror.

Ellen Harmon was brought up in Gorham and Portland, Maine. Her father, Robert Harmon, a hat maker, and her mother, Eunice, were active laymen in the Methodist Episcopal Church. "They had the joy of seeing their children, eight in number, all converted and gathered into the fold of Christ." [1]

As an elementary school child, Ellen was injured in a freak accident to her face, caused when an older girl threw a rock at her. It resulted in considerable loss of blood at the time and in lingering damage to her respiratory system. In the absence of modern medical services, her condition deteriorated alarmingly, and for many years any ordinary infection might precipitate a crisis. When her nerves could no longer cope with her copybook, she dejectedly dropped out of school.

When she was twelve, her family heard William Miller and accepted his message. When he made a call, Ellen went forward; but keenly sensing her sinfulness, she had no feeling of being saved. At a Methodist camp meeting the next summer she prayed intensely, and her burden lifted so suddenly that she felt guilty! Then a sweet sense of acceptance took its place. Soon she and several others were baptized near Portland in Casco Bay.

She tried again to get an education by attending a local girls' school, but once more had to withdraw.

Miller returned to Portland. Ellen saw him stop in the middle of his sermons to usher old people to seats in the crowded assembly. She loved him for it; and she was deeply impressed with his earnest Bible sermons. But her joy in the second coming was soon marred by hell-fire preaching from a non-Adventist minister who made God so cruel that her doubts came back. She stayed awake all night, praying for mercy. Her mother sent her to Elder Stockman.

Elder Levi Stockman, a young Methodist minister who, like the Harmons, had adopted the advent hope, told Ellen that God is not a tyrant but a loving heavenly Father who longs to draw His children close to Him in simple trusting faith. "Go free, Ellen," he said. "God loves you!" He also said that God must have a very special plan in mind for her, cultivating in one so young so deep a religious experience. He prayed for her, and she left, a much happier girl.

With her conviction that only a little time remained before the second coming, Ellen exerted herself to the limit in winning souls to God, and she won most of those with whom she labored.

All the rest of her long life she vividly remembered the weeks preceding October 22. "With diligent searching of heart and humble confessions, we came prayerfully up to the time of expectation. Every morning we felt that it was our first work to secure the evidence that our lives were right with God. ... We prayed much with and for

one another. ... The joys of salvation were more necessary to us than our food and drink." [2]

When Jesus failed to appear on October 22, Ellen's family was as disappointed as any other. Of the eight Harmon children, only the youngest four were still at home: Sarah, aged 22; Robert, 18; and Ellen and her twin sister, Elizabeth, both 16. Of those who had left, two married sisters lived in Poland, Maine, about thirty miles away.

Robert and Elizabeth soon gave up all hope in the second coming, though Robert returned to it after a few years, and it appears that Elizabeth may ultimately have died a Christian. [3] But during November and early December 1844, Ellen, Sarah, and their parents lived from day to day hoping, but only with declining faith, that Christ would yet come soon.

In this frame of mind Ellen, now seventeen (her birthday was November 26), went by wheelchair [4] in December to visit Mrs. Haynes, a friend of hers. One morning a small group of other Adventist

women joined them in prayer--for light, no doubt, on the disappointment, and for mercy on their loved ones whose faith was no longer strong.

As they knelt, the Holy Spirit drew close with an especially beautiful sense of assurance. At that moment, Ellen received her first vision.

When it was over, she told the ladies how she had searched the world in vain for the advent people, until an angel said, "Look again, and look a little higher." At that, she saw a path, high above the world, on which the believers were traveling to the Holy City.

People, path, and city, however, were mere props for the real message which the vision was intended to convey. Ellen's grateful attention was drawn to "a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which the angel told me was the midnight cry."

Here was an answer to their prayers! Heaven said that the midnight cry--the proclamation about

the coming of the Bridegroom on October 22--was light, genuine light. No explanation of the disappointment was given, but this was reassurance indeed!

The light was set up "at the beginning of the path." This was a new thought. They had hoped the midnight cry would mark the end of the path. Evidently God expected His followers to travel a new path of experience and service.

The light "shone all along the path and gave light for their feet so they might not stumble." But it was not their only source of light. Jesus was just before them, leading them to the city, and encouraging them with light from "His glorious right arm."

Tragically, Ellen saw that some Adventists "rashly denied the light behind them and said that it was not God that had led them out so far." The light behind these people, who said that the 2300 days were of no account and that October 22 was a mistake, went out, and their feet were left in perfect

darkness, and "they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below." [5]

Before the vision closed, Ellen had another surprise to tell the ladies about. Elder Stockman, like Elder Charles Fitch, died sometime before October 22. Near the end of the vision she was shown that when the second coming eventually takes place, both of them will be taken to heaven. This too was good news, and it provided additional evidence that God was with the advent movement.

A week after this first happy vision Ellen received another one in which God called her formally to work for Him as a prophet. He warned her of the great sacrifice this would entail, and also promised the abundance of His grace.

Ellen shrank away in terror. So ill that she could scarcely cross the floor or speak above a whisper, she was glad to give her last to save the lost, but she dreaded opposition and misrepresentation. A meeting of Adventist

believers was scheduled for her home. Unwilling to face them, she escaped by sleigh to a neighbor's house instead.

But in a little while she surrendered. At a prayer service, visible light shone upon her. She gave her witness to the Portland Adventists and at the end heard about sixty confess that they had given up faith in the midnight cry but were now convinced again that it was of God. Shortly after, while visiting her sister Mary, she presented her visions to an Adventist group at MacGuire's Hill, near Poland. She started in a whisper, but God gave her a strong voice for nearly two hours. When she was through and people asked her questions after the meeting, she could only whisper again. [6]

Still too sick even to read, Ellen set out in the depth of a New England winter to visit other Adventists who lived "east" along the coast of Maine. At a small gathering in Exeter, Maine, she had a vision of exceptional significance.

"I saw a throne," she told the people when it

was over," and on it sat the Father and the Son." Until this moment she had known only that October 22 was important; she had not known the reason why. Now she was shown inside the heavenly sanctuary. As she watched, she "saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down."

Jesus, too, stepped from the throne. And as He did so, He raised His arm and said to His followers who were represented as worshiping Him there, "Wait here; I am going to My Father to receive the kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to Myself."

Fascinated, she watched as "a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat."

"There," said Ellen, «I beheld Jesus, a great

High Priest, standing before the Father " [7]

This was Ellen's turn to learn about the Bridegroom's going to the wedding on October 22 and returning from it at the second coming. But more clearly than Edson or Turner, she saw the precise fulfillment of Daniel 7:9-14. After the four "beasts" of Daniel 7, the ten "horns," and the terrible "little horn" have run their fearful course and history nears its close, Daniel saw that majestic thrones would be set in place and the Ancient of Days would come and take His seat. "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." Then "one like the Son of man" would come "with the clouds of heaven" to the Ancient of Days to receive dominion and a kingdom.

Thus the Bible predicted that prior to the Second Advent when the time for judgment arrived, the Father would move from one part of heaven to another and the Son would follow Him there. In Exeter, Maine, in February 1845, Ellen was shown, to her total astonishment, that this prophecy had now been fulfilled.

So this was why October 22 was so important!

She also got an idea of the magnificence of the heavenly sanctuary. Grand enough for flaming chariots and retinues of angels, "no earthly structure could represent its vastness." [8]

That summer, with her health somewhat improved, she and her sister Sarah began an eight-month tour among the Adventists of Massachusetts, staying some of the time with the Otis Nichols family in Dorchester, and now and then taking a quick trip home to Portland. [9] In October, in Carver, Massachusetts, she had a third special vision to add to the "Midnight Cry" and "Bridegroom" visions.

In this one she saw the time, yet future, when Christ would complete His priestly ministry in the most holy place and the "time of Jacob's trouble" would begin. She had never heard of this before. The thought that men would have to live sometime without a mediator was a solemn one. [10]

As Ellen traveled, accompanied by her sister Sarah, and also at times by others including James White and her near relative Louisa Foss, she told her visions to any Millerite Adventist who would listen, and brought understanding and joy to many of them.

Notes:

1. Ellen G, White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1915, 1942), p. 17
2. Ellen G. White, Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1922), p. 53
3. Cf. Review and Herald, April 21, 1868, p. 287
4. J. N. Loughborough, "A Sketch of Individual Experience" (1918), manuscript deposited in the Heritage Room, James White Library, Andrews University
5. Ellen G. White, Early Writings of Ellen G. White (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald

Publishing Association, 1882, 1945), pp. 14, 15

6. James White, A Word to the "Little Flock," p. 22; idem, to Joseph Bates, July 13, 1847
7. Ellen G. White, Early Writings, pp. 54, 55
8. Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1890, 1958), p. 357
9. Otis Nichols to William Miller, April 20, 1846, original deposited in the Orrin Roe Jenks Memorial Collection of Adventual Materials, Aurora College Library; Cf. Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, Mich.: [vols. 1, 2] James White, 1858, 1860; [vols. 3, 4] Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), vol. 2, pp. 67-82. See below, chapter 13, note 2
10. Letter from Sister Harmon, Falmouth, Mass., Feb. 15, 1846, in Day-Star, March 14, 1846, p. 7; republished with some alteration in Francis D. Nichol, Ellen G. White and Her Critics (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1951), pp. 625, 626

Chapter 10

What Is Jesus Doing Now?

"So we know where Jesus is now; He's in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. And we know what He's doing there; He's attending a 'wedding' and participating in the preadvent 'judgment.' But what, in simple language, does all this mean? What is Jesus doing now?"

Edson and Crosier were seated at a table in Edson's Port Gibson farmhouse, where Crosier made his home part of the time. A third friend had joined them, Dr. F. B. Hahn of Canandaigua, the secretary of his county medical society. Bibles, a copy or two of Cruden's Concordance, and probably some Millerite publications lay before them.

Joseph Turner's article in the Advent Mirror was still some weeks in the future, and Ellen's visions would remain unknown to them for over a year; thus our Port Gibson three sought their

answer in the best of all places, in their Bibles.

As the three of them met time after time to study and pray for new light, their understanding of the heavenly sanctuary deepened. They became convinced, for example, that it was a real place, as real as the "city which hath foundations" (Hebrews 11:10) in which it is located, and as real as the "many mansions" that Christ has gone to prepare in His Father's house. John 14:1-3. [1]

But their study was guided principally by key sentences in Hebrews 8 and 9: "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle." "There are priests ... who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." "The first tabernacle was a figure." "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified by these [the sacrifices of animals]; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."

From passages such as these they came to realize that Christ's sacrifice on the cross and His priesthood in heaven were symbolically prefigured in the ceremonial rituals of the Old Testament. They learned that God directed Moses to set up the tabernacle and its services as an object lesson to teach great truths about Jesus Christ. And they saw that if we want to know what Jesus our High Priest is doing in the heavenly sanctuary today, it is vital to discover what the priests did in the Old Testament sanctuary long ago. Here was a key to immense treasure!

Reading in Exodus and Leviticus, it can scarcely have taken them long to learn that the earthly sanctuary (or "tabernacle" as it was often called) was a portable two-room tent used by the Israelites during their long journey through the wilderness from Egypt to the Promised Land. Every day, as people came to confess their sins they offered an animal sacrifice and were forgiven. Then the priest, either directly or indirectly, [2] conveyed a small quantity of the animal's blood into the first room (the "holy place"), depositing it

on the beautiful little golden altar located there. By doing this he carried into the sanctuary a record of confessed sin; and because sin is terribly unclean, even this record of confessed sin polluted or "defiled" the sanctuary.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest carried sacrificial blood right on into the second room (the "most holy place"), and sprinkled some of it on the sacred, gold-plated chest (the "ark") that contained the Ten Commandments which, by sinning, the people had broken.

To Edson, Crosier, and Hahn, the Day of Atonement seemed the most significant event of all. It was the Day of Atonement that had provided Samuel Snow with his proof at the Exeter, New Hampshire, camp meeting that the 2300 days ended on October 22, 1844; and quite evidently it was the most solemn and salient occasion of the ancient ceremonial calendar.

But before we find out what they learned about the Day of Atonement, let us look for a moment at

the word "atonement" itself. This interesting word is based on the idiom "to be at one." William Tyndale, who translated the Bible into English at the cost of his life in the early 1500s, used "atonement" for the restoration of friendly relations (at-one-ment) between God and sinners, and also for the means by which this good relationship is achieved. From Tyndale's Bible it was transferred about a century later into the King James Version, and from there it entered the vocabulary of every English-speaking student of the Word.

Sinners are "at odds" with God, separated from Him by their sins. (Isaiah 59:2) Because they cannot restore themselves, someone else must provide at-one-ment. To fill the need, Jesus laid down His life; and this is the reason that most Protestant theologians speak of Christ's death as "the" atonement. Adventists however, in their eagerness to learn all they can about Jesus, have come to understand atonement in a significantly broader sense. [3]

Hiram Edson and his friends, for example,

noticed that in the earthly sanctuary services, as the people offered their sacrifices and confessed their sins day by day, they were forgiven and an atonement was made for them. See Leviticus 4:26, 31, 35. Notwithstanding this, every year their forgiven sins were reviewed and cleansed away on the Day of Atonement.

On this solemn Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16), God required the high priest himself to perform the rites. No ordinary priest would do. On this one day in all the year the high priest entered the most holy place, where the presence of God was symbolized by a brilliant, supernatural light above the ark. And the high priest's purpose on this special day in this special place was emphatically stated in the Scriptures: to "make an atonement for the holy sanctuary," and to "make an atonement for you [God's people], to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." (Leviticus 16:33,30)

Cleansing of the sanctuary and ultimate cleansing of forgiven people went hand in hand in

Old Testament times. Thus, Edson and his friends reasoned, cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the ultimate cleansing of God's forgiven saints must be the meaning of Christ's special ministry in heaven's most holy place since October 22, 1844.

With the help of their concordances, Edson, Crosier, and Hahn looked up the words "atone" and "atonement" every time they occur in the (KJV) Bible, and they found that they are associated with such words as "cleanse, reconcile, purify, purge, pardon, sanctify, hallow, forgive, justify, redeem [and] blot out." [4] They paid particular attention to the promise in Acts 3:19-21 that in an ultimate sense sins will be "blotted out" just before God sends Jesus back to earth at the end of the world.

They reasoned that the daily atonement was a type of Christ's gracious death on the cross and of His ministry in the heavenly holy place, making forgiveness of sin available to every sinner; and that the annual Day of Atonement was a symbol of Christ's ministry in the heavenly most holy place, blotting out the sins of every believer who has

remained sincere since his confession. Thus they developed the triumphant conclusion: As sinners have sought forgiveness through the ages, Jesus has carried the record of their confessed sins into the holy place, where it has defiled the heavenly sanctuary. And just as it was necessary that the "patterns of things in the heavens should be purified" by animal sacrifices, so it became necessary in time that "the heavenly things themselves" needed to be cleansed. (Hebrews 9:23) The cleansing of the sanctuary now in progress is a truly great work of at-one-ment; it is nothing less than the final removal and blotting out of every sin that separates God's people from Himself.

Crosier, the best author in the group, was commissioned by the others to write up the results of their research. Enoch Jacobs, a friendly Adventist editor in Cincinnati, agreed to publish his article at their expense in a special number (or "extra") of his journal; the Day-Star. The cost was about $30.00, and so tight were their circumstances that Edson and Hahn, who agreed to underwrite the expense if Crosier undertook the writing, were hard

put to it to come up with even half of it. Mrs. Edson sold some of her silverware to help out. They hoped the balance would be contributed by grateful readers.

Some of the Adventists among whom Ellen Harmon was traveling at the time in Massachusetts and other parts of New England were evidently on the mailing list; and when the Day-Star Extra of February 7, 1846, arrived, she was delighted. It harmonized strikingly with the visions she had received.

Her enthusiasm was quickly endorsed. In another vision soon after, the Lord showed her that "Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, &C., and that it was His will that Brother Crosier should write out the view which he gave us in the Day-Star Extra, February 7, 1846." She commented, "I feel fully authorized by the Lord to recommend that Extra to every saint." [5]

Many years later, after receiving much further

light on the subject, she still spoke as they had done of "this great work of atonement," the "blotting out of sins." [6] She also called their new concept one of the "landmarks" of the Seventh-day Adventist message. [7] Unless we understand it, she said, "it will be impossible" for us "to exercise the faith essential at this time." [8] Near the end of her life she reiterated her emphasis: "The sanctuary is the foundation of our faith." [9]

The sanctuary is the foundation of our faith!

Seventh-day Adventists exist to bear to the world a message about what Jesus is doing now for those who put their trust in Him.

For those who put their trust in Him. Even in Old Testament times, when the high priest cleansed the sanctuary, he cleansed the people too, as the Lord through Moses told the people, "that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." "The passing of the time in 1844," Ellen White wrote in 1889, "was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes the cleansing of the sanctuary

transpiring in heaven, and having decided relation to God's people upon the earth." [10]

How very glorious and how very personal that relationship is to God's people on earth she hinted at in The Great Controversy, page 485: "Thus will be realized the complete fulfillment of the new-covenant promise, 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' 'In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.' (Jeremiah 31:34; 50:20."

Edson and his friends learned a good deal about Jesus; but we still have to wait till later chapters for an explanation of the vital ways in which Christ's high-priestly ministry is related to the wedding and the judgment, as also to the third angel's message, the seal of God, the spirit of prophecy, and, in particular, to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Notes:

1. O.R.L. Crosier, "The law of Moses," Day Star Extra, February 7, 1846, p. 38
2. In many cases the priest ate a portion of the people's sacrifices, thus transferring their guilt to himself. Later, when he made his own sacrifice, he carried blood into the holy place, thus transcribing there a record not only of his own but also of the people's sins. (See Leviticus 4:27-35; 1-7, 13-20; 6:24-30)
3. Seventh-day Adventists regard the entire plan of salvation, from beginning to end, as the atonement. See SDA Encyclopedia, art. "Atonement." See also Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), pp. 341-390. The cross is Christ's supreme atoning act. His ministry in heaven, however, is considered "equally essential" (Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1888, 1911, 1950], p.

489), and is called "atonement" by Ellen White in many passages, such as Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1, p. 158; Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 575; The Great Controversy, pp. 420, 489, 623; Testimonies to Ministers (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1923, 1961), p. 37

4. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," p. 40
5. James White, A Word to the "Little Flock," p. 12
6. Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 358
7. Ellen G. White, Counsels to Writers and Editors (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1946), p. 30
8. Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 488
9. Ellen G. White, Manuscript 20, 1906
10. Ellen G. White, Counsels to Writers and Editors, p. 30

Chapter 11

A Widow Witnesses

At the 1843 General Conference of the American Seventh Day Baptists, an action was voted which deserves our close attention.

Several dozen "messengers" attended the session, representing some 5500 members residing chiefly in Rhode Island and New Jersey and scattered over several other states. A spate of Sunday bills in state and federal legislatures had recently increased public interest in the Sabbath. The times seemed ripe to advance the cause of God's holy day; and the conference voted a recommendation unusual for their church: "That the first day of November next be observed by our churches as a day of fasting and prayer that Almighty God would arise and plead for his holy Sabbath. [1]

The faithful Seventh Day Baptists who observed this recommendation on Wednesday,

November 1, 1843, little anticipated the manner, or the magnitude, of the answer that God for centuries had been preparing in advance.

Even as they fasted and prayed, one of their number, Mrs. Rachel Oakes (after remarriage, Mrs. Preston) of Verona, Oneida County, New York, was thinking of moving to the mountain village of Washington, New Hampshire. Her eighteen-year old daughter, Delight, had accepted a position there as a public school teacher; and being herself a widow, it seemed reasonable to Mrs. Oakes that she spend the winter with Delight in Washington. Why not?

Besides, she might have an opportunity to witness there. She could take along a supply of Sabbath tracts.

Suiting action to her thought, Mrs. Oakes found herself in the late winter of 1844 attending church with the Christian brethren in her adopted village. Theirs was an unaffiliated congregation which, with their minister, had accepted the advent

message of William Miller. It was also, to be sure, a Sunday-keeping congregation, but there being no church of her own persuasion nearby, Mrs. Oakes kept the Sabbath as best she could with her daughter Delight, and then attended church on Sunday for Christian fellowship. This particular Sunday was communion day, and the pastor, Frederick Wheeler, a youngish Methodist circuit rider from Hillsboro, twelve miles away, was preaching the sermon. All at once he said something that almost made Mrs. Oakes start up from her pew. [2]

She contained herself until Wheeler, fine shepherd that he was, came to call on his new parishioner from New York.

"While you were speaking, Elder Wheeler," she told him abruptly, "I could scarcely contain myself. You said that we must observe all of the Ten Commandments, and yet you yourself constantly break one of them!"

"Why, Sister Oakes," exclaimed the good man,

"whatever do you mean?"

"I mean that the fourth commandment says, 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God,' but you keep the first day. You observe the pope's Sunday instead of the Lord's Sabbath!"

Whether or not the pastor felt irritated we do not know, but we do know that sometime during that same winter, possibly on March 16, 1844, [3] he made his decision to keep the seventh day as the Sabbath.

Thus it came about that Frederick Wheeler, a Millerite Adventist Methodist, of Hillsboro, New Hampshire, became the first Sabbath-keeping Adventist minister in North America. And although he did not at that time preach about the Sabbath in his Washington church, it appears that he did do so in a schoolhouse near his home, and that he discussed the matter privately with at least one other minister who, like himself, had adopted the advent hope. By August 1844 Thomas M. Preble, formerly a Freewill Baptist who pastored a

congregation in the shoe-making township of Weare, New Hampshire, about a dozen miles east of Hillsboro, became the second Sabbath-keeping Adventist minister in North America.

By early October 1844 there was at least one other Sabbath-keeping Adventist, a Sister S. Blake in Rhode Island, who may have been a Seventh Day Baptist lady like Mrs. Oakes. [4]

Outside North America quite a few other early Adventists adopted the seventh-day Sabbath at approximately this same time or earlier. One of these was Francisco Hermogenes Ramos Mexia (1773 to 1825) of Argentina, a prominent statesman who combined reformatory politics with large-scale farming and Indian evangelism. He made a good number of converts, and was arrested in 1821 for keeping the Sabbath. Another, James A. Begg (1800 to 1868) of Scotland, well known in the British Isles as a writer on prophecy and the Second Advent, began to keep the Sabbath about 1832. [5]

But we must return to Washington, New Hampshire. It seems that Delight Oakes lived in the large Farnsworth farmhouse. It follows that her mother most likely stayed there too. Many were the comments about Sabbath and Sunday that must have passed between the forthright Mrs. Oakes and her generous, honest hosts.

It appears, furthermore, that Cyrus, one of the Farnsworth boys, was falling in love with the school teacher. (They later married)

But overshadowing every other concern was the approaching end of the world. Christ was coming, and there was little time for most Adventists to consider the obligations of a new holy day. Thus it was that among those who looked eagerly for the second coming on October 22, 1844, there were at least three who kept the Sabbath, Frederick Wheeler in Hillsboro, Thomas Preble In Weare, and Sister Blake in Rhode Island--unless, that is, Mrs. Oakes, who thus far had apparently failed to persuade the Washingtonians to become Sabbath keepers, had by this time (as

she did at some time) allowed them to persuade her to become an Adventist. In that case, there were at least four.

After the "passing of the time" on October 22, Adventists in Washington did not give up their faith, but continued patiently to await Christ's return. At this time they turned their attention with deeper interest to Mrs. Oakes's sabbath.

A short time later, when the sturdy little Christian Brethren church was solemn with worship on a Sunday morning, William, the eldest of the Farnsworth sons, stood to his feet during the social meeting and announced before folk who had known him since his birth that he had made his decision to live henceforth by the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Jesus Christ had not changed the day, but the pope had done so in fulfillment of prophecy. William said he wanted to be counted among the Lord's Sabbath keepers and not among the Pope's Sabbath breakers.

Hardly had he sat down than his brother Cyrus

stood up and made the same ringing testimony.

Mrs. Oakes and her daughter each shed a tear and praised the Lord.

Not everyone was pleased, however. The larger part of the congregation did not accept the Sabbath at this time, though many of them did later. Those who did, ceased to use the church for the time being and met instead at the large Farnsworth place--the first congregation of Sabbath-keeping Adventists in North America.

But before we trace the future of the Sabbath, it is most interesting and helpful to look backward for a moment. After all, Seventh-day Adventists got the Sabbath from Mrs. Oakes and she, a former Methodist, got it from the Seventh Day Baptists. How far back can the Sabbath be traced?

To creation, of course! But in recent centuries it is valuable to go back at least to the 1520s, when the Reformation was in full swing in central Europe. [6] With Martin Luther and the other great

Reformers all saying that truth must be sought in "the Bible and the Bible only," it is not surprising that a dialogue arose among their followers over the question of Sunday and the Sabbath. The Sabbath is taught as plainly in Scripture as almost anything else.

There were Christians in Europe in the 1520s who asked, "If Luther says we must follow the Bible and the Bible only, why doesn't? He do so himself?" Among these were some who adopted believer's baptism in place of infant baptism, earning themselves the appellation Anabaptists. From among the Anabaptists there emerged two men of particular interest. Both had at one time been Catholic priests. In their quest for truth they gave up their careers as priests to become Lutherans. As they continued to study, they became Anabaptists. After still further study, they adopted the Sabbath and became the first "Sabbatarian Anabaptists."

Luther sent theologians to dissuade them. From their reports we learn that these two men, Oswald

Glait and Andreas Fischer, had not made their decision for the Sabbath lightly. They had thought through their position carefully. The Sabbath, they said, could not be part of the ceremonial law because it was instituted at creation before the need arose for a ceremonial law; therefore it is part of the moral law and still binding. Quoting Matthew 5:17, 18, they showed that Jesus refused to alter even a jot or tittle of the law; and referring to James 2:10, they added that the apostles didn't change it either. Sunday worship, they pointed out, was a fulfillment of the prophecy of the work of the little horn (Daniel 7:25) who was to "think to change times and laws."

In those days men could not take such a position, even in Protestant countries, and hope to live out their natural lives. In 1529 Mr. and Mrs. Andreas Fischer were sentenced to death, she by drowning, he by hanging. She was successfully drowned, but when her husband was in the process of being hanged, he fell to the ground and escaped.

Not forever, unfortunately. In 1539 or 1540 he

was seized by the soldiers of a "robber" knight, dragged into his castle, and hurled from the top of a wall.

Oswald Glait survived many adventures while traveling in central Europe to encourage the faithful and to make new Sabbath keepers. In 1545 he was captured. After a year and six weeks in jail he was awakened at midnight by the clatter of soldiers in the hall outside his cell. His door burst open. By the fluttering light of the flaming torches which they held, he read in the grim cruelty of their faces his impending fate. He was led through the silent city to the banks of the Danube, bound hand and foot, and cast into the river.

As the soldiers heard his splash, little did they realize that the truth for which he gave his life would live on for centuries in Germany, burst into new life in Great Britain, be transferred to the American colonies, and in the twentieth century capture the hearts of millions around the world.

Other Sabbath keepers from this period are

known to have lived in the Netherlands, Switzerland, Moravia, and Sweden, [7] and according to recent research, in Seville, Spain. [8]

Everyone knows that the early American Puritans were extremely strict about their Sunday observance, believing that Sunday should be kept in fulfillment of the fourth commandment. The British Puritans were the same; and during the 1600s there occurred such a stir in England about the fourth commandment that a number of persons were led to keep the Sabbath. Seventh Day Baptists cherish their memory as pioneers of their movement. [9]

Among the first of these were John and Dorothy Traske. He was a zealous Puritan minister, she, a talented teacher who had a knack for helping very young children from wealthy homes learn to read.

Both were sent to prison for their Sabbath keeping. Mr. Traske was sentenced (about 1617) to be "set upon the pillory at Westminster, and from

thence whipped to the fleet, there to remain a prisoner."

It was two miles from Westminster to the Fleet prison. How he must have suffered, tied behind a wagon and flogged all the way. But about the time his three-year sentence was completed, he recanted and gave up the Sabbath. His wife, however, gained courage from his cowardice. In her filthy, flea-ridden, rat-infested prison she remained faithful for fifteen or sixteen years until her death.

Francis Bampfield, a minister of the Church of England, was imprisoned in 1662 for conscientious refusal to swear an oath. In prison he soon became a Sabbath keeper as a result of personal Bible study. By preaching almost every day during the remainder of his nine-year sentence, he raised up a company of Sabbath keepers in the jail! Released, he was imprisoned again in a short time. Released once more, he moved to London where he was arrested three more times for preaching the truth about the Sabbath, finally ending his life in the damp and cold of Newgate prison.

John James, another Sabbath-keeping minister, was preaching on Sabbath afternoon, October 19, 1661, when police entered his church and demanded in the name of King Charles II that he cease.

A man of Spirit, he went right on.

A commotion arose. James was arrested, convicted by a packed jury on trumped-up charges, and sentenced like a traitor to be hanged, drawn, and quartered.

In spite of two brave appeals to the king by his wife, John James was hanged by the neck at Newbury, taken down, his body butchered, his heart drawn out of his chest and flung into a fire, and his head impaled outside his church as a grim warning to anyone who might desire to keep the seventh-day as the Sabbath.

For many an early Seventh Day Baptist, the Sabbath was a day worth dying for.

Not all British Sabbath keepers in the seventeenth century were required to suffer persecution. Dr. Peter Chamberlen, the favorite obstetrician of several royal and noble ladies in England, kept the sabbath safely for over thirty-two years. He spoke several languages, he recommended hot and cold water in the treatment of disease, and, incidentally, he invented a horseless carriage propelled by wind. With his brilliance and ability, he was too valuable for the British crown to persecute.

Observance of the seventh day was transferred to America by Stephen Mumford, who emigrated from England in 1664 and organized, in Rhode Island, in 1671, the first Seventh Day Baptist church in America. In the early 1700s there were Moravian Sabbath keepers, too, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. After visiting them, Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf determined to keep the Sabbath as well as Sunday. And there were still other German Sabbath keepers in various parts of the colonies.

The Seventh Day Baptists in America organized themselves into a General Conference in 1802 with a membership around 1200. Though they grew steadily in numbers, they were never very energetic about evangelism. For them, the Sabbath became a day to cherish rather than to share. But share it some of them did--which brings us back to their significant General Conference of 1843, with its resolution setting apart November 1, 1843, as a day for fasting and prayer that God would "arise and plead for his holy Sabbath."

Through widow Rachel Oakes, their prayer was to be answered beyond their fondest dreams.

Notes:

1. Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America, 3 vols. (Plainfield, N.J.: The Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, 1910-1972), vol. 1, p. 185. (See also Froom, Prophetic Faith, vol. 4, pp. 942, 943)
2. Early fragmentary accounts of how Mrs. Oakes brought the Sabbath to the Adventists in

Washington differ considerably in their small details and have been the subject of much study by Adventist historians. Interested students can compare the story as related here with other accounts in Froom, Prophetic Faith, vol. 4, pp. 944-951, and Spalding, Origin and History, vol. 1, pp. 115-117, 397-400

3. S.W. Bartle to W.A. Spicer, September 4, 1935, original deposited in the W.A. Spicer Collection, the Heritage Room, James White Library, Andrews University. Bartle's authority is George Wheeler, presumably Frederick Wheeler's son
4. Sister S. Blake, Richmond, Rhode Island, letter, Advent Herald and Signs of the Times Reporter, October 2, 1844, p. 72
5. Froom, Prophetic Faith, vol. 4, pp. 920-940
6. For information about early Sabbatarian Anabaptists see Gerhard F. Hasel, "Sabbatarian Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century," part 1, Andrews University Seminary Studies 5 (July 1967), pp. 101-121, and part 2, AUSS 6 (January 1968), pp. 19-28
7. See SDA Encyclopedia, art. "Sabbath"

8. Mario Veloso, "Reformation in Seville, 1530-1560" (master's thesis, Andrews University, 1972), pp. 143-145. The Spanish Sabbath keeper was Constantino de la Fuente
9. Information about prominent seventeenth-century British Seventh Day Baptists can be found in Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America, vol. 1, pp. 63-111; Froom, Prophetic Faith, vol. 4, pp. 906-917; and J.H. Andrews and L.R. Conradi, History of the Sabbath and First day of the Week (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1912), pp. 717-734

Chapter 12

The Captain Spreads the Word

There was something about the manner in which the Sabbath made its way from Seventh Day Baptists to the future Seventh-day Adventists that resembled fire making its way along a fuse to a barrel of gunpowder.

Mrs. Oakes passed it to Frederick Wheeler and a handful of Washington Adventists. Wheeler preached it without very much effect at the time and (apparently) passed it on to Thomas M. Preble.

Preble wrote about it in the Hope of Israel for February 1845--a paper edited, by the way, by the same Joseph Turner who in December 1844 discovered the same truth that Edson and Ellen did about waiting for Christ's return from the wedding.

As soon as he was able, Preble revised his article and republished it as a tract entitled, fittingly enough, Tract Showing That the Seventh Day

Should Be Observed as the Sabbath. He concluded his message vigorously using a lot of capitals and italics. "Thus we see Daniel 7:25 fulfilled, the 'little horn' changing 'times and laws.' Therefore it appears to me that all who keep the first day of the week for 'the Sabbath' are Pope's Sunday Keepers!! and GOD'S SABBATH BREAKERS!!!"

The article and the tract got results. One or the other may have been the reason why J.B. Cook, a Millerite theologian, advocated the Sabbath for a few years. A copy of the tract definitely found its way to Paris, Maine, where it convinced several people, including the family of Edward Andrews, and that was something, as we shall see. A copy of the article was also read by that sea captain turned Millerite leader, Joseph Bates. And through his exertions the fire fairly flamed along the fuse.

Bates was nothing if not a man of action. Immediately he dropped everything he was doing and searched the Bible. He made his way 140 miles by coach, rail, and foot--perhaps entirely by foot--to Hillsboro to meet with Frederick Wheeler,

arriving late, waking up his family, and studying with him the rest of the night. (Wheeler's son, George, would tell of that night as long as he lived.) Next morning, Bates and Wheeler went on to Washington and talked about the Sabbath till noon with some of the Farnsworths under a stand of maple trees. Then Bates turned back to his home in Fairhaven, Massachusetts. On the way he wrestled with the effects a change to the Sabbath on his part might have on his neighbors, family, and friends. "What is that to thee? Follow thou me" rang relentlessly in his ears.

Crossing the bridge between New Bedford and Fairhaven, Bates made his first convert out of one of his Adventist friends. "What's the news, Captain Bates?" asked James Madison Monroe Hall. "The news," replied the captain, "is that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord our God." Hall kept the very next seventh day as the Sabbath.

So much for 1845. The Seventh Day Baptists may not have been very evangelistic about the Sabbath, but Joseph Bates was a former sea

captain, a natural leader by definition. He was an Adventist, besides, eager to help people get ready to meet the Lord. He could never imagine, he once said, "that our glorious Commander designed that we should leave our sacrifices smoking on the altar of God, In the midst of the enemies' land, but rather that we should be pushing onward from victory to victory."

In 1846 he read Crosier's article in the Day-Star Extra of February 7 and was convinced that the sanctuary to be cleansed is in heaven and is as real a temple as the new Jerusalem itself. He sat down and wrote a companion piece, a tract entitled, "The Opening Heavens," In which he added further evidence from astronomy and the Bible. Not content, he traveled all the way to Port Gibson to compare notes with Edson, Crosier, and Hahn, and made Sabbath keepers out of all of them.

In the meantime, he wrote his most famous tract, "The Seventh Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign." God blessed the sacrifice and scholarship that went into that little work. It made numerous

converts to the Sabbath, among whom were James and Ellen White, who accepted its message shortly after their marriage on August 30, 1846.

In view of all this and of his later labors, Joseph Bates may rightly be considered the father of the Sabbath truth among Seventh-day Adventists--a people who today count millions of Sabbath keepers around the world.

Let us pause and get acquainted with Joseph Bates. [1]

What a man he was! Intrepid, inventive, indefatigable, disciplined, dedicated, colorful, and kind. Patriarch of the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers, he traveled more and was ill far less than any of the other founders of the church. He lived till he was 80.

Bates was born in 1792 only a dozen miles from the sights, sounds, and smells of New Bedford, Massachusetts, a port fast becoming the whaling center of the world.

Inevitably he took to the waves at 15 as a cabin boy. His father hoped he would have an unpleasant time and quit. He had a very unpleasant time but kept right on. During his first voyage he fell from the rigging into the Atlantic but was rescued before a shark, seeking food on the other side of the ship, could make a meal of him.

On his second trip, while ashore at Liverpool, he was impressed into the Royal Navy under a brutal British practice which helped to precipitate the war with America in 1812. Five years to the day passed before he was released. Half of that time he spent as a sailor at sea and half as a prisoner on a man-of-war or at dread Dartmoor Prison. Several times he attempted escape over his ship's side or through its hull, but every time was foiled.

Free again, he made ten voyages between 1815 and 1828, advancing through second mate and first mate to captain of his crew and part owner of his ship. In 1818, between trips, he married his

childhood sweetheart, Prudence Nye.

His life was ever adventurous. Checking the anchor chains once in his days as a crewman, he saw sheet ice form suddenly all around his rowboat and carry him in gathering darkness out to sea. His captain read the burial service for him!

On another occasion, returning with a heavy cargo of iron from Europe and only three short days from home, his ship was engulfed in a most ferocious and extended tempest. The vessel was driven back into the Atlantic for weeks, while lengthy sea grasses and enormous barnacles flourished on her hull, severely retarding her progress. Seven times his captain hailed passing ships to beg for water and other provisions. Joseph Bates believed until he died that the prayer of the black cook, the first prayer he ever heard on shipboard, was one reason that they reached home at last.

One by one, five children (the first died in infancy) were added to the Bates's home; at the

same time, liquor, wine, profanity, and tobacco were one by one resolutely subtracted from Joseph's personal way of life. He became more thoughtful about salvation. Prudy (as he called his wife) placed a New Testament in his seaman's chest. The Good Book deeply impressed the captain. At first, depressed about his soul, he thought of jumping overboard. On shore in South America he climbed a tree to be safe from snakes and prayed aloud. Peace was stealing in, but complete confidence in God still eluded him.

Back home in Fairhaven he introduced regular family worship and started attending church. In his boyhood, before going to sea, he had given his heart to God and happily attended prayer meetings. That experience was now long in the past and he was starting over anew. All at once his fears departed and joy came in with a rush. "My tongue was loosed to praise God. ... All doubts and darkness respecting my conversion and acceptance with God, passed away like the morning dew, and peace like a river, for weeks and months occupied my heart and mind."

Aboard ship in these better days he entreated God in writing, "Use me O Lord, I beseech Thee, as an instrument of Thy service; number me among Thy peculiar people."

In years to come, this prayer was to be marvellously fulfilled. On the day of his baptism he began to organize a temperance society, one of the first in America. On his final voyage, which followed immediately, he ordered his men, strangers from Boston, to avoid all profanity, to refrain entirely from alcohol, and to keep the Sabbath (which to him at that time, of course, meant Sunday). They enjoyed the least quarrelsome trip of their careers. Soon forty and then seventy-five other ships from New Bedford and Fairhaven were following the example set by Bates and his men.

In 1828, after twenty-one years at sea, Joseph Bates retired from sailing and sold out. He had promised Prudence he would stay home when he had saved $10,000. It appears he had achieved his

goal. There was another factor. He wanted more opportunities to witness for the Lord. While he developed a silk farm and sold real estate, he became an active member of the local Christian Connection church and of several reform societies, including an antislavery (abolitionist) group.

But just as his silk farm was coming into production, he heard his first Millerite sermon and at once cast himself with everything he had into the advent movement. Having worked with J.V. Himes in temperance causes in the 1820s, he was quickly drawn into the leadership of the Adventist people. He chaired one of their general conferences.

In 1843 Bates joined hands with H.S. Gurney, a rugged blacksmith with a fine singing voice, for an evangelistic tour to Kent Island off the coast of Maryland. By this time he had abandoned abolitionism, believing the second coming to be the only effective answer to slavery. He wanted now to lead the bondsmen to freedom in Christ. But the slave owners greeted him with suspicion. "I understand you are an abolitionist," said one, "and

have come to get our slaves."

"I have indeed come to get your slaves--and you too!" replied Bates. "I want you all to be saved."

A heckler interrupted a meeting and threatened to rouse a mob and ride him and Gurney out of town on a fence rail.

Bates responded lightly, "If you will put a saddle on it, we would rather ride than walk." His audience laughed and made the heckler sit down. Bates and his "singing evangelist" proceeded to draw many converts from blacks and whites alike.

Before the spring of 1844, he sold his farm and real estate, settled his debts against the coming of his Lord, and proceeded to give virtually all the remainder of his fortune to the cause. When Prudence protested that he was imprudent, he confidently replied, "The Lord will provide." Though the Lord did not come as expected, He did indeed provide for the Bates family, often in

unexpected ways.

Tuesday, October 22, 1844, found Joseph almost penniless, and without his only son. Choosing to follow his dad's youthful adventures rather than his religious convictions, fourteen-year-old Joseph, Jr., put to sea on a whaling ship on Monday, October 21. In his twenties young Joseph was to be injured by a whale; in his thirties, to die at sea.

The day after the disappointment found Captain Bates deeply embarrassed. As a highly respected member of the community he had urged his neighbors to prepare for the second coming. Now they taunted him in the streets until he wished the ground would open up and swallow him.

He soon got over that, however, and counted himself among the Adventists who hoped their calculations were wrong and that Jesus would yet come soon. We have already seen what occupied part of his time in 1845 and 1846. He accepted the Sabbath from Preble and the Bible and the new

light about the sanctuary discovered by Edson, Crosier, and Hahn. He became convinced late in 1846 that Ellen White was a true prophet. He then went on to become, with James and Ellen White, one of the top three leaders in the emerging Seventh-day Adventist movement.

Accustomed to endless travel on the high seas, Bates the seafarer continued to rove. Until 1852 he sought to bring the new light to Millerites from Maine to Michigan; after that he traveled still farther afield, witnessing to any who would listen, from stragglers by the roadside to a governor (W.H. Crapo, of Michigan) in his mansion. Trains then seemed like airplanes today. He used them at times, handing out tracts to the passengers. Sometimes he walked; it was cheaper, and he could meet more people that way. Sometimes, having no money for the fare, he was forced to walk.

Often he tramped many long miles through snow to look up a single family. On various occasions he arrived in time to pray for a seriously ill child and see it healed. Once, after months on

the road, he returned to Fairhaven, only to be off again to visit the "scattered flock" after a single weekend! (Mrs. Bates for many years had the companionship of her widowed mother and then of a married daughter.)

Although able to hold large crowds spellbound, Bates's normal procedure was to address small groups in churches, public schools, or farmhouses. Interested people invited their neighbors from the country miles around and provided Bates a place to sleep a night or two--then often counted a few new Sabbath keepers as the consequence of his call.

Weather was but a slight deterrent to this man who had faced ocean storms. When he was sixty-five, he baptized seven people in a river, standing in a hole cut through three feet of ice. The temperature was thirty degrees below zero.

Blessed with natural energy and tactfulness and almost thirty years the senior of James White, Bates was chosen to chair most of the more important conferences held by Sabbath-keeping

Adventists, a practice that lasted until the formal organization of the General Conference in May 1863. Thus the captain continued in command.

The reformer also continued to reform. To the improvements in his way of life that he made in the 1820s, he had added by 1844 the rejection of tea, coffee, meat, and rich desserts. Preferring to witness by example, Bates said little about his diet in public until Ellen White's health reform vision of 1863. After that he spoke more freely on the subject.

As people looked at him, they were constrained to listen! Sick but a few brief times in his entire life, he could say at seventy-nine, "I am entirely free from aches and pains!"

James White, who was himself rarely free from aches and pains, could say of Bates, "He stood straight as a monument and would walk the sidewalks as lightly as a fox."

Having disciplined himself as a ship's officer to

maintain a continuous log about his craft and crew, Bates was able in spite of his incessant travels to send hundreds of reports and articles flowing into the Review office. Subscribers, many of whom he personally had baptized, thanked him for them.

This ability of his as a writer brings us back to where we started. Bates, the devout Sunday-keeping captain became a yet more devout Sabbath-keeping Adventist. And, as we have seen, it was a booklet that he wrote in 1846 called The Seventh Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign that won James and Ellen White, and many others, to the Sabbath. In 1855 he told J. N. Loughborough an experience he had while writing one of his three books on the Sabbath. It is a famous story and well worth retelling.

Prior to the development of western silver mines in the 1870s, silver was a scarce commodity in the United States, and English and Spanish coins were in common use. When the event in this story occurred, Bates's cash reserves were reduced to a single York shilling. Let us reconstruct the story as

if he were telling it himself: [2]

"While I was praying one day, the conviction came over me that I ought to write a book about the Sabbath and that God would provide the means. So I seated myself at my desk with my Bible and concordance at hand and began to work. After about an hour Mrs. Bates came and said, 'joseph, I don't have flour enough to make out the baking.'

" 'How much do you lack?' I asked.

" 'About four pounds,' she replied.

"I went out and purchased the flour, brought it home, and sat down once more at my desk. Soon Mrs. Bates came in again and exclaimed, 'Where did this flour come from?'

" 'Why,' I asked, 'isn't there enough?'

" 'But I don't understand,' she said. 'Have you, Captain Bates, a man who sailed vessels out of New Bedford to all parts of the world, been out and

bought four pounds of flour?'

"Up to this date Mrs. Bates [who was not yet a Sabbath keeper] did not know my true financial condition. Recognizing that I must now acquaint her with it, I said calmly, 'Wife, I spent for this food the last money I had on earth.'

"Mrs. Bates began to sob bitterly and asked, 'What are we going to do?'

" I stood to my feet as if I were a captain still directing my vessel and said, 'I am going to write a book and spread the Sabbath truth before the world.'

" 'But what are we going to live on?'

" 'The Lord will open the way.'

" 'Oh, The Lord will open the way! The Lord will open the way!' That's what you always say.' And bursting into tears, she left the room.

"I went on writing for about half an hour, when an impression came over me to go to the post office. I went, and sure enough there was a letter--but with the five-cent postage not paid. It humbled me to tell the postmaster, Mr. Drew, a friend of mine, that I did not have even five cents, but he was kind and said, 'Take it along, and pay some other time.'

" 'No,' I replied, 'I won't take the letter until the postage is paid. I'm of the opinion, however,' I went on, 'that there is money in it. Would you please open it? If there is money there, take the postage out first.'

"The postmaster complied--and found a ten-dollar bill. It was from a person who said the Lord had so impressed his mind that Captain Bates needed money that he had sent it to me immediately.

"With a light heart I then went to a provision store, bought a barrel of flour for $4.00, and some potatoes, sugar, and other necessary things. When I

explained where the groceries should be delivered, I warned, 'Probably the woman will say they don't belong there, but don't you pay any mind. Unload the goods on the front porch.'

"I then went to Benjamin Lindsey, the printer, and arranged for publishing my book on the understanding that I would pay for the work as fast as I received money, and that the books would not be mine until the bill was paid in full.

"I knew that no one owed me anything, but I felt that it was my duty to write the book and that God would move on people to send the means. I bought some paper and pens in order to give time for the groceries to get home ahead of me. Then I went on, entered the house quietly by the back door, and sat down again at my work. Soon Mrs. Bates came into my study and said excitedly, 'Joseph, look on the front porch! Where did that stuff come from? I told the drayman it didn't belong here, but he insisted on unloading it.'

" 'Well,' I said, 'I guess it's all right.'

" 'But where did it come from?'

" 'The Lord sent it.'

" 'The Lord sent it. The Lord sent it, That's what you always say!'

"I handed her the letter I had received. She read it and had another cry, but a very different one from the first. And then she sweetly asked for my forgiveness for her lack of faith.

"And the money did come in, sometimes from persons I never met. In fact, the final amount that we needed--I never found out where it came from--arrived on the very day that the books were finished."

Although Joseph Bates never found out where that final payment came from, J.N. Loughborough, in 1884, found out. He learned that H.S. Gurney, Joseph Bates's singing blacksmith friend of the Kent Island trip, had provided it. When Gurney had

set out on that journey, his employer had fired him and angrily refused to pay him his back wages that were due. Now, just in time, the Lord led the employer to relent. [3]

God's providence in helping Captain Bates spread the word about the Sabbath in 1846 and 1847 strengthened early Sabbath-keeping Adventists in their sometimes sorely tested belief that God was indeed with them.

The fuse had ignited the gunpowder. A radiant new light about God's holy day was bursting upon them!

Notes:

1. This sketch of Bates is based primarily on his own writings, including his autobiography, which was republished by the Southern Publishing Association in 1970; also on Godfrey T. Anderson, Outrider of the Apocalypse (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1972); and

Spalding, Origin and History, vol. 1, pp. 111-130

2. Adapted from Loughborough, The Great Second Advent Movement, pp. 251-254. Loughborough says the incident occurred while Bates was writing his first Sabbath book in 1846; but James White, Life Incidents, p. 269, says Bates was reduced to a York shilling while writing his third book on the subject in the autumn of 1847. It appears that this third book was A Vindication of the Sabbath and The Commands of God: With a Further History of God's Peculiar People, from 1847-1848 (New Bedford: Press of Benjamin Lindsey, 1848), which appeared in January, 1848, and had evidently taken some months to prepare. Godfrey T. Anderson of Loma Linda University recently discovered a copy in the Boston City library
3. Review and Herald, June 28, 1923, pp. 9, 10. We may say that God kept the money "in escrow over the disappointment to help start the third angel's message," Spalding, Origin and History, vol. 1, p. 401

Chapter 13

Third Angel's Message

When they first met early in 1846, Ellen Harmon didn't believe in Joseph Bates's Saturday Sabbath. Nor did the captain believe in Ellen Harmon's prophetic visions.

Ellen found in Bates, who was more than thirty years her senior, a kindly second father. She was deeply puzzled, however, that so genuine a Christian should so emphasize the fourth commandment.

Didn't he know, she wondered, that there were nine others?

For his part, Bates accepted Ellen as a wonderful Christian youth, but though he found nothing contrary to Scripture in her visions, he "felt alarmed and tried exceedingly" by them and supposed that they came only from her depressed state of health.

He interrogated her and her sister closely outside of public meetings. In November that year she had a vision about stars and planets. He knew she was ignorant of this subject, which he, as a sailor, knew a good deal about. He was so impressed that he finally acknowledged her gift to be the true spirit of prophecy.

Meantime, the Millerite Adventists, who had stood gloriously united in their belief that Christ would come to cleanse the "sanctuary" of earth and church on October 22, 1844, had by now divided along several different seams. A large number had rejected the whole concept and either returned to their former denominations or abandoned the Christian faith.

By contrast, a small but energetic number of Millerites chose to believe that they were correct about the time of Christ's return. Jesus had come on October 22 all right, but invisibly and only to His true believers--that is, to themselves.

According to these people, Jesus had cleansed His sanctuary (themselves) from every stain of sin, with the result that they could never sin again.

To her great perplexity, Ellen was summoned by the Lord to help lead these people out of their delusion. As she saw that their claims to holiness were accompanied by foolishness and even immorality, she developed a strong aversion to all kinds of fanaticism. Through the years that followed she often warned against claiming to be free from sin.

A sizable body of Millerites (perhaps 40,000 or more) continued to believe that Christ would come to cleanse the church and the earth at the close of the 2300 days, but they said they had been mistaken in the initial date for their calculations (457 BC). These Adventists regrouped in April 1846 at a conference in Albany, New York. For decades they continued to set new dates for Christ's return. They still exist, about 30,000 in number, as the Advent Christian Church.

It was among these disappointed but still believing Adventists that Edson and Crosier (with their light on the sanctuary), Ellen Harmon (with her light on the sanctuary and the spirit of prophecy), and Bates (with his light on the Sabbath) exerted their efforts.

Before the end of 1846 several nuclei of believers in Sabbath, sanctuary, and spirit of prophecy had formed in scattered places around New England and the state of New York in Fairhaven and Port Gibson, of course, and also in Topsham, Maine, for example, under the leadership of a county engineer named Stockbridge Howland and in Dorchester, Massachusetts, south of Boston, under Otis Nichols, a lithographer.

Perhaps the first Adventists to accept all three discoveries of Sabbath, sanctuary, and spirit of prophecy were the Otis Nichols family. These upstanding people welcomed Ellen and her sister Sarah in 1845 when they were all Sunday keepers. They accepted the Sabbath from Joseph Bates many months before Ellen did. Perhaps we should

ascribe to them the honor of being called the first "Seventh-day Adventists." [1]

Otis Nichols, incidentally, wrote William Miller a letter in April, 1846, [2] urging him to accept Sister Ellen as God's prophet and her new light on the sanctuary as God's truth. Miller, sad to say, was too old and tired to understand.

We may never decide on who were the first Seventh-day Adventists. Be that as it may, James White and Ellen Harmon were married in Portland on August 30, 1846. Having been disfellowshiped from their former churches because of their advent faith, they took their vows before a justice of the peace.

James had been very successful as an Adventist evangelist. It was he whose six-week evangelistic tour one winter, referred to in chapter two, resulted in 1000 conversions. Visiting Portland from time to time he was impressed by reports that Sister Ellen was being invited by different ministers to witness in their churches. After the disappointment he met

Ellen again about the time she had the "Bridegroom" vision. After that they traveled together now and then, duly chaperoned, of course, by Sarah Harmon or Louisa Foss or sometimes up to half a dozen others, to encourage the disappointed Adventists. Now--almost penniless--they were married. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Harmon, who had moved back to Gorham, invited them to call their place home, and they gladly accepted.

Promptly, James and Ellen studied Joseph Bates's new book on the Sabbath, compared it with the Bible, and found that the seventh day is indeed God's true Sabbath. A couple of months later it was just after Bates had accepted her visions--she fell so ill that some people thought she would die. Her parents, sisters, and husband prayed earnestly, but there was no improvement until Otis Nichols sent his son Henry from Dorchester to convey their concern. With Henry there, they held another season of prayer, and young Nichols was so impressed that he got up from his knees, walked across the room, and placed his hand on Ellen's head. "Sister Ellen" he said, "Jesus Christ maketh

thee whole." By the next day Ellen was well enough to ride thirty-eight miles with James to a meeting. And for quite a while afterward she felt better than she had for years. When their first child was born, on August 26, 1847, they named him Henry Nichols White in memory of this young man and this happy occasion.

During that same autumn and winter of 1846-47, after visiting Edson and Crosier in Port Gibson and watching Ellen have her vision on astronomy in Topsham, Bates went home to Fairhaven to revise and enlarge his first book on the Sabbath, the supply of which was nearly exhausted.

In the second edition of The Seventh Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign, Bates developed a clear exposition of the third angel's message. He also developed Hiram Edson's thought that perhaps Revelation 11:18, 19 was then being fulfilled. He noted that Preble, Cook, and others, including himself, had been impressed to publish light on the Sabbath question. And he suggested that the reason may have been that when the "seventh angel began

to sound" in 1844, the "temple of God was opened in heaven," and the "ark of his testament" (containing the Ten Commandments) was then seen.

Bates was modest about this second point. "I do not say that this view is positive," he cautioned, "but I think the inference is strong." [3] By early spring, however, his doubts were removed. Ellen had received two remarkable visions. [4] One came on March 6, 1847, the other on April 3, 1847. These were similar enough so that we can treat them both by telling the story of the second.

Let us imagine the scene, reconstructed from early accounts. [5]

Welcome spring was on its way at last to Topsham, Maine. Undoubtedly the snow was melting, crocuses were blooming, and robins were hunting worms in the grass. Indoors at Stockbridge Howland's place, the believers were kneeling in prayer on Sabbath, April 3, seeking God's light and truth. All at once Ellen, in her warm, pleasant

voice, cried out, "Glory! Glory!" Everyone knew she was having another vision.

A sense of thrilling reverence settled over the group. Already their prayers were being answered. They knew that when her vision was over, Ellen would have something helpful to tell them.

While still in vision Ellen rose to her feet and walked over to the table where they had placed their Bibles and other books before kneeling. The rest of the group rose also from their knees and sat in their chairs to watch and to pray silently for God's blessing.

Without hesitation, Ellen picked up a Bible and held it above her head. Keeping it there, where she could not possibly read it, she turned to a Bible promise. Then she walked over to someone who needed the encouragement of that particular text, quoted the verse while looking toward heaven, and pressed the Bible gently against his chest. As the person took the Bible to read the passage for himself, Ellen returned confidently to the table,

picked up another Bible, and repeated the process for a different person. This she did a number of times. Then she sat down and the vision continued.

After a time she inhaled deeply, her first breath since the vision began.

Everyone was eager to know what she would have to say. She gazed around the room while her eyes grew accustomed to earth's dimness after heaven's brightness.

"Can you tell us now what the Lord has shown you?" James asked quietly.

"Yes, yes, I can," Ellen replied.

"I saw an angel flying swiftly toward me. He carried me quickly from the earth to the Holy City. In the city I saw a temple, which I entered. Then I passed into the holy place.

"Jesus raised the veil and I passed into the holy of holies. There I saw an ark, covered with purest

gold. Jesus stood beside it. Inside were tables of stone folded together like a book. Jesus opened them, and as He did so; I saw the Ten Commandments. On one table were written four commandments and on the other, six. The four on the first table shone brighter than the other six, but the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all. The holy Sabbath looked glorious. A halo of glory was all around it."

At this, the people looked at each other in surprise, and Ellen noticed their reaction. "I was amazed too," she agreed. "I had no idea that the Sabbath was so very special in God's sight."

After a pause she went on. "I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question to unite the hearts of God's dear, waiting saints."

Again looks of surprise passed around the room.

Ellen thought for a moment struggling to find the best words to express what she had seen and wanted to tell. "I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. At this time God's chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us."

"Was there anything else, Ellen?"

"Yes, there was," she replied. "It was about the third angel. I saw that it represents the people who receive the Sabbath and go out to warn the world to keep God's law as the apple of his eye. I saw that if we gave up the Sabbath, we would receive the mark of the beast. I also saw," and she smiled, "that in response to the warning, many people would embrace the true Sabbath." [6]

Ellen White wrote out this vision immediately, and within days Joseph Bates had a thousand copies printed as a "broadside" (a single sheet printed on one side). James White raised $7.50 to pay off Bates's expenses. Soon afterward White republished the vision, along with several other items, in a tract called A Word to the Little Flock. Later (in 1851) he published the visions in a booklet entitled A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White. (The word "views" here means "visions.") It is available today in Early Writings.

When the believers read the vision of April 3, 1847, some were perplexed. They understood that after the time of trouble begins, everyone's probation will be dosed and their cases decided. "What good will it do," they asked, "to preach the Sabbath to them then?" Ellen White explained in her next book [7] (now also included in Early Writings):

" 'The commencement of the time of trouble,'

here mentioned, does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the 'latter rain,' or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out. [8]

The early Sabbath-keeping Adventists were fascinated with the prediction that they were to "proclaim the Sabbath more fully."

More fully than whom? More fully than what? More fully in what way? The importance of these questions cannot be exaggerated.

Back in 1847 the answer was at least this: They were to attach to the Sabbath far greater meaning and deeper personal experience than the

Sabbatarian Anabaptists had in their day or the Seventh Day Baptists had from whom the Adventists received the Sabbath.

The Seventh Day Baptists and Sabbatarian Anabaptists, you remember, had said that the Sabbath is binding for the following reasons: (1) It is a part of the moral law, (2) Jesus and the apostles endorsed it, and (3) The apostate church changed it in fulfillment of prophecy. Was anything wrong with their position? No. It was biblical, and it showed a high regard for the fulfillment of prophecy in past history.

But there was much more to the Sabbath truth than this. And today it is no vague something-or-other that distinguishes Seventh-day Adventists from other Sabbath keepers. There is a vitally different way of living and thinking involved here, a vastly broader understanding of why we exist and what we're expected to do and to be.

This difference involves insights into such Bible terms as "the seal of God," "the three angels'

messages," "the mark of the beast," "the sanctuary," and "the judgment." Seventh-day Adventists accept essentially all that the Seventh Day Baptists taught, but from Bible study they have added highly practical concepts relating to last-day prophecy.

As the handful of Adventist pioneers studied the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, they came upon the solemn evidence that they themselves were occupying a specific role at a specific time foretold in Scripture.

As Millerites in the early 1840s they had helped to herald the first angel's message concerning the judgment hour and the everlasting gospel. (Revelation 14:6,7) In 1843 and 1844 they had helped proclaim the second angel's message, that Babylon had fallen and that God's people must in consequence come out of the churches that "Babylon" represented. (Revelation 14:8; 18:1-4) In 1846 they noticed that the third angel proclaimed a Christ-centered message about Sabbath keeping--the very truth that was just then

attracting their attention. (Revelation 14:9-12)

To their astonishment they came to realize that they were being summoned to fulfill the third angel's message, just as they had helped to fulfill the first and second angels' messages.

Their discovery was confirmed by Ellen White's visions of March 6 and April 3, 1847.

Here was a highly significant advance beyond the Seventh Day Baptists. It provided a new sense of destiny, an awareness that they were being called to fulfill yet another prophecy whose time had come.

Their sense of timing was further reinforced in the March and April visions by the indication that since October 22, 1844, Jesus had been standing beside the ark, displaying the law and revealing a halo of glory about the Sabbath. Another vision two years later, in March 1849, provided the specific information that "the time for the commandments to shine out with all their

importance ... was when the door was opened in the most holy place [that is, on October 22, 1844], ... where He [Jesus] now stands by the ark." [9] In another vision Ellen saw an angel quoting the third angel's message, and as he did so, pointing upward to the heavenly sanctuary. [l0]

Now, Jesus will not stay in the most holy place forever. As we observed in chapter nine, in October 1845 Ellen saw the moment arrive when Christ will leave that place and step onto the cloud that will carry Him to the earth as God's judgments fall upon sinners. Revelation 15 and 16 also foretell this time and indicate that God's judgments will fall in the form of plagues.

The third angel's message not only talks about Sabbath keeping but also tells specifically who the people are who will have to suffer these last plagues. They are those who do not exercise enough faith to keep the commandments of God, and who instead accept into their minds the "mark of the beast."

It became crystal clear to the early Seventh-day Adventists that the book of Revelation speaks of two opposite insignia that people will receive into their minds before the close of probation, the "mark of the beast" and the "seal of God." Because the mark of the beast is placed on those who do not keep the commandments, the early Adventists began to see that the seal of God is for those who do keep them--who keep all of them, including the Sabbath.

They discovered, in fact, that the seal of God is the Sabbath, properly observed through faith in Jesus. And this interpretation of theirs was confirmed through extensive Bible study and by one or more visions given to Ellen White. [11]

As they examined Revelation 7, they saw that another special angel is commissioned in the last days to attend to this "sealing" of God's people into the Sabbath experience. They saw also that the seven last plagues will not fall until every sincere follower of Jesus has been sealed.

As the pioneers pondered all of this and more, a sense of urgency and purpose emerged based on the awareness that the Sabbath is important because time is short and Christ is coming soon.

While doing His dosing work in heaven Christ calls attention to the Sabbath. In these last days He is blotting out sin, and Sabbath breaking is of course, sin.

As the dark clouds of the final time of trouble gather in the skies and the impending storm is about to break in fury, the great controversy between Christ and Satan reaches its climax on the earth. Good angels and wicked demons are abroad seeking to attract men's allegiance to God or to the beast. In the process, characters are being formed irrevocably either in the image of God or in the likeness of the evil one. No one can escape involvement. All must and will take sides. Only those who choose God's truth will escape the plagues and share the joy of the second coming of Christ.

Into this fray every Sabbath keeper who understands the times is called to enter with all his energy, treasure, and talent: "Let the message fly, for the time is short!" [12]

How different this emphasis was from the one Mrs. Oakes brought with her to Washington, New Hampshire! When that good Seventh Day Baptist lady presented what she had to say, the Adventists, in effect, replied that because Jesus was coming soon, there was no time or need to consider the Sabbath.

But as Bates, Gurney, Edson, James and Ellen White, David Arnold, Stockbridge Howland, and the other Sabbath-keeping Adventists got well into their research, they found that it is precisely because Christ is coming soon and time is short that they must accept the Sabbath--this great test of genuine allegiance to Jesus--and proclaim it everywhere.

This, then, is at least part of what was meant by "proclaiming the Sabbath more fully." It is also the

heart of the third angel's message.

And the third angel of Revelation 14 proclaims his message "with a loud voice." In order for this part of the prophecy to be fulfilled so that the message could fly to those who knew it not, the believers began to sense a responsibility to launch a regular publication.

Notes:

1. According to different traditions, Rachel Oakes, Frederick Wheeler, and William Farnsworth are each ascribed the honor of being known as the "first Seventh-day Adventist." However at the time when each of them accepted the Sabbath, they knew nothing about that "foundation of our faith," the new light on the sanctuary. And being unacquainted with the modern manifestation of the spirit of prophecy in Ellen Harmon White, they could scarcely be numbered among those who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus," in this special latter-day

meaning. Otis Nichols held to all three doctrines (Sabbath, sanctuary, and spirit of prophecy) some years before Wheeler, Farnsworth; or Mrs. Oakes did, and somewhat earlier than Bates, Edson, and the Whites. Another early believer (possibly even earlier than Nichols) was H. S. Gurney.

2. Otis Nichols to William Miller, April 20, 1846, written on the back of a copy of the April 6, 1846, broadside of Ellen Harmon's first visions
3. Joseph Bates, The Seventh Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign, 2d. ed., rev. and enl. (New Bedford: Press of Benjamin Lindsey, 1847), p. iv
4. The vision of the Sabbath in the sanctuary that begins on page 100 of Life Sketches is the April 3 vision, and is the same as the one described in Early Writings, pp. 32-35. It is also the one that Joseph Bates published in his broadside, A Vision, vol. 1, no. 1 (April 7, 1847). In his "Remarks" in this same broadside Bates refers to a "similar vision" given to Ellen White on March 6, 1847, and it may be

assumed that it is this vision which is described? in Life Sketches, pp. 95, 96. Careful examination of these two pages tends to confirm this conclusion.

5. Adapted from Loughborough, The Great Second Advent Movement, pp. 244,245
6. The statements attributed here to Ellen White are slightly adapted from Early Writings, pp. 32, 33, 85, 86; Life Sketches, pp. 95, 96, 100-103; and Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, pp. 82, 83. They combine elements from both the March 6 and April 3 visions
7. Its title and date: Supplement to the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White, 1854
8. Ellen G. White, Early Writings, pp. 85, 86
9. Ibid., p. 42
10. Ibid., p. 254
11. See especially ibid., pp. 36-38; also SDA Encyclopedia, art. "Seal of God."
12. Present Truth, no. 4 (September 1849), p. 28

Chapter 14

The "Good Old Review"

The periodical that James White launched in November 1850 has for over a century been known to old-timers as "the good old Review." It is registered with the post office as The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald. [1]

Advent Review? If the "advent" is the second coming of Christ, how can a periodical review an event before it happens?

The answer in 1850 was that the advent which the Review reviewed was the great Second Advent awakening. After the spring disappointment in 1844, Josiah Litch had initiated The Advent Shield, tracing the providence of God and the fulfillment of prophecy in the advent movement up to that time. In the summer of 1847 Joseph Bates wrote Second Advent Waymarks and High Heaps, an updated history on the same theme.

Ellen had seen in her first vision that the bright light of the midnight cry was to shine all along the path to the Holy City. This is one reason why there have been so many histories about early Adventism, including the one you are reading now. This is one reason, too, for the Advent Review.

And Sabbath Herald. The new paper was to herald a crucial message from Jesus in the most holy place designed to separate men and women from sin and draw them to Himself.

Between the initial sabbath-in-the-sanctuary discoveries and the inauguration of the Review and Herald, two and a half significant and formative years elapsed, marked by more than twenty [2] weekend conferences that continued the earlier weekend gatherings of 1846. These meetings were held in selected homes in the various geographic centers of Sabbath-keeping that were developing, in kitchens, parlors, a carriage house, a "large unfinished chamber," and in several swept-out barns.

The conference held in April 1848 was particularly noteworthy. Accustomed to attendance by only a dozen or so even in Topsham, James White was deeply impressed when about fifty people arrived for the meeting at Albert Belden's home in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. Years later he evaluated that conference as "the first general meeting held by Seventh-day Adventists. In point of numbers and influence, it marked a new era in the cause." [3]

A conference might last from Friday to Sunday or from Thursday afternoon to Monday morning. One was held on a Sunday and Monday. James White, like some living "Advent Review," presented evidence that the true events preached by the Millerite movement culminated in the entrance of Christ into the most holy place. Joseph Bates, himself a living "Sabbath Herald," preached on the Sabbath in the ark of His testimony and on the need to adopt the third angel's message.

The men and women who attended these meetings had been through the preparation and

disappointment of 1844. Now, several years removed from that ecstasy and agony, they asked each other whether it was true? Did the 2300 days really end in 1844? Did Jesus indeed enter the inner court of the heavenly sanctuary? Did we truly preach the first and second messages? Is it "duty" now to pass along the third?

They were experienced in the sacrifice entailed in espousing an unpopular theology. They were inexperienced in the vagaries of liberal philosophies. Their criteria were the same as Luther's at the Diet of Worms--Scripture, common sense, and conscience. When they found that the Bible spoke clearly on the claims of the seventh-day Sabbath, most of them willingly staked their lives on it.

"Many of our people," wrote Ellen White in 1904, [4] "do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who ... searched for the truth as for

hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power."

Ellen White's own role was limited but valuable. "When they came to the point in their study where they said, 'We can do nothing more,' the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me," she reports, "I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively."

The brethren at once looked up her suggestions in their Bibles and concordances and were thrilled to find that they really did clarify the points at issue. [5] These contributions of Ellen White's seeemed particularly impressive because "the brethren knew that when not in vision," she tells us, "I could not understand these matters." The

general outline was plain enough, of course. But often she could not understand the Bible texts or the earnest reasoning that the brethren used to support their various points of view.

"I was in this condition of mind," she says, "until all the principal points of our faith were made dear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God." Evidently it was God's purpose that the brethren should understand that the truth He was calling them to hold and proclaim was rooted in the Bible itself and not--as some might be tempted to say--merely in a young woman's dreams.

At the meeting held at David Arnold's place near Volney, New York, in the summer of 1848, Ellen White reports [6] that "about thirty-five were present,--all the friends that could be collected in that part of the State. But of this number there were hardly two agreed. Some were holding serious errors, and each strenuously urged his own views, declaring that they were according to the Scriptures."

As they began to celebrate the Lord's Supper, one of the brethren rose to say that he believed it should be observed only once a year--at the time Jesus Himself celebrated it. Someone taught that the millennium was already in the past.

"These strange differences of opinion rolled a heavy weight upon me," Ellen White remembered years later. "I saw," she wrote, "that many errors were being presented as truth. It seemed to me that God was dishonored. Great grief pressed upon my spirit, and I fainted under the burden. Some feared that I was dying. Brethren Bates, Chamberlain, Gurney, Edson, and my husband prayed for me. The Lord heard the prayers of His servants, and I revived.

"The light of heaven," she continued, "then rested upon me, and I was soon lost to earthly things."

In her vision she was shown what was wrong about the ideas these men were presenting, and what their true position ought to be. She was

"bidden to tell them that they should yield their errors, and unite upon the truths of the third angel's message." The outcome was that the meeting "closed triumphantly. Truth gained the Victory," and the movement gained several new members.

It cost something to conduct these conferences. Ellen paid the most. Convinced that God was calling her to go, she tearfully left her infant son Henry with her dear friends, the Stockbridge Howlands, visiting him now and then for several years, like Hannah, with a present.

To secure money to attend the conference at David Arnold's farm, James White earned forty dollars mowing hay with a scythe--at eighty-seven and a half cents an acre.

While going home down the Erie Canal with the Whites after the meeting in Edson's barn at Port Gibson, dear Brother Bates attempted to step onto a canal boat with the precious dollar for his fare already in his hand. When the boat failed to stop Bates lost his balance. Undaunted, our former sea

captain started swimming "with his pocketbook in one hand, and a dollar bill in the other. His hat fell off, and in saving it he lost the bill, but held fast to his pocketbook." A little later he and the Whites paid a surprise visit to a new Sabbath-keeping couple, Brother and Sister William Harris, hoping that Bates could get his clothing dried out.

The final gathering in 1848 was held at the Otis Nichols home in Dorchester on November 18 and 19. In some ways it was the most significant to that time. As the believers had come into ever closer unity on the great themes they were studying, a burden had developed that someone should lead out in publishing them. Should Elder Bates, perhaps, get out another book?

In Dorchester they prayed much for guidance in publishing the message. On Sunday, Mrs. White had a vision during which she spoke aloud about the Sabbath as the seal of God (Revelation 7) rising in the east like the sun and growing warmer and brighter until the saints are made immortal. After the vision she bade Brother Bates publish what she

had said. [7] Turning to her husband she added, [8] "I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people."

A little paper. Books are good, of course, but frequently they suffer neglect. Periodicals are more persistent.

Mrs. White discussed the proposed paper: "Let it be small at first; but as the people read," she promised, "they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first."

After a pause she added, "From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear around the world." That was an impressive prophecy to present to a handful of poverty-stricken pioneers!

A testing time followed. Many of the folk who wanted the journal printed wanted someone else to pay for it. Elder White had no money to publish it himself. Totally dedicated to his ministry, he depended for income on occasional jobs between

evangelistic expeditions and on small donations. When he sought support for the proposed paper, the response was surprisingly depressing.

In January 1849 Joseph Bates stepped into the gap with a new book, A Seal of the Living God; A Hundred Forty-Four Thousand of the Servants of God Being Sealed, in 1849. Catching some of the breadth of Ellen White's "streams of light around the world," he confidently predicted the proclamation of the Sabbath in France, Britain, Russia, and lands east of the Euphrates.

One year later, early in 1850, James White also came out with a book, a 48-page hymnal titled, Hymns for God's Peculiar People, That Keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus. It, too, carried the message about the seal of God, "the message clear, ascending from the east" and prayed,

O God, the living God,
Do thou the seal apply,
And from destruction's rod,

Oh! keep us lest we die. [9]

A hymn called "Second Advent History" traced the development of the first and second angels' messages till "yet a third and solemn message, now proclaims a final doom." Another one celebrated Ellen White's earliest visions. It was written by W.H. Hyde, who was healed when Ellen prayed for him in the first months of her prophetic ministry:

We have heard from the bright, the holy land;
We have heard, and our hearts are glad.

In her sunset years, Mrs. White was often heard humming this hymn to herself. [10]

Books of different kinds were good, but God had said He needed a periodical!

In 1848 White had scythed hay at eighty-seven and a half cents an acre to earn money to attend a conference. In July 1849, after months of unproductive pleading for his paper, he decided to try it again.

"I'm going out to find a field to mow," he announced to his wife. As he stepped out into the summer morning, a great burden pressed on Ellen and she fainted. Prayer was offered, and soon she felt better. A vision came.

"What was it about?" James asked later.

"About you."

"What did you see?"

"The Lord showed me that He blessed you last year when you went out to mow, but that if you tried the same thing now, He would let you get sick. Your work is to write, write, write and walk out by faith."

That did it. James found pen and paper and, with his Bible and concordance, began to prepare articles and editorials without delay. As he looked up texts, he sometimes found it hard to understand them. Then he and Ellen knelt and asked God to

explain them. Then he continued writing.

At this time Elder and Mrs. White were living temporarily in Albert Belden's new farmhouse near Rocky Hill, Connecticut. The first conference of 1848 had convened in its "large unfinished chamber" (about 20 x 30 feet) on the second floor. James and Ellen, after nearly three years of marriage, still had no furniture. Everything they owned fitted easily into a three-foot trunk.

Every spare penny went into the cause. Miss Clarissa Bonfoey of nearby Middletown, a woman with a sunny disposition whose mother had passed away, offered to bring her things and move in with them. They were delighted. Her furniture was brought over by wagon, partitions were installed on the second floor, and house-keeping began.

It was a unique arrangement, Miss Bonfoey living with the Whites, and they all in turn living with the Beldens. Similar beliefs can seal friendships closer than blood. The attachment endured, and Ellen's sister Sarah later married the

Belden boy, Steven, and became the mother of Frank E. Belden, the songwriter. [11]

In the same month that the paper was born (July 1849) the White's second baby was born also. The new baby was named James Edson. The new paper they called the Present Truth.

The title came from 2 Peter 1:12. In his first editorial White wrote, "In Peter's time there was present truth, or truth applicable to that present time. The Church has ever had a present truth. The present truth now, is that which shows present duty, and the right position for us who are about to witness the time of trouble, such as never was." The "present truth" was, of course, the Sabbath.

When the material was finished, James White walked into Middletown in dead heat of July, climbed to the upstairs office of a local printer, and requested a thousand copies.

James was suffering from a bad pain in his leg. He limped the eight miles in and the eight miles

back.

As the printer, Mr. Charles Hamlin Pelton, gazed first at the proposed title and then at the article headings in James White's handwritten copy, he was puzzled. "The Weekly Sabbath Instituted at Creation, and not at Sinai," he read. "Is this 'present truth'?"

But a job is a job. He shrugged and pointed to the dotted line. White signed the contract and limped off down the long flight of "stairs. But as Pelton began hand setting the tiny letters, the mystery was resolved. "The storm is coming," he read. "War, famine and pestilence are already in the field of slaughter. Now is the time, the only time to seek a shelter in the truth of the living God."

Most of the material in the first three issues, though brand-new to the printer, was solid old Seventh Day Baptist teaching. In the third and fourth issues characteristic Adventist concepts emerged: Jesus in the sanctuary, the third angel's

message, the Sabbath as God's seal, and a discussion of Isaiah 58:12-14, where last-day Sabbath keepers are called "repairers of the breach" (or "break") in God's law. "The time is come," declared James White, "for the Sabbath to be proclaimed more fully."

Elder White's lameness continued as repeatedly he hiked back and forth, reading proof and making sure the material was set up and printed to his satisfaction. When the copies were finished, he borrowed Brother Belden's buggy to bring them home.

They were placed in a pile on the floor. Believers were called in from nearby farms. With tears of earnestness they knelt around the papers and asked God to bless them. Then they folded them, cut their edges, and addressed them to everyone they thought might read them. James stuffed a few at a time into his carpet bag and carried them back to Middletown for mailing. Almost immediately letters and contributions came in encouraging him to carry on. After publishing

four issues from Middletown, the Whites left the Albert Beldens', spent a few happy days with their three-year-old son Henry at the Stockbridge Howlands' in Topsham, Maine; then, borrowing furniture from local brethren, they settled for a while in Oswego, New York. Miss Bonfoey came along to baby-sit little Edson while Ellen White went traveling with her husband. With all the moving around the Present Truth lapsed a couple of months. When White secured a new printer and putout the December issue, he found that enthusiasm for the paper was nearly dead. Even Bates, indeed, was opposed [12] (temporarily, it turned out), probably reasoning that publication deadlines anchored an editor too much to a desk.

So meager were the offerings for a while that White was compelled to announce, "At the present time I am destitute of means, and am some in debt." [13] Ellen White added from a vision, "As I viewed the poor souls dying for want of the present truth, and some who profess to believe the truth letting them die, by withholding the necessary means to carry forward the word of God, the sight

was too painful, and I begged the angel to remove it from me." [14]

Now the money came in. Apathy was replaced with ardor--and James White soon found himself editing two papers!

To the Present Truth he added the Advent Review. Then in November 1850 after the Whites had moved to Centerport, New York, and then to Paris, Maine, the first number of the first volume appeared of the Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, [15] a continuation of both papers united in one. In addition to articles about the Sabbath and the sanctuary, it published other items, of course, on a variety of biblical themes; also letters from Sabbath keepers, and notices on the whereabouts and activities of their few, ever-traveling ministers.

Subscriptions, free at first, were set after a while at $1.00 a year to those who could pay, though still free to those who could not. Almost every Adventist home received it, and most paid

for it. It became a link of love binding the movement together and leading it forward.

Today the "good old Review," much improved and enlarged, still helps to keep the Seventh-day Adventist Church united and moving ahead while remembering the past. In recent years, indeed, the large growth in membership outside North America has led to the launching of special editions adapted to readers in other places, such as in Europe and South America.

After starting the new paper the Whites continued to travel too much, work too hard, and get paid too little. There was a great message to be carried and few messengers carried it. In 1851 James White became so discouraged from overwork that he set out one day to give the printer a note to be inserted in the next Review, that this was to be the last issue. But Ellen fainted again as he left the house, and he turned back to help her. They prayed, their faith revived, and the paper lived. [16]

While residing in Saratoga Springs, Elder White decided that they ought to stop hiring commercial shops to do their printing and should set up their own printing office instead. Too bad, he thought, that a periodical devoted to proclaiming the Sabbath should be printed on the Sabbath, as occasionally was the case. He felt, too, that believers would do the work with greater fidelity than unbelievers, and he hoped in addition to save some money for the cause.

To buy the necessary equipment, he would first have to find the money. An appeal went out, the funds came in, and White acquired a Washington handpress, much like the press that Gutenberg used in the fifteenth century.

Meanwhile another move had brought the Whites and the Review to Rochester. A rambling old house was rented (at $175.00 a year). It was large enough to accommodate the press, the type, the paper stock, the Whites, their young sons, and about a dozen dedicated volunteers. These received little more than their room and board, with the

board often consisting of nothing more than mush or beans, meal after meal.

Notable among those who joined the staff in those early days were Annie Smith and a little later her brother Uriah.

Annie helped wherever she was needed, especially as copy editor and proofreader and sometimes even as a relief editor when Elder White was away. She had a talent for verse, and ten of her hymns are to be found in The Church Hymnal. "I Saw One Weary, Sad, and Worn" is only the best known of her many poems which adorned the front page of the Review. Most of these interpreted the movement in lyrical lines such as these:

We are going, we are going, now a lonely Pilgrim Band,
To a brighter world of glory--to a fair and happy land.

Her untimely death from consumption at age twenty-seven was deeply mourned.

Uriah Smith was also a poet, with a taste for more classical patterns but equally useful to the Advent Review:

The hour came on,

And with it came, as on the whirlwind borne,
"Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out
To meet him!"

Uriah was twenty when he gave up his plans for a Harvard education and moved into the big house in Rochester. At the age of twenty-three, in 1855, he was made editor. With but few interruptions, he served the Review for fifty years, most of the time as editor-in-chief, but also for many years as bookkeeper, office manager, or proofreader.

Smith was skillful with tools as well as with pens. For a long time he was the only engraver at the press responsible for wood-cut illustrations. He made his own desks, two of which are preserved.

[17] He secured a patent for an artificial leg--he had lost a leg in his teens--that enabled him to kneel when he prayed. Later he secured a patent for an improved school desk.

For many years Uriah Smith filled the position of General Conference secretary. Between nine and twelve o'clock at night he also found time to write books. His most famous is Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation, which remained the standard Adventist interpretation of the two great prophetic books until decades after his death. Handsome, courteous, and committed, he was one of the best-known Adventist leaders during his lifetime. He died from a stroke suffered while walking to work on a Friday in March 1903 at the age of seventy-one.

But back to the early days! In 1855 the believers in Michigan invited the Whites to move from Rochester to Battle Creek and offered to build a little factory for them. The offer was gladly accepted, and a small two-story wooden structure was quickly erected.

During the decades that followed, steam-powered equipment replaced the little handpress. Increasingly spacious buildings replaced the tiny first one, until the Seventh-day Adventist Steam Press in Battle Creek became the largest and best-equipped printing establishment in the entire state of Michigan.

But Adventists have never forgotten that their first headquarters was the home that housed the press in Rochester, and that their first institution was a printing company. It was in order to incorporate this company as a legal publishing association that the leaders sat down in 1860 and selected the denomination's name. And as long as the General Conference offices were located in Battle Creek (from 1863 to 1903), they occupied rooms in the Review and Herald plant.

All of this is symbolic. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was called into existence on account of a special last-day message. Its mission is to live that message and to let others know about

it (through books and papers and in other ways) so that they can live it too.

Notes:

1. This chapter is based primarily on Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, pp. 110-128; James White, Life Incidents, pp. 264-296; contemporary correspondence by James and Ellen White; and Spalding, Footprints of the Pioneers (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), pp. 99-103
2. Seven conferences of various size and significance are known from contemporary sources to have been held in 1848; at Rocky Hill and Bristol, Connecticut; Oswego and Port Gibson, New York; Rocky Hill (again); Topsham, Maine; and Dorchester, Massachusetts. Several of these 1848 meetings have become known familiarly among Seventh-day Adventists as "Sabbath Conferences," a term apparently coined by Arthur L. White, who, in his Messenger to the

Remnant (Washington, D.C.: Board of Trustees, Ellen G. White Publications, 1954), p. 38, lists five "Sabbath conferences," omitting the gatherings at Bristol and Dorchester. The SDA Encyclopedia, art. "Sabbath Conferences," adds Dorchester to make six--and goes on to say that sixteen similar meetings were held in 1849 and 1850. Bates is known to have attended a "conference" in Middletown, Connecticut" in 1847

3. James White, Life Incidents, p. 271, where he puts the number in attendance at "less than thirty." In Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, p. 93, a contemporary letter of his is quoted which gives the number "about fifty"
4. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), bk. 1, pp. 206, 207
5. Joseph Bates, A Seal of the Living God. A Hundred Forty-Four Thousand, of the Servants of God Being Sealed, in 1849 (New Bedford, [Mass.]: Press of Benjamin Lindsey, 1849), p.

31

6. Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, pp. 110, 111
7. Ibid., p. 116, footnote
8. Ibid., pp. 124, 126
9. This hymnal bears the date 1849 but did not appear until early 1850. Apparently the type for the first signature(s) was set in 1849 but not for the last one till later. Present Truth, December 1849, p. 47; March 1850 (no. 7), p. 56; March 1850 (no.8), p. 64; cf. Ellen G. White, Letter 4, 1850
10. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 70; Arthur L. White, Messenger, p. 127
11. Frank E. Belden wrote a large number of hymns and gospel songs, twenty-two of which may be found in the The Church Hymnal. His Christ in Song was loved and widely used for many years
12. James White, Oswego, New York, to Bro. Hastings, January 10, 1850. Arthur L. White, Messenger, p. 49
13. Present Truth, December 1849, p. 47
14. Present Truth, April 1850, p. 71
15. Changed in the second volume, August 5,

1851, to the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald

16. Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, p. 140
17. One is housed at the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Washington, D.C., and the other in the James White Library, Andrews University.

Chapter 15

What Adventists Owe to Other Christians

Seventh-day Adventist pioneers called the message they discovered, "the truth." They titled their first periodical the Present Truth. Their successors still speak of new members as "coming into the truth" and of apostates as "leaving the truth."

In 1881 Ellen White wrote, "It is as certain that we have the truth as that God lives; and Satan, with all his arts and hellish power, cannot change the truth of God into a lie." [l]

It almost sounds as if Seventh-day Adventists think they are the only ones who possess truth! On the contrary, however, they acknowledge their deep indebtedness to countless other Christians through the ages who have cherished and passed on truth from one generation to another, often at the

peril of their lives. We have already traced the special debt which Adventists owe to Seventh Day Baptists. Let us look briefly at their debt to others.

But first, what is truth? Jesus answers, "I am ... the truth" (John 14:16), and "Thy word is truth." (John 17:17) So truth is "Christ" and "Bible doctrine."

"Doctrine" means "teaching." The Bible teaches the truth about God. Jesus, too, taught the truth about God. At a time when many regarded the Supreme Being as either unreasonably angry at man's failings or heartlessly unconcerned about his sufferings, Jesus presented Him as a loving heavenly Father.

Jesus said that God is so gracious that He offers salvation to anyone who simply trusts in Him with all his heart. "Whosoever believeth in him" has everlasting life! (John 3:16) He promised quietly, "Set your troubled hearts at rest. ... If I go ... , I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also." (John 14:1-3, NEB)

Jesus also promised that until that happy day arrives, He would be with mankind in a very personal sense through His representative, the Holy Spirit, who is just like Him. (See John 14:15-18, 25-29; 15:26,27; 16:7-14) To assure people of this, He invited His followers to eat a simple meal, the Lord's Supper, reminding themselves the while that He desires to be "in" them and become part of them, just like food.

Jesus taught that when a person dies, God does not torment him in some unseen place, but lets him rest, peacefully "asleep," until the resurrection. (See John 11:11-14; 5:28,29)

Jesus also taught the truth about a God who wants everyone to be free. No one should be compelled even to be a Christian. People should be instructed first and then baptized only if they choose to believe. (See Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16) He taught further that, if we would like to continue as His friends, we should keep God's commandments. He promised us the needed help to do this, adding that living in harmony with God

would yield happiness. (See John 15:1-11)

Jesus spoke so many wonderful truths about God that the people who listened to Him "were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips." (Luke 4:22, New International Version) At the risk of their careers, even the temple police once disobeyed an order to arrest Him. "Never man spake like this man," they explained. (John 7:46)

When Jesus left the earth, He gave His apostles "the spirit of truth" to continue teaching the true doctrine--the truth about the Truth.

Sadly, things went wrong. Just as Paul had warned, false teachers arose. (See Acts 20:28-31; 2 Timothy 4:3,4) In a tragically short time, Christ's truth became badly distorted. False doctrines brought a false concept of God and; with it, a loss of spirituality.

Righteousness by faith was never totally forgotten, and some Christians in every age held firmly to their faith in God. But in the confusion of

the Middle Ages, people eager to find peace with God were often taught that in addition to "believing," God wanted them to go on difficult pilgrimages, visit shrines, and perform other penances [2] of various kinds. Above all they were told to remain on good terms with their pastors, for priests, it was said, were appointed by God to hold the keys to heaven and hell, and to close heaven against any who did wrong. Since many priests in those days were dishonest and corrupt, many people came to despise God in the same way they despised priests.

Babies were baptized as soon as they were born, turned into church members before they knew what it meant to be Christians.

The literal second coming of Christ was not denied, but medieval theologians preferred to think that the second coming had already taken place. Misapplying Revelation 20:4, they said Christ had come and set up His bishops on their thrones (cathedra) in their churches (cathedrals). [3]

Instead of teaching that in death a person sleeps, it was said that unbaptized persons went straight to eternal torture in hell when they died and that even the faithful were often assigned to purgatory, an intermediate place where they were burned for an indefinite period before advancing on to heaven. Legends were invented to support these theories. A grave in England, for example, was said to rise and lower from time to time, proof positive to the pious that the soul buried there was suffering in torment. When young people asked if they might help their dead parents or grandparents pass more quickly from purgatory to heaven, they were assigned additional penance. If they asked, "Have we done enough?" the reply was, "No one knows."

Diaries and devotional works of monks and saints reveal that for many Christians the Lord's Supper continued through the Middle Ages to be an occasion for intimate fellowship with a personal Saviour. At the same time, the simple words of Jesus, "This is my body"--translated into the Latin, "Hoc est corpus meum"--were believed to turn the communion bread into the actual flesh of Christ,

[4] and to make the wine so sacred that laymen were forbidden to drink it lest they accidentally spill the "blood of God."

Superstitious folk entered churches at midnight to steal away fragments of the body of Christ and sprinkle them for good luck among their cabbages. It was popularly felt that little need existed for sermons or, indeed, for any worship except at the moment when a little hand bell rang and the pastor pronounced the words, "Hoc est corpus meum." Services were accelerated to make this mystic moment come the quicker. Christ's words of spiritual fellowship became for millions little more than magic.

As the truth about God was forgotten and false doctrines took its place, people grew increasingly careless or superstitious about personal religion. In general, they regarded God as being either angry or unfeeling--much as the Jews had done before Jesus came to set the record straight.

How God must have longed to present the

world once more with the real evidence about Himself! How pleased He must have been when John Wycliffe opened his mind for new truth!

Wycliffe, a loyal Catholic theologian, loved the Lord Jesus and believed that Christ was the source of all truth. He begged his fellow Catholics to lay aside various man-made traditions and follow Scripture as the Christian's only guide.

Enemies threatened to kill him. Once as he lay ill, they came to mock him. But he sat up in bed and said, "I shall not die, but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the friars."

Wycliffe became the father of the first translation of the whole Bible into Middle English. Hundreds of handmade copies were circulated. Special preachers called Lollards were sent about England in distinctive clothes reading this Bible to the people and teaching them to put Scripture above tradition.

A century passed and Martin Luther appeared,

often on his knees before God seeking truth. As a professor in a Catholic university, he was required to teach the Bible as the Word of God. But so many penances were required of him that heaven seemed impossible and God an angry judge. "Love Christ?" he asked in a moment of anguish. "I hate Him."

The writings of Saint Augustine helped him. Then with intense excitement he discovered in the Bible that sinners are not saved by "works" but by simple faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He discovered "the priesthood of believers," the thrilling truth that every man may come to Christ directly without the mediation of priests and saints. "The gates of Paradise opened wide," he said, "and I walked right in."

Luther agreed with Wycliffe that the Bible and the Bible alone is the rule of faith. At the Diet of Worms in 1521 he declared with consummate courage, "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason, I can do no other. My conscience is captive to the Word of God."

Luther accepted also what Wycliffe had discovered about the Lord's Supper, namely that the bread does not turn into the body and blood of Christ. [5] He emphasized that the meal is a supreme occasion at which Christ assures us of the free forgiveness of every sin. Thus Luther accepted insights of previous Christians in the rediscovery of truth, added others of his own, and passed them on to millions after him.

All over northern Europe thousands of Catholics rejoiced with Martin Luther. Large numbers gave their lives for their faith. Lutheran ministers were at times hanged from trees in batches. It seemed to them cheap enough to give their all in exchange for the truth about their Saviour.

In France and Switzerland other devoted Catholics continued their study and discovered additional truth that had been obscured in the Middle Ages. The most notable of these, John Calvin, father of the Presbyterians and

Congregationalists, had as logical a mind as Luther's was enthusiastic.

He systematized the exciting biblical truth newly coming to light. It is unfortunate that Calvin's name today is associated so disparagingly with "predestination."

True, he did teach it, but to the people of his time it did not sound as it does to us today. People then had been taught that their destiny depended on the caprice of priests and bishops who "held the keys" to the kingdom of heaven. Calvin said that people were indeed predestined--not by men, however, but by God, before the foundation of the world!

It is difficult today to grasp the immense relief that came over Calvin's congregations when they learned from the Bible that their destiny was so far removed from the fickle whims of pastors and priests that it was settled by God thousands of years before such men were born.

Calvin was not completely correct. He taught that once a person had been chosen by God for salvation, even the person himself could not choose to be lost. Nonetheless, when he put a man's destiny in the hands of God rather than in the hands of other men, he moved his people significantly closer to Bible truth.

More than Luther, Calvin laid before his followers the possibility of victory over sin and challenged them to live each day better than they had the day before. Whereas Luther recovered chiefly the doctrine of our transformed status before God (justification by faith), Calvin emphasized the transformation of character (sanctification by faith) that God's grace makes possible.

Thousands of Catholics accepted with gratitude the recovered truth that Calvin taught them, and many of these also gave up their lives as a result.

In England the followers of Calvin came in time to be known as Puritans because of their

concern to purify what seemed to them to be the rather immature Christianity of the new Anglican Church.

To the Puritans we owe the King James Version of the Bible. In 1603 they petitioned King James I for a new translation for use in worship services. The king complied and appointed forty-seven scholars of the realm to undertake the task. Eight years later, in 1611, the famous King James Version came off the press. Who can estimate what this translation has done, to the glory of God?

On the continent of Europe devout Anabaptists called for "believer's baptism." And they gave their lives for it when necessary. The first Anabaptist to die appears to have been a pretty Swiss girl whose head was held under water in a horse trough in mock imitation of believer's baptism. Others died in this way or by being drowned in rivers. Or burned at the stake. Or barbecued beside a fire. Others were laid on open coffins too small for them. Soldiers pounded them in with their hobnailed boots.

Analogous to the Anabaptists on the continent of Europe were the Baptists of England and America. [6] These also insisted that only believers and not infants should be baptized. But unlike most Anabaptists they advanced to "baptism by immersion."

In the eighteenth century teaching on predestination began to grow stale. Millions who had never felt the fear of priests began to fear that God Himself might have chosen them to be lost! John Wesley recovered the New Testament truth that salvation is free for all--for "whosoever believeth." (John 3:16)

Wesley founded the Methodist Church, which accepted the principles of "the Bible and the Bible only," the "priesthood of believers," the status of the Lord's Supper as a memorial bringing through faith a healing sense of the presence of Christ, and the doctrine that the Christian's life should be a transformation. Wesley always held to infant baptism, but he and his church permitted baptism

by immersion to those who desired it. (Ellen Harmon was baptized by immersion into the Methodist Church.)

What the Methodists did was typical of other Christians. They accepted truth from those who had gone before and added further new light, and in this way God's truth was ever seen more clearly.

There were individual Christians, too, through the centuries, who learned that God does not torture sinners after death but lets them rest. Wycliffe believed in the "unconscious sleep between death and resurrection." Martin Luther taught that death in Christ "is a fine, sweet, and brief sleep." In England the Anglican Francis Blackburne, the Baptist Matthew Caffyn, and the Puritan poet John Milton shared this belief. In America the former Methodist minister George Storrs and the former Congregationalist minister Charles Fitch also taught the sleep of death. These are a few samples of a large number who believed the same. [7]

Reference to Storrs and Fitch reminds us that in the early nineteenth century came the great interdenominational second advent awakening, in which the truth about the second coming of Jesus shone with greater luster than it had since the second century. Out of that awakening rose the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Annie Smith was a Baptist.

Rachel Oakes was a Seventh Day Baptist.

Hiram Edson, Frederick Wheeler, and Ellen Harmon were Methodists.¸

Joseph Bates and James White were members of the Christian Connection.

Stockbridge Howland was a Congregationalist.

As these and increasing thousands of others became Seventh-day Adventists in the early days of the new movement, they did not give up the beautiful truth about God which they had learned

in their former denominations. Instead, they found new glory in it as they learned still richer concepts.

Justification through Jesus Christ, victory through the Holy Spirit, salvation by faith alone, the Bible as the only rule of faith, priesthood of believers, baptism by immersion, the near return of Christ--all this and more Seventh-day Adventists drew from their former churches. To it they added the Sabbath (from the Seventh Day Baptists) and fanned its flame into a brilliant torch. More than any before them, they taught that a gracious God lets the dead sleep until the resurrection. Supremely, they offered to the world the exciting news about the great new enterprise in which Jesus is now engaged in heaven.

So when Adventists say that they have "the truth," they mean that they have the truth that other Christians held before them, and also the present truth, the special additional truth which applies particularly to this present time.

The knowledge that Jesus is in the most holy

place, blotting out sins, would not have been truth in the days of Martin Luther. Jesus wasn't in the most holy place then. But He is now. And the implications are immense.

When Adventists invite a friend to leave his denomination and become a Seventh-day Adventist, they don't expect him to give up everything he knows as a Methodist or Baptist or Presbyterian or Catholic. Far from it! Every beautiful facet of truth he learned about Jesus in his former church, he should cherish even more warmly in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, adding to the glorious things he already knows the great and vital truth discovered by Seventh-day Adventists.

When an Adventist says he has "the truth," he is not boasting. It isn't his truth. It's God's truth; truth which God has revealed, not to satisfy curiosity, but to be spread everywhere to everyone who will listen, to everyone for whom Christ gave His fife and whom He lives to save.

God has placed this lustrous truth in our hands. Now He asks us urgently, expectantly, to run with it and tell it to the world.

Notes:

1. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 595
2. Penances, as the word is used in this paragraph, were various activities assigned by a priest and intended to show that a person was truly repentant for his sins. The most common penances consisted of reciting the Lord's Prayer and the Ave Maria a specified number of times. The Ave Maria is the prayer that begins, "Hail, Mary, Mother of God, blessed art thou above women"
3. Augustine taught that the millennium is going on now, and that the bishops have already been authorized to sit on their thrones in judgment
4. Catholics in the later Middle Ages taught that the "substance" of the bread turned into the "substance" of the body and blood of Christ, a process they called "transubstantiation." By "substance" their theologians did not imply the

common meaning of this term. Rather they meant that the "breadness" of the bread turned into the "bodyness" of Christ's body--while the appearance of the bread remained unchanged

5. Wycliffe and Luther believed that Christ's body was "really" present in the bread, a doctrine sometimes described as "consubstantiation." Nonetheless, by denying transubstantiation, they made a significant advance in the direction of truth. (They did not believe that Christ was confined only to the bread, of course)
6. English Baptists have a complex origin. They seem to have arisen in part from roots in the British Isles, and are not to be regarded as merely a modification of the Anabaptists.
7. LeRoy Edwin Froom, The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1965-1966), pp. 58, 78, 142, 205, 300-314

Chapter 16

Jesus and "Investigative Judgment"

If John and Marilyn Adventist could get out of bed extra early some summery Sabbath morning in the 1970s, hop into a backward-flying time machine, and attend church with the Seventh-day Adventists of 1851, they would need to be prepared for some very real surprises.

Even though they would find that the Howlands or Beldens or Chamberlains or Arnolds (or whoever else they sat next to during church) cherished many doctrines with which they were familiar, John and Marilyn would soon discover that several of the features of modern Adventism were strangely missing.

For one thing, "church" would not be held in a church. Sabbath-keeping Adventists first erected church buildings in Battle Creek, Michigan, and

Bucks Bridge, New York, in 1855. When James White included a certain favorite Methodist hymn in his 1850 Hymns for God's Peculiar People, he left out the words, "On this Thy day, in this Thy house." [l] Early Adventists met in their own houses, with several families worshiping together under one roof.

Very likely there would be no preaching on the Sabbath morning when John and Marilyn paid their visit. By 1851 ministerial ranks had enlarged to include William Ingraham, George Holt, and a number of others in addition to Joseph Bates and James White; but there were by no means enough preachers to meet with all the weekly gatherings of the "scattered flock." Sabbath morning sermons were consequently rare. On a typical Sabbath hymns were sung to the accompaniment of a pump organ (if the leading family were fortunate enough to own one), Scripture and the Review were read aloud by local laity and discussed, prayers were offered, and, quite likely a "social meeting" was held during which the believers confessed their faults to one another and bore testimony to their

faith.

If John and Marilyn remembered to take their Bibles with them, they would make good use of them. But their purses would likely remain unopened. Indispensable as offerings may be to modern Adventist gatherings, they were almost unheard of in 1851. Foreign missions were scarcely thought of till the 1870s, and Adventist ministers in the 1850s often went about their duties very much underpaid.

A considerable shock would strike John and Marilyn in the middle of the day when, invited to lunch, they saw pork placed on the table--and observed some of the other folk who were also invited to dinner light their pipes while they awaited their meal! Smoking, though scarcely approved, was reluctantly permitted among the brethren in 1851, and Ellen White's first comprehensive health reform vision was twelve years in the future.

Another shock would come at six o'clock in the

evening. With summer's sunset still several hours away, our John and Marilyn would watch incredulous as their 1851 counterparts promptly at six pm set about their ordinary weekday duties! It would not be until November 1855 that Adventist pioneers would discover that "from even unto even" (Leviticus 23:32) means from sunset to sunset rather than, as they supposed, from six to six.

And if, during supper before flying back to the 1970s, John and Marilyn talked anxiously about one another's "Laodicean" condition, they would be met with uncomprehending stares. Sabbath-keeping Adventists applied the Laodicean message to Sunday-keeping Adventists until clearer (and more embarrassing) light came in 1856.

All of this points up the fact that the discovery of new light did not come to an end with the establishment of the "landmark" doctrines [2] in the late 1840s. Great new truths kept coming to light in the 1850s--as also in the 1860s (notably healthful living), the 1870s (foreign missions and

education), the 1880s (deeper insights into righteousness by faith), and the 1890s (richer understanding of the person of Christ). In fact, Adventist understanding of the Bible advanced considerably after 1900 as well, and especially so in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

But to return to the 1850s. It is worthwhile to examine a particular belief which was developed during that decade and which was to become characteristic of the advent movement. This is the doctrine of the "investigative judgment."

When asked today, "What new work did Jesus begin in 1844?" an Adventist instinctively replies, "The investigative judgment." Surprisingly, when Hiram Edson's friend wrote out their great new understanding of the Day of Atonement in the Day-Star Extra--the publication which Ellen Harmon felt "fully authorized by the Lord to recommend to every saint"--he breathed not one word about investigative judgment! His emphasis, instead, was on Christ's work of blotting out sins in the sanctuary and on the cleansing of the people.

Probably this was providential. The primary purpose of the ancient Day of Atonement was indeed the blotting out of sins in the sanctuary and the cleansing of the people. The Lord (through Moses) told the people that the high priest entered the most holy place to "make an atonement for the holy sanctuary" and "to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." (Leviticus 16:33,30)

But the Day of Atonement was also a day of judgment. The Israelites were expected to "afflict their souls" on that day. That is, they were required to search their hearts to the core to see if they were truly sorry for the sins which they had confessed day by day during the previous year. Any Israelite who refused to do this was to be investigated by the elders and cut off from the congregation. (Leviticus 23:29) But the Day of Atonement was not primarily a day of judgment.

It was primarily a day of intimate communion with God and of ultimate cleansing from sin.

Backsliders were "disfellowshiped" on that day not so much because it was a day of judgment as because it was a day of supreme spiritual opportunity--and they didn't care.

The Millerites associated judgment with the cleansing of the sanctuary not because they found judgment in the Day of Atonement of Leviticus 16 but because the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 parallels the judgment scene in Daniel 7:9-14, an event which they wrongly interpreted as the second coming. This is why they preached the first angel's message, "The hour of his judgment is come," When Jesus failed to arrive on October 22, 1844, some of the Millerites assumed that He had begun a brief period of judgment in heaven at the close of which He would yet descend to the earth. But when still He did not appear, they gave up the idea.

During the 1850s, however, J. N. Loughborough and Uriah Smith, who were both won to the Sabbath in 1852, had their attention directed to the judgment aspect of the Day of

Atonement [3]. In 1857, two years after the Review and Herald office was moved from Rochester, New York, to Battle Creek, Michigan, James White used the term "investigative judgment."

It is quite obvious that if the first angel's message ("the hour of his judgment is come") precedes the second and third angels' messages, then the hour of God's judgment must strike before the end of the world in order to allow time for the second and third messages to be preached after the judgment begins.

The Day-of-Atonement judgment in ancient Israel concerned itself only with the people of God. It was they who had confessed their sins during the year. It was they whose sins were then to be blotted out. And it was they, not the Gentiles, who were subject to being "cut off."

Jesus referred to this special judgment of believers in His parables. He spoke about fishermen who catch all kinds of fish (converts) in their net (the church) and then sit down (in the

judgment) to keep the good and throw away the bad. (See Matthew 13:47-50) He told of a king who invited everyone to a wedding feast and then, just before the meal, inspected the guests to see if those who had accepted the invitation had also put on the free wedding robe. When he found a man who thought that his own clothing was good enough, without the free covering robe, he ordered him out. (See Matthew 22:1-14)

Jesus also told of a man who owed his employer 10,000 talents. When the employee begged for mercy, he was freely forgiven. But when he went out and abused a fellow employee who owed him a hundred pence the employer had him thrown in jail. "So likewise," Jesus concluded, "shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses." (Matthew 18:23-35)

When in 1844 Jesus went on the clouds of heaven (Daniel 7) to begin this pre-second-coming judgment, He commenced an investigation into the records of the saints to see if those who had

accepted His invitation to salvation had also put on the robe of His righteousness; to see if those who had been forgiven 10,000-talent sins at their conversion had thereafter forgiven other people who owed them a hundred pence.

So important a doctrine as this has continually engaged the thoughts of Seventh-day Adventists through the years since its discovery. Ellen G. White wrote about it frequently and clearly. She said, for example, that Christ's final ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is indeed a time of judgment in which each name written in the Lamb's book of life is taken up one at a time, and at which some names are retained and others erased. See Revelation 3:5; 21:27; 22:19.

Now Daniel 7 says that this judgment sits to give "the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven" to "the people of the saints of the most High." Its grand climax, therefore, unlike that of many earthly tribunals, is not so much the condemnation of the accused as the justification of the redeemed.

Because God really desires to honor His people in this judgment, He summons into evidence the book of remembrance (Malachi 3:16) where "every deed of righteousness" committed by His people, "every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed" has been carefully recorded, along with every sacrifice and sorrow endured for Christ's sake. [4]

God of course knows the verdict in advance. He conducts the judgment in the presence of unnumbered angels (Daniel 7:10) so that they can know it too. He wants every unfallen inhabitant of the entire universe to be proud of His earthbound but earnest saints who so soon will share the delights of eternity with them. The judgment, said Ellen White in 1898, is "held in the presence of other worlds, [so] that the love, the integrity, the service, of man for God, may be honored to the highest degree." [5]

Wonder, O heavens! Be amazed, O earth!

"They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up"--not my pebbles, or my stones--but "my jewels." (Malachi 3:17)

In His estimation of character God makes no mistakes. Notice the words of Ellen White: "How solemn is the thought! Day after day ... our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe." [6] Those "believers" who have not grown in grace will not be allowed to enter the holy city.

But when Christ sees that a child of His has clung faithfully to Him to the end, He triumphantly claims on that person's behalf justification full and complete. Of that glorious time when the sins of the righteous will be blotted out finally, fully, and forever, Ellen White wrote with great warmth: "Christ will clothe His faithful ones with His own righteousness. ... Thus will be realized the complete fulfillment of the new-covenant promise, 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' 'In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought

for, and there shall be none.' (Jeremiah 31:34; 50:20)" [7]

It seems incomprehensible: "I will remember their sin no more." Can the infinite God forget anything? Are not past, present, and future all the same to His omniscience?

But the Bible doesn't say that God cannot remember their sins anymore. It says that God will not remember them anymore.

What a lot this reveals about the heavenly Father! With what eagerness He must anticipate this moment of the blotting out of sins! How deeply He has yearned, since rebellion first began, to rid His universe and His people of sin, to have done with it once and for all and forever! When He closes the cases of His people in their favor, He will remember their sins no more--not because He could not, but because He emphatically and lovingly will not.

When their sins are blotted out, the saints will

not claim to be sinless. They need not. They claim Christ's sinlessness and cling to that.

The remembrance that they have fallen far short of the glory of God and their awareness that they are utterly dependent on Jesus for safety and support is enough to prevent any claim to self-righteousness. Yet when probation closes and the time of Jacob's trouble sets in, [8] although the saints "have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal." [9]

Their confessed sins are blotted out, and they have left none unconfessed. Their sins have "gone beforehand to judgment." [10] They have been "borne away into the land of forgetfulness." [11] "Their sins ... have been blotted out." [12] And the heralds of heaven announce with joy, "You are clean from all your sins before the Lord."

But can sins be blotted out merely from the record books of heaven? Suppose that after their sins were blotted out the saints committed new ones--what would the "blotting out" have meant?

God can blot out the sins of those who die in faith by simply attending to their records. They are dead and cannot sin again. But will it not be vitally different for those who are alive when their names are called in the judgment? Can their sins be blotted out in heaven unless they are completely overcome on earth? The "blotting out of sins" must be achieved in the hearts of the living saints before it can be accomplished in their books of record.

Ellen White wrote very seriously about this in The Great Controversy: "Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. ... There was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble." [13]

In the same year that these lines appeared, Ellen White delivered a sermon [14] on a Sabbath afternoon at the great 1888 General Conference?

held in Minneapolis in which she reminded her large congregation that "now Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary." Then she asked, "What is He doing?"

"Making atonement for us," the answer followed, "cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people,"

What then? "Then we must enter by faith into the sanctuary with Him, we must commence the work in the sanctuary of our souls. We are to cleanse ourselves from all defilement. We must 'cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' "

We must do it? We must cleanse ourselves from all defilement? Is that in the Bible?

Indeed it is! She quoted from Second Corinthians 7:1. And James 4:8 adds: "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

Referring to the white-clad multitude in heaven, Revelation 7:14 describes them not as those whose robes Christ washed but as those who have "washed their robes, and made them white." Where did they wash them? In the blood of the Lamb, of course. There is no other source of righteousness. But they brought their robes to the blood; Jesus did not do the washing for them while they slept. Ellen White, writing in 1882, plainly stated that many "wish to have righteousness put upon them as a garment. But the white-robed throng of the redeemed ones, are those who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Christ has presented the matter as it is: 'Agonize to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' " [15]

Everything hinges on our relationship to Christ, on our entire submission to the will and work of the Saviour. While our High Priest is engaged in His final atonement we, like the Israelites of old, must earnestly afflict our souls, our proud self-sufficient souls; for if we do not do this, we, like

they, will be cut off--not because we have sinned (the very purpose of atonement is to forgive sins), but because Jesus engaged in a very special work of grace, and we didn't care.

Thank God, the grace of Christ is a wondrous strong detergent. If we submit ourselves to it, we can be made eternally sweet smelling and clean. "He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap," Malachi 3:2 says; and then, speaking of the work Jesus is doing now in the heavenly sanctuary, Malachi adds in the next verse, "He shall purify the sons of Levi."

He shall purify the sons of Levi! In ancient Israel the priests were the sons of Levi. Since all believers in Christ are now called priests (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6), this promise to cleanse "the sons of Levi" is also a promise to cleanse every Christian who avails himself of the opportunity. The cleansing of the sanctuary, then, involves the cleansing of the people who look to the sanctuary. The blotting out of sins is not concerned merely with accounts but also with attitudes; not merely

with the quantity of sins confessed but also with the quality of lives changed.

Here is where the Sabbath truth comes in. The Sabbath demands the very holiness that is required for the "blotting out of sins" in a person's daily experience. "In order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. ... When the command was given to Israel, 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,' the Lord said also to them, 'Ye shall be holy men unto Me.' " [16] (See Exodus 20:8; 22:31)

Now, "holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; ... it is trusting God in trial ... ; it is walking by faith ... ; it is ... resting in His love." [17]

To keep the Sabbath holy in the ultimate sense, a person will live for an entire day with his will in complete surrender to Christ's power and holiness--living by the Word, walking by faith, resting in Love. Who can do this all day on Sabbath unless he

practices it every day all week? Thus true Sabbath keeping and experiential "blotting out of sins" are one and the same.

But the Sabbath not only demands holiness, it also points to the only possible source of holiness. "I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." (Ezekiel 20:12)

As Christ stands beside the Ten Commandments in the most holy place blotting out sins in heaven, by His grace He sheds precious light on the world to help men and women, boys and girls, reach the standard of dedicated, well-informed victory that will enable them to stand in the time of trouble after Jesus leaves the heavenly sanctuary. "From the holy of holies," wrote Ellen White in 1887, "there goes on the grand work of instruction." [18] Accepting, believing, cooperating with this instruction, be the price what it may, is part of what is involved in bringing one's life to Christ to be washed, to have his sins "blotted out" in an experiential sense. "There must be a purifying

of the souls here upon the earth, in harmony with Christ's cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven." [19]

Instruction about the sanctuary informs us what Jesus, the Lamb of Calvary, is doing now, and that we are living in a peculiarly crucial moment in human history.

Sabbath and sanctuary together remind us that as Jesus in the most holy place removes sins from records, He also seeks in a unique sense to remove sin from people's lives.

The sealing message points to the climactic moment when, through an indissoluble relationship with Jesus and an intelligent understanding of Sabbath and sanctuary, God's people will be settled into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved.

The doctrine of the sleep of the dead guards against the supposition that people go to heaven or hell when they die, a belief that makes nonsense of any day of judgment. Why should God judge

people after He has already sent them to heaven or hell?

Within this total context, the spirit of prophecy manifested through Ellen G. White is seen as a series of messages dispatched from the great High Priest, lovingly guiding His followers into the genuine Christlike holiness of character which He so much desires.

All together these concepts constitute a truly grand work of at-one-ment in which Jesus seeks to link His people into an ultimate and eternal bond of unity with Himself.

Wrote James White in 1868: "Seventh-day Adventists dwell upon this subject [of Christ in the sanctuary] with great delight. ... They treat [it] ... in their sermons and books, and find a place for it among the symbols of prophecy upon their charts. .... It is the great center around which all revealed truth relative to salvation clusters, and contributes more toward defining their present position, than any other." [20]

While the great truth of Jesus and the investigative judgment was first coming clear in the 1850s, the movement was growing at a very rapid rate, and the need for a central organization, much feared by some, was strongly urged by others. We turn now from doctrinal matters to the growth and organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the years.

Notes:

1. For a comparison between the hymns James White selected and the possible antecedents of many of them, see Lyell Heise, "Hymns for God's Peculiar People: A Theological and Historical Study" (term paper, Andrews University, 1975). See also above, chapter 4, note 8
2. For a list of the "landmarks" see Ellen G. White, Counsels to Writers and Editors, p. 30
3. See SDA Encyclopedia, art. "Investigative judgment." Certain historical details in this article are subject to correction

4. Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 481
5. Review and Herald, November 22, 1898, p, 745
6. Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 486
7. Ibid., p. 485
8. In Adventist terminology the "close of probation" as a last-day event refers to the time when Jesus leaves the most holy place and the cases of all have been settled irrevocably for life or death. See The Great Controversy, pp. 490, 491. The "time of Jacob's trouble" is the short but crucial period while the seven last plagues are being poured out, during which the saints, uncertain of their status with God, agonize for His blessing as Jacob wrestled with the Angel at Peniel. (See Genesis 32:24-30; Jeremiah 30:5-7; The Great Controversy, p. 616)
9. Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 620
10. Ibid.
11. Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, vol. 3, p. 135
12. Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 620
13. Ibid., p. 623
14. Ellen G. White, Manuscript 8, 1888, complete

in A. V. Olson, Through Crisis to Victory (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), pp. 260-269
15. Review and Herald, May 30, 1882, p. 338
16. Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 283
17. Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911,), p. 51
18. Idem, Letter 37, 1887
19. Ibid.
20. James White, Life Incidents, pp. 308, 309

Chapter 17

In Need of "Gospel Order"

"I must say, dear brethren, that I hope we shall decide upon what name we shall have; what we wish to be called by. I meet with friends very often who ask me what the name of our people is; and it is quite an embarrassing position to be in, not to be able to give any. We give our children names when they become a few weeks or a few months old. When we commenced to labor in this work, when the cause was young and individuals who had embraced it, few, we did not see the necessity of any such steps. But it seems to me that the child is now so grown that it is exceedingly awkward to have no name for it." [1]

So spoke Elder James White on Sunday morning, September 30, 1860, to one of the most significant conferences in Seventh-day Adventist history. Sixteen years after the Sabbath-and-sanctuary movement was born, it was at last getting down to the business of voting itself a name.

The conference in question had begun to meet the night before, immediately following the close of the Sabbath, and it continued until its business was finished on Monday afternoon. The delegates met in the second Adventist church in Battle Creek. The first one, built only five years earlier, had already proved too small. This one seated 300 and was at present too large for the local congregation. But the energetic Battle Creek Adventists had planned it to be a center for large Adventist conferences. Even so, they scarcely dreamed that a third church would soon be needed, or that a fourth would house congregations numbering nearly 4000.

Many early Sabbath-keeping Adventists opposed denominational organization. In and of itself, this was scarcely unusual in those days. American Protestants still debated energetically as to whether the Holy Spirit worked best through independent congregations or through denominations united by presbyteries, conferences, and general assemblies. Methodists and

Presbyterians believed in broad denominational cooperation, but Baptists and Congregationalists argued equally strongly for the autonomy of local congregations.

In the 1850s James and Ellen White and others urged a presbyterial form of denominational organization, but not all their brethren at first agreed with them. In particular, the establishment of a new denomination was feared by many who had once been Millerites. They had belonged to the established Protestant denominations of the day and, in fact, had been among their most dedicated members. But the churches they loved had turned against them, ridiculed their advent hope, and cast them out.

In their bewilderment, the Millerites had sought an explanation in Scripture and had discovered it in Revelation 14:6-8. Subsequent to the first angel's message about the judgment hour, which they were then proclaiming, they noticed the second angel's message, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." They linked this to Christ's appeal in Revelation 18:1-4, "Come

out of her [Babylon], my people," and with other passages elsewhere in Daniel and Revelation. The conclusion seemed inescapable.

The churches that had treated them so cruelly had rejected crucial truth and so had become "fallen" churches, as surely "Babylon" as the fallen (or "harlot") mother church from which in Reformation times and later they had broken away. They were sincerely afraid that if they set up another religious establishment they too might in time reject new Bible truth and persecute God's true children. Because they had so recently come out of Babylon, it is understandable that they had no desire to find themselves at once in a new Babylon.

But what makes a group of Christians a "Babylon"?

Error, of course. But did anything else characterize the churches that disfellowshiped them?

In the leading Millerite paper, The Midnight Cry, for February 15, 1844, George Storrs warned the believers who were just then being driven out of their churches, "Take care that you do not seek to manufacture another church. No church can be organized by man's invention but what it becomes Babylon the moment it is organized." So organization was feared by many as a hallmark of Babylon.

The Millerites had been excommunicated because their Adventist beliefs were deemed contrary to the creeds of their denominations. Therefore many Adventists felt that they must avoid creeds or become another Babylon.

And one day, as Roswell F. Cottrell, sturdy convert of Huguenot stock who had formerly been a Seventh Day Baptist (and as such a very strict "congregationalist"), reexamined Genesis 11 for the story about the founding of the original city of Babylon, he was struck with the words of the builders: "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower; whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make

us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

"Make us a name! As late as March 22, 1860, Elder Cottrell wrote in the Review that in his opinion it would be wrong to assume a denominational name since such a practice lies "at the foundation of Babylon."

Strange as these arguments about organization, creed, and name may sound today, they do sound a valid note of warning. The harlot who is called Babylon in Revelation does represent a church or group of churches. And a church is an organized body of Christians that holds to a characteristic set of beliefs, or a creed. Furthermore, it is precisely because a church holds to certain beliefs that it tends to call other beliefs heresy. And it is because a church is unified through organizational structure that it has the clout to persecute. When we reflect on the sorrow and stress that the Millerites suffered when shutout of their cherished churches, we can better understand their hesitancy. Organization, creeds, and names can be harmful.

It is also true, of course, that their absence can be harmful.

Not all Sabbath keeping Adventists opposed organization. James White didn't. As early as 1850 he expressed a hope [2] that the church would soon get together and move in gospel order. He preached on gospel order to the Oswego Conference in 1851, and in 1853 published a series on gospel order in the Review. He used the term "gospel order" to convey his conviction that modern church organization should follow the guidance and models found in the New Testament.

Young J. N. Loughborough and elderly Joseph Bates vigorously seconded his efforts. But the more conservative folk held back. And so, without name, organization, or creed, Sabbath keepers referred to themselves quite accurately as "the little flock," "the scattered sheep," "the remnant," "the saints," or "the friends" and carried on.

In spite of their fear of organizational and

creedal unity, these early Adventists regarded themselves with conviction as members of the true church. And they were held together in real unity by a variety of factors.

One obvious factor that held them together, especially in the early years of 1845 to 1850, was their common experience. Almost all of them were former Millerites who had passed through the 1844 disappointment. Other unifying factors included their numerous conferences, the dynamic leadership of Joseph Bates and of the young Whites, Ellen's visions, and, most especially, their characteristic doctrines.

Because "present truth" meant so much, they wrote articles and tracts to publish it and were in turn drawn together by these publications. For a while they were permitted use of the Day-Star, edited by Enoch Jacobs in Cincinnati. When Jacobs became a Shaker, they used Crosier's Day-Dawn for a short period. But in 1849 they began a journal of their own, the Present Truth, soon replaced by the Review and Herald. Believers mailed letters

and articles to James White and were encouraged as they read the faith and experience of fellow believers, published now in their own periodical.

There was enough glue here to hold them together while they numbered only a few hundred and owned no institutions, but in the 1850s they acquired a publishing house, and their numbers expanded from around 200 to perhaps 3000 at an average rate of almost 30 percent a year, roughly six times the average percentage gain of the 1970s. Indeed, they appear to have exploded to perhaps 2000 within the first two years of the decade, [3] at an almost incredible rate of over 200 percent a year which understandably leveled off and was unfortunately reduced by some backsliding and splintering.

With this numerical growth came geographic expansion to Michigan and Illinois and Wisconsin and Canada East and Canada West--and a leapfrog to golden California. Inevitably, conditions developed requiring additional and more sophisticated elements of organization. Also, many

people joined the movement who had not been Millerites and had not been cast out of their churches and who therefore did not fear organization so much.

In November 1851 a report was sent to the Review from the cradle of Sabbath-keeping Adventism, Washington, New Hampshire, stating that "a committee of seven was chosen (see Acts 6) to attend to the wants of the poor." [4] The Washington believers did not let their fear of organization interfere with their Christian duty to the underprivileged. Just the same, they refrained from calling the seven men "deacons." After all, Acts 6 didn't use the term "deacon" either! Be that as it may, reports began to appear soon afterward about the ordination of men expressly as deacons, such as at Fairhaven, Joseph Bates's hometown.

More significant than the ordination of deacons is the ordination of ministers. With the explosive increase of members came a corresponding increase in preaching brethren--or lecturing brethren, or traveling brethren, or messengers, or

missionaries, or however else they were variously designated. More than forty-five are named in the Review in 1852 and 1853, better than two per hundred of the membership. Since there was no official body to "call" them, all were volunteers, many of them like Hiram Edson preaching in cold weather so they could earn a living in warm. Much of their spiritual effort was expended not on the faithful but on Sunday keepers whom Sabbath keepers interested in the third angel's message. Back and forth they traveled from Maine to Wisconsin, answering appeals published in the Review from active--or lonely--laity in isolated places. A weekend or a week or two, possibly a baptism of three or four in a river or a lake, and on their way they went, to another appointment.

Some of these men had been ordained to the ministry by the churches to which they had formerly belonged--Frederick Wheeler, for example, and Joseph Baker, and M. E. Cornell, and John Byington, and James White. Others, and perhaps most, were dedicated laymen--J. P. Kellogg, Otis Nichols, H. S. Gurney, Stockbridge

Howland, and many more. Few, even of the ordained, were formally trained and not all lasted long in their efforts. Genial E. L. H. Chamberlain proved a better mixer than messenger, and after testing his talent for a season withdrew at Ellen White's suggestion to his former trade.

It was generally understood that no one could "celebrate the ordinances of the Lord's house," that is, lead out in the Lord's Supper and baptism by immersion, [5] without first being ordained. This was, of course, a serious handicap to so rapidly expanding an interest among neighbors and friends.

The first known ordination of a minister by Sabbath-keeping Adventists, a somewhat informal occasion by later standards, occurred in East Bethel, Vermont, in the summer of 1851. Sister F. M. Shimper subsequently reported to the Review [6] that Brother Washington Morse had been "set apart" by the laying on of hands, to the administration of the ordinances of God's house." Apparently this ordination was performed by George Holt, who had been an ordained minister in

his former denomination.

A much more formal ordination [7] took place on Monday, September 5, two years later, at what was known as the "Potsdam Conference" because it convened in Bucks Bridge, which is in the Potsdam District of Saint Lawrence County, New York. John Byington fixed up a shady place in front of his home to accommodate 300 for the "First-day" (Sunday) meeting to which the public would be invited. He and Mrs. Byington felt rewarded for their labors when eighty believers attended on Sabbath, including two sisters who came sixty-five miles by private carriage and later professed themselves well fed by the spiritual feast. James and Ellen White came up from Rochester; but, because Elder White was somewhat ill, he let brilliant young John Andrews do most of the preaching. Sunday night they held a service two miles up the Grass River at Morley Wesleyan Church, where the good Wesleyans crowded in to hear good preaching without holding any grudge against John Byington for having left them a year before to join the Adventists.

But the climax came on Monday morning, probably back at the Byington home. "Remarks were made relative to the importance of church order," presumably by James White, who must surely have been feeling better by now. A "plain testimony" was born, presumably by Ellen White. Tears of repentance and fellowship were shed. And the matter was taken up of ordaining a dedicated lay worker in his twenties, Horace W. Lawrence of West Bangor, New York. Brother Lawrence had been baptized in 1842 into "the Christian Church," joined the Millerites in 1843, passed through the disappointment of 1844, been licensed as an exhorter by the Sunday Adventists, been rebaptized into the Sabbath message by Joseph Bates, and proved a very effective lay witness, even helping win John Byington and his wife to the Sabbath, which was a great prize. Further, a few weeks prior, carried away with zeal and a sense of need, he had celebrated a baptism and the Lord's Supper for some isolated believers without being ordained.

Those who knew him best thought it was time

to "lay hands" on him. The others agreed. And so, Elder White wrote later, " 'it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,' to set apart our dear Bro. Lawrence to the work of the gospel ministry, to administer the ordinances of the church of Christ, by the laying on of hands. The church," White added, "was of one accord in this matter."

Incidentally, as the leading brethren knelt for the ordination prayer--John Byington and H. G. Buck, ministers recently converted from Wesleyanism, James White, ordained in the Christian Connection, and John Andrews--no one in the audience anticipated that three of them would become the first three presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference.

At that time there was no General Conference. There wasn't even a Seventh-day Adventist Church, strictly speaking.

In addition to the cry for increased manpower in the growing movement, another critical situation which also required at least a semblance of

organization was the recurring need to deal with troublemakers and backsliders.

Routinely James White or some other recognized leader handled these problems when making his now-and-then visits to the congregations where the disturbing persons lived. The difficulties were candidly and prayerfully discussed and an open vote was taken. Soon afterward the Review might carry the account that "the brethren" in such and such a place "felt called upon to withdraw fellowship from one who had fallen into, and taught dangerous errors," or that in another place "rather a gloomy state of things existed, in consequence of the blighting influence of one (a professed teacher) from whom we had to withdraw our fellowship." [8]

Shortly after such reports appeared, a confession like this might be printed from the person whose sinful course had been dealt with: "I can now freely say, that ... [what I did] was wrong. Also, I now see, that it was my privilege, as well as duty, to have submitted to the voice of the church";

or like this: "I would say that I feel very thankful for the kind spirit that you have manifested towards unworthy me, after having grieved the Spirit of God, and bringing a reproach and a wound upon his suffering cause. ... I confess that I am guilty of these wrongs. ... I am sorry for the trials that I have brought upon his people."

And with such confessions, notices like the following might appear in their turn from the leading elders: "We therefore hope that Bro. and Sr. ... will be restored to the confidence of their brethren as though the trial mentioned had not existed." [9]

To help keep the movement pure, on other occasions the Lord intervened directly. We go back to early fall of 1852. In September the Review moved to the big house on Mount Hope Avenue in Rochester. John Loughborough, who had been a boy preacher with the Sunday-keeping Adventists and had now turned twenty, came to the worship room in that residence to hear John Andrews (age twenty-three) preach on the Sabbath question and

was convinced. The Whites returned from a trip to Maine on the first Friday in October. Next day during services Loughborough cheered every heart with his public stand to keep the Sabbath holy.

Oswald Stowell, who had accepted the Sabbath in Paris, Maine, after reading the very same copy of T. M. Preble's tract that had convinced John Andrews, was ill with pleurisy and so was listening in from an adjoining room.

Doctors had given Oswald up to die, but he asked the believers to pray. As they knelt at his bedside, Elder White anointed him. By the time they rose from their knees, Oswald was sitting up in bed, punching his sides that had been so painful, and exclaiming, "I'm fully healed! I can work the handpress tomorrow!"

Ellen White remained on her knees. Her husband studied her a moment and remarked "Ellen is in vision. She doesn't breathe while in this condition. If any of you desire to satisfy yourselves of this, you are at liberty to examine her."

She was kneeling with her eyes open, intelligently gazing at objects only she could see. For an hour and twenty minutes, as long as the vision lasted, no one could detect any evidence of breathing, even though now and then she spoke words or sentences in response to what she saw. Her face was a natural color, and the gestures she made with her hands and arms were graceful.

When the vision ended, she looked for Loughborough, whom she had met briefly for the first time the night before, and told him things about himself he thought that no one knew.

Then she spoke of someone whom she had never met. She said he was traveling away from home, witnessing a lot about the fourth commandment but breaking the seventh. It happened that one of Andrews's recent converts was in Michigan at the time. He had always been a faithful husband and no one supposed the vision referred to him.

But six weeks later, when this brother returned home, Ellen White recognized him at a glance, gathered several folk around as witnesses, told him earnestly what God had told her, and concluded with the words of Nathan to David: "Thou art the man."

Promptly the sinful new convert knelt before his wife, confessed with tears that it was all too true, said it was the first time it had ever happened, and promised sincerely it would be the last. [10]

But if some of the problems facing the "scattered flock" could be solved by weekly publications, occasional ordinations, prayerful excommunications, and timely revelations, many others could not. And so, as James White observed at the beginning of this chapter, sooner or later Adventists would be driven to give the child a name and to organize as a church.

Notes:

1. Review and Herald, October 16,1860, p. 170

2. Letter to Brother Hastings, March 18, 1850
3. Review and Herald, May 6, 1852, p. 5
4. Review and Herald, November 25, 1851, p. 52
5. See Bates, The Seventh Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign, p. 22
6. Review and Herald, August 19, 1851, p. 15
7. Review and September 20, 1853, pp. 84, 85; conversation with John O. Waller, Andrews University, August 1975; see also Waller, "John Byington of Bucks Bridge: The Pre-Adventist Years," Adventist Heritage, July, 1974
8. Review and Herald, November 25, 1851, p. 52
9. Review and Herald, December 13, 1853, p. 183
10. Loughborough, Rise and Progress, pp. 169-173

Chapter 18

Giving the Child a Name

After hours of scrubbing over a hot soapy tub, a certain Adventist lady in the village of Jackson, Michigan, was taking down her washing one day when a close neighbor, who had frequently vented her spleen against Sabbath keepers, hurled a bucket of water out of her window and splashed mud all over her nice clean clothes.

"You ... you witch!" cried the Adventist lady in a burst of tears, as she angrily yanked the clothes off the line for a second scrubbing.

Inevitably the word spread; or rather, a different word spread. In those simple days, when the good name of the church was a primary concern of every member, a meeting to consider her case was convened at the home of blacksmith Dan Palmer, the local Adventist leader. H.S. Case and C.P. Russell, two of the numerous more-or-less self-appointed ministers of the day, rebuked the

woman severely and accused her of using a certain word. This word, she just as strongly insisted, she had not used.

Calmer minds soon suggested prayer. And while the group were on their knees, Ellen White, who was stopping by with her husband on their way west, received a vision. At Elder White's invitation, Russell and Case examined her carefully until they were convinced that her experience was authentic. When the vision closed, Mrs. White announced that God had unveiled the truth about the lady in question and that she had indeed done something wrong. Having revealed this much, however, Ellen found herself unable to recall any more.

Case and Russell were jubilant. Emphatically they declared themselves steadfastly confident in Sister White's divine gifts as a prophet, and demanded that the hapless woman confess!

On Friday night, during family worship in another Adventist home, the same vision was

repeated. On Sabbath morning, during the sermon at Dan Palmer's house, Mrs. White returned once more to the situation. The woman did do wrong, she repeated--but the lord had also revealed, Ellen went on, that she had not used the specific word which Case and Russell had accused her of using. God had shown, moreover, that He was deeply displeased with the unkindness manifested by the two ministers and desired compassion instead.

The reaction was remarkable. The woman melted into tears, confessed what she had done, and begged forgiveness. Russell and Case, on the other hand, complained indignantly about Mrs. White's unwarranted criticism of themselves and condemned her visions as totally unreliable!

It was in this manner in June 1853 that the first "offshoot" from Sabbath-keeping Adventism was born. [1] The two men soon inaugurated a new publication with which to attack the Whites and other leaders, and from its title, Messenger of Truth, they and their followers came to be called "The Messenger Party."

At that very time James White was seriously ill from overwork. It seemed so likely that he would die that when in Battle Creek his first little house was built, he had the deed made out in the name of his wife. [2] The Messenger made merry over his malaise, citing it as crowning evidence that God would soon take him out of the way.

When James read the Messenger's uncharitable comments, his faith revived, and like Wycliffe of old he sat up in bed and exclaimed, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord, and may yet preach at their funeral." [3]

For two long years loyal ministers felt it their duty to defend the Whites and the truth from the Messenger's attacks. But after a vision on a Sabbath evening in Oswego, New York, in June 1855, Ellen White instructed them not to reply to the charges any longer, but to devote their time and energy to proclaiming "truth, present truth." [4] In the name of the Lord, she promised that if they would do this, the leaders of the offshoot would

soon go to war among themselves; their paper would expire, and their movement vanish. She also promised that when that time came, Adventists (if they followed God's counsel) would find that their own ranks had doubled. [5]

For a while it must have seemed that her words could never be fulfilled, for late that same year a second group separated out under the leadership of J.M. Stephenson and D.P. Hall. Their burden was that man's opportunity for salvation continues on during the "age to come" (that is, during the millennium), a belief which earned them the name, "The Age-to-Come Party." Stephenson and Hall had been won to the Sabbath when J.H. Waggoner walked fifty miles specifically to teach it to them. At first they had condemned Russell and Case for the "egregious ... exposition" of doctrine in their "Messenger of Error." [6] But after a while Stephenson and Hall found that they agreed with Russell and Case in rejecting James White's leadership and Ellen White's visions, and so joined them. The Messenger Party appeared to be growing, not falling apart. But the brethren obeyed

Ellen White's counsel, the Messenger Party (including its Age-to-Come auxiliary) did dissolve in due course, and on January 14, 1858, White reported in the Review that subscriptions had increased in three years from one thousand to two thousand.

The final end of the editor of the Messenger was a somber one. Finding himself out of a job because he was out of readers, he went to teaching school to make a living. "But not having learned first to govern himself, he failed utterly in governing his pupils." Angry with an unruly student, he pulled a gun on him. To escape lynching he fled to parts unknown. [7]

Still another offshoot developed, in 1858, which, from its practice, might be designated "The Smoke and Chew Party." The use of tobacco, though not yet a test of fellowship, was disparaged by most Sabbath keepers. A few believers, however, in the vicinity of Otsego, Michigan, found a minister to their liking, a certain Gilbert Cranmer, who encouraged them to keep both the

Sabbath and their tobacco. In common with the Messenger and Age-to-Come people, they published a paper (the Hope of Israel) and vehemently denied the inspiration of Ellen White. Like them, too, they soon faded off the scene. [8]

To avoid returning to offshoots for a while, it may be added here that in 1865 the remnants of these three groups received a few reinforcements when Elders B.F. Snook and W.H. Brinkerhoff were voted out of the leadership of the Iowa Conference. Snook and Brinkerhoff wanted a congregational, independent type of denominational structure and opposed Elder and Mrs. White with vigor. Because they made their headquarters in Marion, Iowa, they and their group came to be known as "The Marion Party." Brinkerhoff soon resumed his practice of law, and Snook turned Universalist. The movement still exists as the Church of God, Seventh Day (Denver, Colorado). [9]

Loughborough somewhere picked up the curious but not impossible legend that the four

offshoots printed their papers on the same little handpress. According to the story, each successive group purchased it from its predecessor. [10]

The main body imposed no legal or economic sanctions on those who wished to leave. They could scarcely have done so even had they desired to. But there were some administrative implications involved which were hard to overlook. The defecting leaders of these various offshoots had become well-known through the Review during their loyal days, and they described themselves in distant communities as still being staunch supporters of the movement. Who was there to prove that they were not?

Further, in 1854 when a large evangelistic audience overflowed a school house to hear John Loughborough preach, the question arose, "Why not use a tent?" Local laymen promptly put up the money, and Merritt Cornell hopped on a train and returned with one in a matter of days. Soon believers in several states pooled their resources to purchase "state tents" to be used by itinerant

preachers in their respective areas, and both attendance and baptisms rose encouragingly. In Wisconsin the disaffected Age-to-Come and Messenger ministers took the state tent for their own use. And who was there to say that they couldn't?

There were other problems too which required central organization. The only regularly dependable means of communication among the brethren was the Review. If a minister felt impressed to travel to a certain area, he announced his intention in the church paper. When subsequent issues came out, he borrowed copies from whatever believer he happened to be stopping with at the time and looked for published replies from people who lived in the area to which he was headed. These letters, if any, told him where his services were most needed and where there was the most likelihood of success.

Conversely, if the believers in an area desired the assistance of a certain minister, they let him know through the Review. The following notice,

for instance, appeared in the issue for January 21, 1858:

"Cannot Bro. and Sr. White, or Brn. Loughborough and Waggoner, or somebody else make an appointment for a meeting at Gilboa [Ohio], and give notice of it in the Review? We have expected such an appointment at every mail for the last six weeks. Are there no bowels of compassion? T. J. B."

Not without reason were the ministers referred to as "traveling brethren." On riverboats and railroad cars, over corduroy (log) roads and icy trails, many of them rode, and often on foot they tramped back and forth, up and down, from Maine to Minnesota believing they were led by the Holy Spirit. Often no doubt they were so led. But "God is not the author of confusion." 1 Corinthians 14:33.

Eager to finish the work, men accepted one urgent call after another rushing from state to state without waiting to ascertain first whether their new

converts were adequately grounded, or whether another minister, working nearby already, could attend to the need more efficiently. Then, too, along with the men who were truly called of God there were, as we have seen, other self-appointed ministers, whose labors were fruitless or worse. And there were inexperienced men who required special counsel to help them mature.

A central clearinghouse was needed where decisions could be made for the most efficient employment of the workers; or, to use a good Adventist expression, to attend to the most favorable "distribution of labor."

Another serious problem was that of providing ministers with a salary. In an essentially agricultural economy most members had little ready cash. Some selfless souls made disproportionate sacrifices. Sarah Harmon once gave five weeks' earnings at one dollar a week to help finance Joseph Bates. Kellogg sold a farm, while Edson at various times sold two farms and a flock of sheep to help spread the message. But

most members were content to let the ministers make the sacrifices, and if they paid them anything, tended to do so in farm produce or, perhaps, with a half-worn-out coat.

Very often they gave nothing at all.

A subtle, selfish notion masqueraded in those days as scriptural. Because Jesus had contrasted the true shepherd, who gives his life for the sheep, with the hired shepherd; or "hireling," who flees when the wolf comes, many Christians in the various denominations justified their ungenerosity by declaring that the church could not be served well by a "hireling ministry."

The consequence was that most ministers had to work for their living in addition to preaching and visiting. Some relied on such day labor as they could pick up from place to place. Others farmed, traveling short distances to preach when free and then, tied to their chores, hurrying home again--a situation which Loughborough likened contemptuously to being a tethered horse. [11]

In 1855 John Andrews, still in his twenties, found himself so nearly exhausted by laboring for a living while preaching and writing that he was nearly blind, his voice was almost gone, and his loved ones were predicting for him an early grave. He retired to Waukon, Iowa, where a community of first while Eastern Adventists were busily developing the rich soil of the prairie. John Loughborough, his convert and dose colaborer, also became discouraged about a year later, moved out to the same location, and to his own surprise turned himself into a tethered horse. John Loughborough and Mary his wife deserve our sympathy. [12] They counted the cost before they entered the ministry. Shortly after they accepted the Sabbath, John sensed an insistent call to preach. But he clearly knew the hard times that implied and at the time he was doing rather well selling window locks, "Arnold's Patent Sash Locks." His savings amounted to $35.00, the equivalent--at the going rate for laborers (a dollar a day)--to wages for six or seven weeks. But, resisting the call, he saw his sales decline precipitously until in a few weeks he

was reduced to a single coin. Falling on his knees, he pledged his future to the will of God and stood up at peace.

Not long after, when Mary requested money to buy some thread and matches, John asked her to purchase only one cent's worth of each and bring him back the change so that he would not be completely out of cash--and thereupon presented her with a silver three-cent piece. (Such coins were minted from 1851 to 1873.) "What are we going to do, John?" the poor girl wailed."

Enter the ministry and trust the Lord," her husband replied; where at Mrs. Loughborough, like Mrs. Bates a few years earlier in a similar situation, went off to enjoy a cry.

Soon John heard his wife steal out of the house. And while she was gone a stranger came by, introduced himself at the door, and asked if Mr. Loughborough could supply him with $80.00 worth of Arnolds Patent Sash Locks.

Could he, indeed!

When Mary returned she found her husband singing. His net worth, on a 33 percent commission, had soared to $26.00, and she was ready to go with him anywhere and trust the Lord.

Or almost ready. The minister's wife who stays at home while her husband travels for weeks on end and does not, as her husband does, see souls in danger saved from sin, often finds that it's not easy to match his consecration. Mary was loyal all right, but < increasingly the lot of a preacher's wife appeared difficult to bear. And when, after particularly pinching times, they heard about the Adventist families who had moved to Waukon to witness by example while they earned big money to give to the cause, she readily encouraged John's yearning to join them.

But winter came early that year (1856), making farming impossible by the time they arrived. And when John found that there were almost no nearby sinners to witness to on the lonely prairie and that

even the saints, turning their backs on sacrifice, had gone to squabbling with each other, he took up carpentry to meet expenses and began to pray, conscience smitten, for a decent way out.

Elder and Mrs. White were in Round Grove, Illinois, some two hundred miles to the south, when in vision she was shown the plight of the folk in Waukon. Their reaction was to leave at once and go to help. But the unseasonable cold that limited cultivation in Iowa had also frozen northern Illinois, followed by a thaw. Hard rains had turned unpaved highways into quagmires. In faith they prayed for guidance. Soon the rain changed to snow, freezing the mushy roads and surfacing them for sleighing. "Here is our sign," Ellen exclaimed. "God wills us to go."

Through falling and drifting snow they set out, accompanied by Josiah Hartand Elon Everts, two other ministers whom, it happens, White had ordained along with Andrews three years before in the Everts home. The snow changed to rain. A new thaw set in. Ice on the rivers softened. Repeatedly

they heard the warning, "Don't attempt the Mississippi!"

On the bank of the Father of Waters, Brother Hart drew up the horses, stood high in the sleigh, lifted his whip hand toward heaven, and cried, "Is it on to Iowa, or back to Illinois? We have come to the Red Sea. Shall we cross?"

Mrs. White replied, "Go forward, trusting Israel's God."

James White seconded her. "Yes, yes, go on!"

All the way over they prayed. Icy waters swirled around them, a foot deep above the uncertain ice below. At any instant they might break through to their chilly deaths. A crowd gathered on the opposite shore. But like Israel at the Red Sea, the travelers crossed over safely.

The temperature dipped again. Ellen hugged her coonskin robe, as for four more days in the open sleigh they faced freezing winds. At night, in

a frontier hotel, they hung their charts in the lobby and preached the message to eager listeners. On Wednesday they arrived at Waukon.

Their welcome was almost as cold as the weather. The folk knew why they had come. To revive them. To restore their Christian dedication. To kindle anew their primitive godliness.

Even John Loughborough was taken back by the answer to his prayer. He hadn't expected to have Sister White arrive unobserved in a sleigh as he labored on a ladder and call out to him in anguish, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

But James and Ellen called a meeting, and then more meetings in a series for over a week. Rumors had done their baleful work, and the Whites patiently told "the other side" till everyone was satisfied. Evening by evening old advent hymns stirred heartfelt memories. Discussion turned to the promise which Christ had given to the lukewarm Laodiceans: "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." Following a

timely vision, Ellen uttered almost incredible words from a gracious God: "Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord, and will heal all your backslidings."

Such kindness was too much for Mary Loughborough. "Brother and Sister White," she sobbed, "I thought we had gotten away where you couldn't find us; but I am glad you have come. ... God forgive me! ... I open the door of my heart. Lord Jesus, come in!" Confessions were made, apologies shared, and the meeting continued past midnight.

The good work resumed next day. Mary appealed to others, and they to still others. At last John Loughborough, too, stood solemnly to his feet. "I have laid up my hammer!" he announced. "I have driven the last nail! Henceforth my hand shall hold the sword of the Spirit and never give it up. So help me, God!"

When at last the Whites left Waukon, tears of affection flowed freely all round.

Leaving Mary for a while with friends, Loughborough returned to Illinois with Hart, Everts, and the Whites, and was immediately back in harness--no longer a "tethered horse"--holding evangelistic meetings in place after place. He never left the ministry till he died in 1924; nor did Mary, so long as she lived. John Andrews rededicated himself to the ministry, but he could preach only a few months at a time for several years until his health returned. Meanwhile the Adventist girl he married in Waukon, Angeline Stevens, a childhood friend, no doubt did what she could to fatten him up.

But the problem of paying the ministers remained, or rather got worse. An exceptionally fine harvest in 1857, coupled with a nationwide depression, lowered prices till cash was almost impossible to come by. In April 1858, when both Andrews and Loughborough were residing temporarily in Battle Creek, Andrews conducted a Bible class in Loughborough's home to search the Scriptures for light on the support of the ministry.

Sister White had been shown in vision that the Bible contained such a plan, and it was their determination to find it.

The plan which they discovered at that time was based on a combination of Old Testament texts on tithing and on 1 Corinthians 16:2: "Upon the first day of the week [that is, regularly] let everyone [individually] ..." give "as God hath prospered him [proportionately]." They called the plan "systematic benevolence." At the close of the Sabbath on January 29, 1859, the members of the little headquarters church assembled and voted to recommend that "each brother from eighteen to sixty years of age lay by him in store on the first day of each week from five to twenty-five cents," each sister in the same age category, two to ten cents, and each brother and sister, "from one to five cents on each and every one hundred dollars of property they possessed." The money thus accumulated was to be used by local congregations, chiefly to assist the ministers when they came preaching and when they held evangelistic meetings nearby.

For years systematic benevolence was known by its initials, "S.B." or more affectionately as "Sister Betsy." It was also known less accurately as "tithing." It was, of course, a far cry from real tithing. Adventists did not perfect their concept of supporting the ministry on the basis of a full tithe for another twenty years. But systematic benevolence was a valuable step in the right direction. Systematic giving has enabled the Adventist Church to accomplish much around the world.

From what has been said, does it seem that organization benefits only ministers? If so, take another look. Ministers are called to serve the laity and win the lost. But how can they serve if, unpaid, they simply can't afford to? How can members trust them, if they can't be sure they represent the common faith? And how can people feel free to make donations when independent leaders may, at will, walk off with property that belongs to all?

It was, in fact, the problem of property

ownership which finally persuaded the membership and brought the issue of central organization to a head. Adventists in the late 1850s owned three kinds of church property: "state" tents, a few local church buildings, and the publishing house in Battle Creek, together with the paper, books, and machinery adjunct to its operation.

More precisely, however, the church owned none of these things.

We have already seen how easily a tent could be taken over by a false minister. As for the churches, they belonged not to the congregations that built and paid for them but to the member on whose property they happened to stand. During the Millerite movement two such members apostatized, and one of their meetinghouses became a vinegar warehouse! The Battle Creek Church itself was located on the private property of S.T. Belden. To those who still opposed organization James White observed that even it might one day become a vinegar warehouse.

But it was the printing press that bothered White the most. It was the only institution Adventists operated. Their evangelism depended on the books and papers it produced, and their whole movement was largely held together by its major periodical, the Review and Herald. Yet the entire concern, building, books, paper, and machinery, were legally White's own personal property. He knew it, and he didn't like it. At his own prodding, as early as 1855 the press had been placed nominally in the hands of "the church" and charged to the care of a publishing committee. Major decisions respecting its operation, such as the purchase in 1857 of an Adams steam press, had been voted on at "general conferences" to which members from all over were invited.

At the meeting in September 1860 White reminded the brethren again that "the property that has been donated. ... I have always regarded as the property of the church. But I am the only legal owner of it, and I am very anxious to make it over into the hands of officers that you may appoint who shall hold and manage it legally."

What if White were to die suddenly? The state of Michigan would hold everything in custody at least until Henry White, who was thirteen in 1860, became twenty-one, by which time he could conceivably have left the faith, taking the press with him; or he could have died, complicating matters in a different way. As things turned out, Henry did die when he was sixteen.

The logical solution was to set up a legal corporation.

A legal corporation? In those bygone days when the Review was a kind of family letter, Elder R.F. Cottrell, the same devoted brother who objected to "making us a name," submitted for publication a quiet but devastating essay charging that a legal corporation would imply such dependence upon government that it would be tantamount to a union of church and state and, he continued, would make Adventism so truly a Babylon that it would provide a throne on which someday the man of sin might take his seat.

Cottrell soon retracted both points, manfully admitting they were far-fetched; but it took months of strenuous effort by James White, Joseph Bates, John Loughborough, Merrit Cornell and others to undo the damage he had caused in people's minds.

White was determined to protect Adventist property for all Adventists. And so it came about that near the end of September 1860 a group of leaders and laity assembled at his invitation in the Battle Creek church building--the second one, the one owned by S.T. Belden--and discussed the issue face to face for three days. "We are not in such great haste," he explained, "that we cannot hear their reasons if any object." Further, to establish unanimity around the field, the discussion was reported in the Review for October 9, 16, and 23, 1860.

Almost at the outset John Andrews made a suggestion which others had hinted at over the previous months but none had articulated so well.

He proposed that for the purpose of owning property the church need not organize itself legally as a church but should appoint representatives to an "association" that could be incorporated legally. He added that this harmonized with gospel order, for the earliest Christians appointed a committee of seven to oversee matters of business. He could have pointed out, too, that evangelistic and benevolent associations structurally separate from denominations were rather common in contemporary American Christianity.

Andrews's distinction, incidentally, proved enduringly helpful. Properties in the territory of an Adventist conference even today are technically not owned by the conference itself but by its holding association.

After two days of discussion in 1860 a simple constitution for a publishing association (still without a name) was voted. But under the laws of Michigan no association could be approved without a name; so that issue had finally to be faced up to, prompting James White to make his

memorable remarks about the embarrassingly unnamed offspring: "It seems to me that the child is now so grown that it is exceedingly awkward to have no name for it."

The inevitable took place. The committee voted that they should adopt a name. But what name?

Some recommended, "Church of God," while others felt this sounded boastful. "Seventh-day Adventist" was proposed.

Laymen, incidentally, were prominent among the nineteen known members of this epochal committee. It was a layman, Ezra Bracket, who introduced the first motion at the outset: "I would move that the church organize." It was another layman, David Hewitt, who near the end introduced the motion, "Resolved, that we take the name of Seventh-day Adventists." "Take the name," however, sounded much like "make a name," and in order to meet even the inscrutable scruples of the still unconvinced, the motion was withdrawn and replaced with the resolution, "that

we call ourselves Seventh-day Adventists."

Progress from the monumental achievement of organizing and naming the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association to full General Conference organization was a relatively simple process, though not altogether an unchallenged one. In the spring of 1861 the Battle Creek leaders recommended that the various scattered congregations organize themselves under the name "Seventh-day Adventist." In October 1861 initial steps were taken toward forming a Michigan conference with the election of a conference committee chaired by Joseph Bates.

During 1862 the congregations in several other states did form state conferences. Michigan completed its own genesis in October 1862 in the Monterey Church, electing a layman, William S. Higley, as its first president. [13]

Finally in May 1863 delegates from the new conferences met in Battle Creek and drew up a simple constitution for a general conference.

James White was enthusiastically nominated the first General Conference president. He declined the position, however. Since 1850 he had preached, written, argued, and pleaded for "gospel order." He had been so visible in the campaign that he thought accepting the presidency could lead some to question his motives. (Two years later, in 1865, he did accept the responsibility. Altogether he served as president of the General Conference for ten years, 1865-1867, 1869-1871, 1874-1880.)

When James White declined, John Byington was elected, thus becoming the first General Conference president of Seventh-day Adventists. It was at his home in Bucks Bridge, New York, that Horace Lawrence had been ordained. Byington had served the Methodists in various capacities and then the Wesleyans (abolitionist Methodists) as a minister and church builder. In 1852 he became an Adventist through reading the Review, subsequently putting up one of the first church buildings erected by Seventh-day Adventists. He sponsored his daughter Martha in her attempt to

operate a home day school for Adventist children. In 1858 he moved to Battle Creek and traveled widely as a self-supporting minister. After his election to the presidency he continued to travel widely, preaching and baptizing, during his two one-year terms. "No one knows Michigan," people said, "like Father Byington."

In addition to voting a constitution and electing a president and other officers, the first General Conference session also set up a procedure for paying ministers a regular salary--about $5 a week--out of systematic benevolence. It made it mandatory for ministers to carry with them official credentials identifying them as spokesmen for the movement. And it stated that no minister should travel from one conference to another merely at his own request or at the desire of a local church. Calls must be processed through both conferences involved.

Henceforth churches were no longer in danger of becoming vinegar warehouses! Ministers could devote their full time to the cause. Congregations

could easily determine whether a visiting minister was a real Seventh-day Adventist or a spokesman for merely individual views. Ministers could save untold time and energy by working in specified areas rather than rushing endlessly all over the field. Local members could appeal to a higher authority if they felt unfairly treated by their home churches. And everyone knew at last who he was. He could say with confidence, "I am a Seventh-day Adventist."

Notes:

1. For the story of the Messenger and Age-to-Come parties, see Review and Herald, January 14, 1858, p. 77; Loughborough, Rise and Progress, pp. 188-192, and The Great Second Advent Movement, pp. 325, 326
2. Review and Herald, October 9, 1860, p. 163
3. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 95-97
4. Ibid., p. 123
5. Loughborough, The Great Second Advent Movement, pp. 325, 326
6. Review and Herald, March 20, 1855, p. 197

7. Loughborough, The Great Second Advent Movement, p. 326
8. Review and Herald, September 2,1858, p. 126; Loughborough, Rise and Progress, pp. 216, 217
9. SDA Encyclopedia, art. "Marion Party"
10. J. N. Loughborough, "A Sketch," pp. 67, 68
11. Review and Herald, February 26, 1857, p. 136
12. For the stories of the three-cent silver and the rescue at Waukon, see Loughborough, Rise and Progress, pp. 176-179, 2008, 211; Review and Herald, January 15, 1857, p. 84; Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, pp. 217-222; Ella M. Robinson, Lighter of Gospel Fires (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1954), pp. 74-76, 105-110; Spalding, Origin and History, vol. 1, pp. 279-289
13. Spalding, Origin and History, vol. 1, p. 306

Chapter 19

Laodicea!

Strange as it sounds after all we've been discussing, Seventh-day Adventists actually gave themselves a name four years before the October morning in 1860 when David Hewitt proposed "Seventh-day Adventist." They did so in October, 1856; and they took it right out of the Bible. The story has a direct bearing on Seventh-day Adventists today.

From the very beginning, as we have observed, Sabbath-keeping Adventists saw themselves as a people with a purpose, a movement of destiny. Believing, from experience and prophecy, that they had the present truth for the last days, they reasonably concluded that they were the true church for the last days. They were spiritual Israel in a modern wilderness, marching from the Egypt of "Babylon" to the new world at the second coming, restoring the true Sabbath on the way as did ancient Israel at Mount Sinai. They were the

prophet Elijah, whom Malachi promised "before the great and dreadful day of the Lord," restoring loyalty to God's law on the Carmel of apostate Christendom. They were the sixth church of Revelation, "Philadelphia," the church of brotherly love.

It was a heady concept. Letters to the Review from scattered laity reiterated a litany of praise for the clear light of truth. In those bygone times a great many Americans felt that they ought to keep a holy day, even though most of them didn't do it. Once prejudice against disappointed Adventism faded, converts flocked in. James White estimated enthusiastically that membership rocketed from a handful to perhaps 2000 in the first two years of the 1850s. [1]

We learned about this growth in chapter 17. Now we need to examine the spiritual loss associated with this gain. "It is evident," James White editorialized a few years later, "that with the increase of numbers ... there was not a corresponding increase in consecration or in the

graces of the Spirit." [2]

Even some ordained ministers dropped out to take up farming, Washington Morse and Horace Lawrence among them. Encouraged by the materialism of some of their leaders, many members minded their business affairs and ignored, or grew suspicious of, one another. Companies raised up by evangelists tended to melt away. Tracts and booklets at the Review office piled up by the thousands for want of anyone to distribute them. The press was heavily in debt, and few members seemed to care. No one committed murder or robbed a bank! But as a people preparing for translation and professing to keep one full day a week holy, they were in sorry shape.

Unintentionally James White himself was partly to blame! Stung by criticism that the doctrines he taught were the product of his wife's imagination, he virtually closed the columns of the Review to her pen. His purpose was noble enough. He wanted potential believers to recognize that Sabbath, sanctuary, and sleep of the dead were

Bible doctrines. But inadequately appreciated, Ellen White's visions became less frequent, and the church was largely deprived of her deep spiritual appeals.

After the move from Rochester to Battle Creek, the local folk called a conference in their tiny "House of Prayer" and earnestly confessed their sin in this matter. They put their names to a confession for the Review and voted to underwrite the cost of publishing Ellen White's current counsel. In this way there came into being the first of the published testimonies, Testimony for the Church, no. 1. It appeared late in 1855 as a sixteen-page pamphlet--joined over the next half century by thirty-six other testimonies, bound today in nine familiar volumes.

Now, in the book of Revelation John was directed to write a letter to each of seven churches representing seven phases or seven periods of Christian experience from his day to the second coming. The Millerites aptly regarded the sixth or "Philadelphia" church of brotherly love as a symbol of their own movement. After the

disappointment, Millerites who accepted the Sabbath and sanctuary doctrines enjoyed such a warm Christian fellowship that they continued to regard themselves as Philadelphia--and spoke of the other Adventists as "Laodicea," the seventh church. [3] The words, "lukewarm" and "I am rich, ... and have need of nothing," seemed to fit people who thought they could get along without the Sabbath and the spirit of prophecy.

But as spirituality declined markedly in their own ranks, the more earnest believers felt that "Philadelphia" was less and less deserved by Sabbath keepers. Here and there thoughtful families discussed the uncomfortable possibility that they themselves were Laodicean.

Near the end of Testimony no. 1, Mrs. White pressed her appeal home with phrases actually taken from the Laodicean message. [4] Unfortunately her words, though appreciated, accomplished little at the time. In May 1856 she wrote out a vision about the sin of Adventist families' conforming to the world. After hearing it

read, the Battle Creek believers voted unanimously to publish it, and by August was in the mail as Testimony for the Church, no. 2. It confirmed the concern of the conscientious, but like the first testimony, it had limited immediate results.

The breakthrough came in October (remember this month), when James White launched a closely reasoned series or articles in the Review showing convincingly from the Bible that Sabbath-keeping Adventists, the last church for the last days, composed beyond a doubt the seventh church of Revelation, the lukewarm self-satisfied church of Laodicea. [5]

Here was a name for the growing child!

Here, too, was Bible evidence that confirmed their own fears and Ellen White's visions. And the response was truly heartwarming. With a subscription list below 2000, the Review received more than 300 letters over the next few months, thanking Elder White for speaking out and expressing humility and rededication. A genuine

revival began and many victories were achieved.

Ellen White's role in this renewal was significant. Her testimonies paved the way for it. And as she traveled with her husband, visions came, adapting the Laodicean message to local needs. In Waukon--where, you remember, the Whites visited in December that year--the Laodicean picture of Jesus knocking on the door led Mary Loughborough to cry out with tears, "I open the door of my heart. Lord Jesus, come in."

Two testimonies in 1857 further confirmed Elder White's presentation. After a vision, Ellen White reported that she had been shown the piles of "rubbish" that people needed to remove from the doors of their hearts--differences with their brethren, love of material things, extravagance in their style of living, evil tempers, and so on. Her attention was also called to the promises to Laodicea. "How precious was this promise," she exclaimed, "as it was shown to me in vision! 'I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' " [6]

In truth the letter to Laodicea is rich with promises and also with the presence of Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who introduces Himself as the "true witness" and tells the self-deceived Laodiceans their true condition. Jesus says that they are lukewarm. Jesus says they need gold, white raiment, and eyesalve. Jesus, the "heavenly salesman," knocks on the door with these things for sale. Jesus offers to come in and dine with us. And Jesus, at the end, promises that every overcomer will "sit with me in my throne."

But there is something we must do. We must open the door. Jesus would never invade our privacy without our permission. And we must "buy" what He has for sale. We may buy Christ's righteousness "without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1); but no one can be Christ's disciple unless he forsakes everything he has. (Luke 14:33)

In the second vision, Ellen White saw two groups of Sabbath keepers responding to the message in two different ways. One group was

indifferent and careless. "The angels of God left these." The other group was accepting it. Eagerly they cleared away the rubbish--but not in their own strength; they agonized in prayer for God's strength. And they obtained the victory! Overcoming criticism, selfishness, and suspicion, they marched in perfect order, organized like an army. They were filled with the latter rain. They witnessed to the world with phenomenal success; and they soon welcomed Christ at His second coming. [7]

What a glorious opportunity!

And it was partially realized.

As they met in their kitchens, barns, and little churches, Sabbath keepers confessed hard feelings and sought forgiveness. Parents and children discussed misunderstandings with a new openness and ended their alienation. In faith, people ventured new sacrifices, till the heavy debt at the publishing office was turned into a reassuring surplus. The rate of baptisms picked up. The whole movement

seemed characterized by wet cheeks and radiant faces, as repentant Laodiceans surrendered to the Lord, rejoiced in a new way of life, and daily anticipated the latter rain.

Letting Jesus into the heart is the same as receiving the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is Christ's personal representative. When people bring "Christ" all the way into every facet of their lives, the Holy Spirit fills them, preparing them for the latter rain.

This appearance of movement-wide repentance is not wholly correct. Many members remained indifferent. Others asked, "Why don't Brother and Sister So-and-so change their way of life?"

Ohers insisted on their independence and refused to trust leadership. The latter rain tarried. And even the more earnest ones, having made a few things right, felt that they had done enough.

A vision on July 15, 1859 (again please notice the date), revealed what had gone wrong. "As they

failed to see the powerful work accomplished in a short time, many lost the effect of the message."

Mrs. White commented: "I saw that this message would not accomplish its work in a few short months." [8]

It seems that God purposely waited for the excitement to wear down in order to allow His people to act on principle rather than feeling. This is how God always works, Ellen White explained: "Lest his people should be deceived in regard to themselves, He gives them time for the excitement to wear off, and then proves them to see if they will obey the counsel of the True Witness." [9]

Evidently the work needed to make Adventists ready for the latter rain in the 1850s was not to be accomplished in a single all-night prayer service, or in several weeks of spiritual devotion, or even in li "a few short months." Heartfelt seeking of the Lord was needed over a more extended period of time until character matured on bright new heights.

But if adequate reformation required more than a few short months, were many years needed before the latter rain could fall?

In the testimony just cited, these electric words also appear, "God has given the message time to do its work."

It was July 1859 when Ellen White wrote these words, less than three years after the Laodicean message first came to Sabbath-keeping Adventists. Is it possible? Does it really mean that before July 1859 God's loving erring followers could have, by His grace, removed all the rubbish from their lives, obtained the victory, been filled with the Spirit like on the day of Pentecost, and been on their way to witness with phenomenal success to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people? Before July 1859?

Notes:

1. Review and Herald, May 6, 1852, p. 5
2. Review and Herald, January 14, 1858, p. 77
3. See for example editorial in the first number of

Review and Herald, November 1850, p. 7

4. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 126
5. James White's articles, the letters and articles of others, and the impact each had on the other can be traced readily in the Review from October 16, 1856, onward for about a year. (See also Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, pp. 222-240)
6. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 143
7. Ibid., pp. 179-184
8. Ibid., p. 186
9. Ibid., p. 187

Chapter 20

Sense of Mission

One hundred ninety-three flags! It was impressive to watch them, ablaze with color, flying in the spotlight of the municipal auditorium in Vienna, Austria. Everyone represented a different country in which Seventh-day Adventists were conducting organized work at the time of the fifty-second session of the General Conference, July 1975.

July 1975 was 116 years after July 1859. If Sabbath keepers had prepared for the latter rain in the 1850s, it shouldn't have taken so long to enter all these lands. Yet work in 193 countries represents real progress. The next most active Protestant churches work in only half as many.

Seventh-day Adventists have always felt a "sense of mission." Article V of the short 1863 General Conference constitution required the three-man executive committee to act as a "missionary

board." Before that, the first business venture of Sabbath-keeping Adventists was the purchase of a Washington handpress to publish truth. Before that, at the 1848 conferences in Rocky Hill and Volney, people listened to Ellen White's visions on "how we were to labor and teach effectively." [1] And before that, in the same inspired moment when Hiram Edson became the first person to perceive Christ's new heavenly ministry, the words of Revelation flashed into his mind: "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

From its earliest beginnings Seventh-day Adventism has been more than a mere religious society. It has been a movement with a message and a sense of mission. "Let the message fly," wrote James White in 1849, "for time is short."

"For time is short." Theoretically, the belief that Christ was coming soon could have hampered the propagation of the third angel's message. It did restrict the early believers' vision a little; but with a York shilling and a three-cent silver they did the

best they could nearby, and as opportunities opened, they pressed out and broadened their vision accordingly.

As early as February 1845 Ellen White was given a vision of the tremendous task God wanted done before Christ's return. She was taken to heaven and instructed to look back. Astronauts are excited to see earth glowing like a sapphire; Ellen saw the world in moral darkness.

Watching closely, she saw "jets of light like stars" flame up here and there, then other jets, and still more in other places, "growing brighter, shining forth from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and lighting the whole world:" The light of these jets came from Jesus, and they stood for people who had faith and obeyed the Word, who adhered to the third angel's message. [2] Then in November 1848 came the vision of the Sabbath shining "like streams of light that went clear round the world."

When believers heard Ellen talk about these

things, some of them accused her of putting off the second coming. [3] But others were elated. Bates burst into print with the prediction that the Sabbath would spread at once to France, Britain, Russia, and the Middle East. [4] James White before the year was out (1849) became convinced that the Sabbath would "ring through the lands, as the advent never has." [5] That was foresight!

Critics of Adventism have made much of an interesting early phase of the movement known as the "shut door period." Millerite leaders often spoke about a shut door. Miller believed that a few days before October 22, 1844, the door of mercy would close against all rejecters of the first angel's message. [6] Some Sabbath-keeping Adventists continued to hold this view for various lengths of time after the disappointment. Ellen White believed it until she had her first visions. [7] James White believed it somewhat longer, and Joseph Bates longer yet.

Logically or not, however, Bates, the Whites, and others who joined them, indefatigably shared

their faith with all who would listen, for they were under a great sense of urgency to let the message fly since time was short. Understandably, with so much prejudice against them, it happened that practically nobody did listen to them at first except former Millerites.

But if any "worldlings" showed up at their meetings, they were assuredly not ushered out. John Wilcox told Loughborough that he was converted "right out of the world" during the April 1848 conference in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, and that James White baptized him then and there. [8] In 1850 Ellen White wrote to a friend that people were "coming in from all round" Oswego, New York. [9] By 1852, Methodists and Baptists were coming out of "Babylon" to "run in the way of all the commandments of God." [10]

As soon as these non-Adventists desired to join their ranks the Sabbath keepers did a noteworthy thing. Instead of clinging to exclusivist notions derived from some misunderstanding of Christ's ministry in the most holy place, they examined

their theology to see if they had overlooked something. They found that although Christ's primary work since 1844 has been blotting out the sins of believers, He nonetheless remains every sinner's High Priest still. [11] It was theologically correct, therefore, to welcome the converts in.

Not only correct but, in retrospect, heartwarming too.

With memory of the disappointment fading, non-Millerites became increasingly willing to listen. By springtime 1852 such people made up the larger portion of the converts; [12] and by the middle 1850s, as we have already learned, evangelistic tents mushroomed in one state after another. Congregations of hundreds, even a thousand or more, crowded in to hear Loughborough, White, Andrews, Cornell, Waggoner, Sanborn, Taylor, Hull, and others preach the word.

But even preaching to crowds from Maine to Minnesota hardly meets Christ's commission to

carry the gospel to all the world. (See Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20) Sabbath keepers didn't deny the gospel commission. Instead, they noted the striking similarity between the commission in Matthew 24:14 ("this gospel ... for a witness unto all nations") and the first angel's message in Revelation 14:6,7 ... ("the everlasting gospel ... to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"). For a while they assumed that they had fulfilled the commission under the first angel's message by sending the advent hope to every mission station prior to October 22, 1844. Stirred, however, by the many non-Adventists who thronged their tents, they once more examined their theology. Whereas they had supposed that the first angel's message was intended for the world and the third, only for the saints, Ellen White led them to see that the third angel's message, too, was intended for "a guilty world." [13] And taking still another look at the three angels, they noticed that all three run parallel until the second coming, [14] leading to the conclusion that the gospel must continue to be preached to nations, kindreds, tongues, and people.

This being the case, to preach the word even to all English-speaking North Americans seemed no longer to suffice.

In 1855 Joseph Bates urged his fellow believers to mail literature to "some of the foreign missionary stations, especially to the Sandwich islands." [15] In 1856 James White admonished: "A missionary spirit is wanted to raise the cry more extensively in new fields, and sound the alarm throughout christendom." [16] In 1857 R.F. Cottrell preached through an interpreter to a company of Seneca Indians (they were Baptist) along the Tonawanda River. [17] That same year the bilingual Canadian-born Bourdeau brothers, A.C. and Daniel T., began to evangelize French-speaking people in Vermont, assisted the following year by a former Catholic priest, M.B. Czechowski, of whom more will be said later. John Fisher, a former Baptist minister, put a tract into Dutch for the immigrants near Holland, Michigan. Encouraged by such developments, Uriah Smith editorialized in the Review in 1859 that "perhaps"

the command to prophesy to peoples and tongues could be fulfilled in North America! [18]

Smith was cautious. Joseph Clarke, an energetic Ohio school teacher, was not so cautious. "The work should not be sectionalized," he warned. "Ireland is as near as Ohio, and Russia is as dear as Iowa." [19] Others, also broader visioned than the Review editor, had already been shipping books and papers to relatives overseas. In the early 1860s reports came from folk in Ireland who had begun to keep the Sabbath in 1859 and who were deeply grateful for the Review and Sister White's Testimonies. "Myself, and two children, and governess," wrote one of them, "keep the seventh day. My house servant I compel to keep from work." [20]

It is easy to understand why in the 1850s Adventists sent publications instead of preachers overseas. The available ministers, overworked, underpaid, and inadequately led, were quite unable to meet even the demands at home. James White thought he had calls for twenty times as many as

they could care for. And they could scarcely have served abroad before the home base organized itself in support.

So we return to the 1863 organization of the General Conference and the genesis of its executive committee as a missionary board.

If it was indeed a missionary board, charged to select personnel and locations for missionary endeavor, why did it take eleven years to send out its first foreign missionary, J.N. Andrews? For one thing, it was busy sending out home missionaries. Among its first actions in 1863 was a vote that Isaac Sanborn be sent" as a missionary to Minnesota." He was only one of several ministers sent out with evangelistic tents for the ensuing season and referred to as missionaries. [21]

Evangelists were appropriately called missionaries in the 1850s and 1860s. As early as 1853 Loughborough and Cornell had been sent by the sacrificial Jackson, Michigan, congregation on a "mission" several months long to the lonely,

sparsely peopled prairies of Wisconsin and Illinois. [22] Sanborn on his mission to Minnesota 1863-64, logged 2400 rugged, lonely miles in eight months. And when J.N. Loughborough and Daniel Bourdeau volunteered at the 1868 General Conference for tent evangelism in California, they went as "missionaries" without a doubt. Sailing south on the Atlantic, crossing Panama by land, and then sailing north to San Francisco, they traveled 7000 miles, farther by many a league than Andrews would go in 1874 to reach Switzerland.

Facts are, however, that in spite of its heavy responsibility for home missions, the General Conference didn't wait eleven years before thinking about sending out a foreign missionary. Eager as a schoolboy, James White reported that the executive committee, only a few days old, was already thinking of sending B.F. Snook as a "missionary to Europe" before the close of 1863. [23] Providentially, it had second thoughts, for as you remember, Snook soon turned Universalist.

In 1864 M.B. Czechowski sought authorization

to return to Europe as a missionary. Reluctantly--with the hope that they could send him later--the committee turned him down. [24] Czechowski, as we shall see in the next chapter, secured support from Sunday-keeping Adventists and went to Europe anyway. A few years later one of his Swiss converts, James Erzberger, came over to America. During his stay he was ordained so that he could return to Switzerland "to participate in the great work of preaching the final warning to men." He was looked upon as a missionary and Europe was considered as a mission field, as early as 1870. [25]

Meanwhile, and largely unrelated to these developments, a number of ladies in the sleepy village of South Lancaster, Massachusetts, encouraged by the energetic Stephen Haskell and led by the resourceful Roxie Rice, formed themselves in 1869 into the Vigilant Missionary Society. [26] Somehow they found time to pray, to call on their neighbors, to help the sick and needy, and also to mail out thousands of tracts and books to people in North America and in many countries far away. They maintained excellent records and

wrote hundreds and hundreds of letters. The next year Haskell, newly elected president of the New England Conference, organized the New England Tract and Missionary Society, prompting the organization of local "T. and M." Societies all over New England. In 1873 he was asked to sponsor T. and M. Societies all over the United States. In more cases than anyone knows, the first converts to the third angel's message in distant lands were won by lay missionaries of the Tract and Missionary societies years before the arrival of a missionary in person.

We began this chapter by watching flags at the General Conference of 1975. The previous year, 1974, was chosen by the church to mark "a hundred years of world mission" out of respect for the departure in 1874 of J.N. Andrews. But because Seventh-day Adventists have ever been a movement with a sense of mission, other dates might have served almost as well.

For example, 1918 would have reminded them of 1818, when that early Adventist, William Miller,

heard the call to "tell it to the world."

The year 1959 was a century after the first European accepted the third angel's message.

And 1964 was 100 years after M.B. Czechowski set sail as Seventh-day Adventism's first "volunteer" overseas missionary.

Notes:

1. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 207
2. Review and Herald, July 26, 1887, p. 466
3. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 74
4. Bates, A Seal of the Living Cod, pp. 4, 35, 40, 45
5. James White to Brother Bowles, November 8, 1849
6. Midnight Cry, October 12, 1844, p. 122
7. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 74
8. Loughborough, "A Sketch," p. 50

9. Ellen G. White, Letter 4, 1850
10. Review and Herald, June 24, 1852, pp. 28-29. The tradition that David Hewitt was the first non-Adventist to accept the third angel's message is attested in Loughborough, "A Sketch," pp. 54, 55. It seems to be refuted by evidence in the voice of Truth that Hewitt was an Adventist in 1845
11. For example, Review and Herald, February 3, 1853, p. 148. The best history of the developments in SDA "mission theology" is Gerard Damsteegt, "The Rise of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission (Ph.D. dissertation, Free University of Amsterdam, 1976). Many references Cited below were called to my attention by this excellent study, soon to be published
12. Review and Herald, May 6, 1852, pp. 4, 5
13. Review and Herald, February 17, 1853, p. 155
14. Review and Herald, November 29, 1853, p. 164
15. Review and Herald, May 29, 1855, p. 240
16. Review and Herald, September 4, 1856, p. 141
17. Review and Herald, February 12, 1857, p. 117

18. Review and Herald, February 3, 1859, p. 87
19. Review and Herald, October 16, 1860, p. 175
20. Review and Herald, November 19, 1861, pp. 198, 199; cf. Review and Herald, December 15, 1863, p. 23
21. Review and Herald, May 26, 1863, p. 206; June 2, 1863, p. 8
22. Review and Herald, June 23, 1853, p. 21
23. Review and Herald, June 2, 1863, p. 8
24. Review and Herald, July 8, 1873, p. 29
25. Review and Herald, March 22, 1870, p. 109; January 25, 1870, p. 37; July 12, 1870, p. 32
26. Ella M. Robinson, S.N. Haskell, Man of Action (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1967), pp. 24-39

Chapter 21

Former Catholic Priest

"Excuse me, son, but would you let me cross the border underneath your wagonload of hay?"

The farmer looked up, scrutinized the strange priest who had made the unusual request, murmured, "Yes, father," and loyally proceeded to conceal him at the bottom of his narrow wagon.

The priest, M.B. Czechowski, was fleeing for his life. The Franciscan monastery in central Europe of which he was a monk had become dangerously involved in national politics. He had almost reached the international border. He would be safe if he could cross it unobserved.

If.

Out of sight beneath the hay in the nineteenth wagon of an extensive caravan, Czechowski bounced and swerved the remaining distance to the

checkpoint, then felt the vehicle stop to await inspection. Squinting through a crack to watch the customs officer do his work, he was greatly alarmed to discover that the elderly inspector probed the contents of each wagon with a sword! The energy involved appeared to tire him not at all despite the sweltering summer heat. He examined the eighteenth wagon as energetically as he had the first.

Czechowski prayed. Then, as the nineteenth wagon rumbled into position, the inspector wilted. Steadying himself, he called out to the driver, "Have you anything to declare?"

"I swear I have not even a loaf of bread, sir!" the farmer replied.

"Hurry up, then, and get a move on," the officer commanded. "Don't keep your wagon parked here all day!"

As the vehicle pulled ahead, a perspiring Czechowski managed to peer backward through

another crack. He saw the inspector probe the next wagon as vigorously as before. [1]

M.B. Czechowski is certainly one of the most colorful, and possibly one of the most controversial, characters in the story of Adventism. People haven't always agreed even on his name. Do his initials "M.B." stand for Michael Belina or Michael Bonaventura? And how does one pronounce "Czechowski"? (He preferred the sound "Chahofsky." [2]) He could tell a dozen stories like the one above. Even if all of them didn't happen exactly as he told them, it's not hard to understand after reading a few of them why, once he made up his mind to return to Europe, he found his own way to get there.

Born in Poland in 1818, he entered the monastic order of St. Francis as a youth, idealistically assuming that modern monks were as chaste and self-denying as Francis of Assisi had been. Disillusioned, he tried to reform the monastery, with the result that he passed from one exciting episode to another. In due course he made

a personal appeal to the pope in Rome, was imprisoned for a year, was exiled three years to France, and was driven thence into Switzerland. There in 1850 he renounced both priesthood and Catholicism and got married.

The next year he sailed for North America, where, after laboring awhile for the Baptists in Canada, he was converted in 1857 to the third angel's message during tent meetings in Findlay, Ohio.

The following spring, at a conference in Battle Creek dealing with work for immigrant ethnic groups, Czechowski was assigned to ministerial labor with the Bourdeau brothers among French-speaking Americans.

It was exhilarating to have a real live ex-Catholic priest in the ranks. His former sacrifice and present zeal received frequent mention in the Review, and his perennial poverty attracted generous responses, notably from the Whites. James White, however, who had three children of

his own, became increasingly perplexed as to why Czechowski, who had four, was so constantly in need of disproportionately large living allowances. Before long, White was writing in the Review about the good "counsel" Czechowski required from his brethren. [3] When Czechowski sometime later left northern New York, abruptly and without counsel, and launched an expensive but relatively fruitless mission in Brooklyn and New York City, matters came to a head.

In 1861 James White was on a tour of the Eastern States trying to organize conferences but encountering a discouraging degree of opposition. Surely Czechowski, whom he and his wife had befriended so liberally, would heed his advice. The former priest insisted, however, on marching to the beat of his own drummer, and in exasperation White wrote in the Review about the New York mission: "We are done moving out in any enterprise connected with the cause until system can lie at the bottom of all our operations. ... Let others who choose push the battle in confusion." [4]

It was a turning point. Czechowski, opposing not only James White but also C.O. Taylor, A.C. and D.T. Bourdeau, and others, remained on in New York, preaching in several languages and raising up a small company of believers.

'Czechowski's real goal was to work in Europe. When the General Conference organized in 1863 and the Review reported its interest in sending Snook there as a missionary, Czechowski hoped his dream might soon come true. When J.N. Loughborough came to Brooklyn the following winter to hold evangelistic meetings and organize a church (of sixteen), Czechowski implored him to mention his name to the executive committee. Loughborough, instead, implored him to wait for a while. Many years later, Loughborough recalled that he had not felt free to be candid with the would-be missionary. He had told him that the church couldn't yet afford to send him. He had wanted to say that the man himself was "too rash" to be sent. [5]

As early as 1858 Czechowsi had confided to Ellen White in a letter that it was his deep desire to "visit my own native country across the big waters, and tell them all about Jesus' coming, and the glorious restitution, and how they must keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus." [6]

In her turn Ellen White wrote Czechowski a number of letters through the years. In 1861 she told him that she had been shown in vision that in rejecting the counsel of his fellow ministers he did wrong. She commended him as "conscientious and perfectly honest before God"--an unusual compliment from the Lord's messenger--but reminded him that he had given his brethren reason to be dismayed at his poor judgment. She urged him not to "mark out a course" for himself but to await the decisions of the church; and she specifically warned him not to let unbelievers wean him away with false praise. [7]

The leadership considered his request to be sent abroad and reluctantly turned it down for the time being, hoping he would yet develop into a prudent

manager so that they could send him sometime later. [8]

Thereupon Czechowski did the very thing Sister White had written him not to do. He went to a camp meeting in Wilbraham, Massachusetts, [9] conducted by the Advent Christians, told them about his dream, and won their high praise and enthusiastic endorsement.

The Advent Christians were an organization of former Millerites who rejected the Sabbath and sanctuary messages but accepted the sleep of the dead. They had organized formally with headquarters in Boston in 1860, the same year Seventh-day Adventists settled on their name. Miles Grant, who edited their World's Crisis, agreed to let Czechowski solicit funds through the columns of that magazine.

The main branch of Millerism, asserting the immortality of the soul, had organized as the American Millennial Association, later known as the Evangelical Adventists, in 1858. The editor of

their Advent Herald also opened his paper to the former priest. (All told, the first-day Adventists numbered in the 1860s some ten times the membership of Seventh-day Adventists.)

Thus supported, and accompanied by his family and Miss Anna Butler, a sister of the George I. Butler who one day would be General Conference president, Michael Belina (or Bonaventura) Czechowski set sail for Europe on May 14, 1864.

For fourteen months he labored diligently in the vicinity of Torre Pellice in the Waldensian country of the Italian Alps. There he won several individuals to the Sabbath, notably J.D. Geymet, Francis Besson, and a little later, apparently, Mrs. Catherine Revel. [10] Yielding at last to overwhelming opposition and taking along John Geymet--and, of course, his family and Anna Butler--he transferred his operations in September 1865 to Switzerland.

Czechowski and Geymet visited from house to house, preached in public halls, printed and sold

tracts, and issued a periodical, L'évangile éternel ("The Everlasting Gospel"). Three years later, when Czechowski departed Switzerland for good, he left behind him about forty baptized believers worshiping in several companies.

Their main church, in Tramelan, was organized early in 1867, the first Seventh-day Adventist church outside North America.

To secure financial support from his willing benefactors, Czechowski filed regular reports with the Advent Herald and the World's Crisis, whose editors became increasingly fond of him, urged their readers to support him, and forwarded their contributions to him from time to time.

Aided by the fact that English was to them a foreign tongue, Czechowski managed for three years to keep his converts uninformed about all Adventist groups in America. But one eventful day in the latter part of 1867, Albert Vuilleumier, who knew just enough English so that he could make it out with the aid of a dictionary, noticed among

Czechowski's belongings a copy of the Review for July 16. Haltingly but with growing excitement he read phrase by phrase till he discovered that there were Sabbath-keeping Adventists in North America too! Quickly he dispatched a letter--in French--to Battle Creek; and after some delay due to the language, the folk in Battle Creek read with growing excitement about Sabbath-keeping Adventists in faraway Switzerland.

Letters flowed back and forth, but mutual joy was marred by news that the building and equipment which Czechowski had purchased for publishing L'évangile éternel were heavily mortgaged, the note was coming due, and the former priest was off in Italy doing missionary work. Czechowski's weakness had surfaced again, disastrously.

While the creditors postponed the deadline to January 1869, the Americans invited the Swiss to send them a representative, and then set about raising money to bail them out. There was a stipulation. It was felt under the circumstances that

if the Americans provided the cash, title to the press should not be held by any individual but by the Swiss believers as a whole. Czechowski said No! And the press was lost. [11] About that same time he left Switzerland permanently. He worked a short time in France, Germany, and Hungary; then he settled in Romania, where he supported himself and made yet another group of converts. Under obscure circumstances, he died of "exhaustion" on February 23, 1876, in Vienna, at the age of fifty-seven.

There is no doubting his missionary zeal. Always poor, he traveled incredible distances on foot. On at least one occasion he slogged endless miles after dark through muddy fields in a driving winter rain. On another, he slipped on snow to the very edge of a precipice. He believed God had called him to his special ministry. Once, he reports, an influential family in Italy was prepared for his arrival by a dream. [12]

The quality of his converts is also noteworthy. J.D. Geymet, Francis Besson, Jonah Jones, and

others forsook all immediately to become full-time missionary workers. Albert Vuilleumier, a watchmaker, doubled vigorously as an elder, sometimes even baptizing people. James Erzberger, already a minister-in-training, transferred his loyalty to the Sabbath-keeping church for life. Mrs. Revel, in spite of severe, opposition at home, remained a Sabbath keeper over sixty years till her death at ninety-nine. Mrs. Pigueron, one of the first three baptized in a lake at Neuchatel, renamed an Adventist over seventy years. Several of the young couples Czechowski baptized are, through their descendants, still active in Seventh-day Adventist work to the present day.

When the news first broke that Czechowski was preaching the Sabbath in Europe, the various "first-day" Adventists, chagrined and angry, dropped him flat. Seventh-day Adventists, however, were understandably delighted and hailed him as "this noble hearted man." They touched lightly on his faults and tended to blame themselves for not having helped him overcome them. The 1872 General Conference session

officially acknowledged "the hand of God in planting the truth in Switzerland." [13]

But when Andrews got to Switzerland in 1874, he found that many of the Swiss Adventists remembered Czechowski chiefly with "much pain and sadness." [14] Debts, disappointment, and the devil had sown seeds of disillusion. The Swiss were clinging loyally to the truth about the Sabbath--but also, stubbornly, to rumors about Czechowski's assumed adultery and ultimate apostasy. [15] Though they welcomed Andrews with open hearts, they were in no position to help him get the new press he badly needed, [16] and he died without obtaining it.

Interest in Czechowski has escalated in recent years, stimulated in part by the centenary of his death. Loyal Europeans are endeavoring, if they can, to disprove all the tragic rumors.

"We have this treasure," Paul observed of every Christian evangelist, "in earthen vessels."

Ellen White didn't say that if Czechowski went to Europe God would forsake him! God evidently did bless the preaching of this one-time Catholic priest. Yet, without passing sentence, it is tempting to think what more might have been. What if, to ease his natural pride, Czechowski back in 1858 had attributed his lack of self-management to his years in a monastery (where every temporal need was supplied) and had honored the friendly counsel of his colleagues and the inspired advice of Ellen White? On the growing edge of evangelism he might have quickly built a solid reputation for creative teamwork. Conspicuous as he was, he might have helped significantly to turn the tide in favor of organization at a crucial time in his church's history. When the General Conference considered sending B. F, Snook to Europe, it might well have appointed him instead, ten years before J.N. Andrews was sent out! His press in Europe need not have failed. The flow of missionaries could have begun a decade earlier than it did. And in due course M.B. Czechowski might have closed his days honored and appreciated on both sides of the Atlantic, the first official Seventh-day

Adventist overseas missionary.

Notes:

1. M.B. Czechowski, Thrilling and Instructive Developments: An Experience of Fifteen Years as a Roman Catholic Clergyman and Priest (Boston: Published for the Author, 1862), chap. 10
2. Advent Herald, January 3, 1865, p. 62
3. For example, in the Review and Herald, December 30, 1858, p. 48. Rajmund lady slow Dabrowski, "M.B. Czechowski, First Adventist Missionary to Europe" (seminar paper, Andrews University, 1972), provides a convenient collection of SDA published sources on Czechowski
4. Review and Herald, September 3, 1861, p. 108
5. J.N. Loughborough, "Sketches of the Past," no. 128, Pacific Union Recorder, June 20, 1912, pp. 1, 2
6. Review and Herald, September 23, 1858, p. 144
7. Ellen G. White, letter 3, 1864

8. Review and Herald, July 8, 1873, p. 29; January 11, 1870, pp. 21, 22
9. World's Crisis, July 28, 1869, p. 80
10. Mrs. Catherine Revel, a remarkable Christian lady, is sometimes considered to have been M.B. Czechowski's first European convert. (See, for example, J.N. Andrews, Review and Herald, October 14, 1875, p. 116) Czechowski, however, claimed John Geymet and another man as converts as early as January 1865 (World's Crisis, January 31, 1865, p. 78; March 28, 1865, p. 6), while in Review and Herald, May 6,1884, p. 295, G.I. Butler says that Sr. Revel had stood for the Sabbath for eighteen years, taking us back only to 1866 as the year of her conversion; and in a letter to Les signes des temps, December 1877, p. 144, she herself says that she had been in the true church for "ten or eleven years," which, again, indicates 1866 as the year of her conversion
11. Review and Herald, July 8, 1873,p. 29
12. World's Crisis, January 6, 1869, p. 68; April 22, 1869, p. 22
13. Review and Herald, November 30, 1869, p.

181; January 11, 1870, pp. 21,22; January 2, 1872, p. 20
14. Review and Herald, September 23, 1875, p. 92
15. J.N. Andrews, "Address to the Public," December 25, 1879, copy deposited in the Ellen G. White Estate
16. J.N. Andrews letter fragment, December 29, 1879, original deposited in the Ellen G. White Estate.

Chapter 22

Overseas Missionary Family

In mid-nineteenth century America, it took more than a mite of dependence to "keep Saturday for Sunday," and converts who agreed on the day of the week didn't necessarily agree on very much else. Their own leaders looked on them benignly as a fascinating "bag of buttons," all shapes and sizes, with "more different beliefs among them than heads or horns on any of the beasts in the Bible." [1]

To say that every member kept pace with all the others in a growing commitment to spread the third angel's message in all the world would be quite false. It was the sight of publications piling up at the press because so many members didn't care enough to buy them for distribution, that finally convinced James White that the church had gone Laodicean. And even after reports about the start in Switzerland, it was a long while before the church got in gear for its overseas role.

Constantly Ellen White called on the people to wake up and reach out. Make special efforts, she urged, where angels of God open the way! [2] Don't settle down in comfortable colonies! [3] Don't expect the light of truth to help you unless you "transmit it to others"! [4] Her words fell on many a dull ear.

Just the same, the news from Switzerland did stir interest. And so, even more, did the arrival of James Erzberger. James was a seminary student when he first heard about Sabbath keepers. To demonstrate his disdain for what he considered their legalism, he showed up at their Sabbath meeting in Switzerland in his work clothes. Late in 1868 Albert Vuilleumier baptized him. In June 1869 he arrived at the Battle Creek railroad depot. Unable to speak English, he held up an envelope marked, "J.N. Andrews, Battle Creek, Michigan."

At once the Whites welcomed him into their home. On the instant Willie, their son, Adeline Howe, their cook, and John Kellogg, the future

physician, launched all-day-long English lessons. Within five weeks young Erzberger gave a talk in English. Within nine weeks he moved an Ohio camp meeting to tears with an appeal for Switzerland. In response Seventh-day Adventists collected what has been called their first foreign-missions offering ($76.00). [5] In a little more than a year Erzberger was ordained and on his way home.

Meantime, as we have seen, a "Missionary Society of Seventh-day Adventists" had been formed to raise money. The Review, furthermore, carried regular news now about the New England Mission, the California Mission, and the Swiss Mission. Yet there is grim reality in an 1870 editorial: "It appears that God is remarkably opening the way for the spread of the light. ... God is preparing the way before his people, even faster than they are prepared to respond." [6] (Emphasis supplied.)

Ademar Vuilleumier, a cousin of Albert's, came over. He attended school in Battle Creek. His

presence must have made a difference. But when the General Conference in 1873 took up the needs of Switzerland, it took no action to send a man. "The fields are all white and ready for the harvest," James White pleaded energetically. "We must send men to Europe to establish the work there. The brethren in Switzerland have been calling, and are still calling for help. And we suggest that Eld. J.N. Andrews should be spared to accompany Br. Vuilleumier to Europe this fall." [7]

But it was not to be; not that fall, anyway. The year 1874 would be better. But, while we wait for the brethren to make up their minds, let us take another look at this man whom Elder White recommended and whom we have already met so many times.

John Nevins Andrews was born fifteen years before the 1844 disappointment in the little town of Poland, Maine (where, incidentally, two of Ellen Harmon's sisters went to live when they got married years later). In due course the Andrews family moved to Paris, Maine, accepted Miller's

message, and after October 22 took into their home the Stowell family, who had sold their farm in anticipation of Christ's return.

This generosity of John's parents was well rewarded. Somehow or other a copy of T.M. Preble's tract made its way into their house. This was the little work, you remember, that led Joseph Bates to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Fifteen-year-old Marian Stowell saw it lying around and read it for herself. Impressed, she showed it to Oswald, her older brother. The very next Saturday the two of them observed the Sabbath--as well as they could, that is, since they were afraid to do it openly.

The following Monday, Marian offered the tract to seventeen-year-old John. He read it and asked. "Have your father and mother read this?"

"No," Marian replied, "but I have. Are you willing to keep the true Sabbath, John?"

The next weekend both families, youth and parents together, kept the Sabbath, holding a service in one of the rooms of their house.

They all shared their faith, of course, and soon seven other families were meeting with them. One of the girls in the group, Harriet Stevens, eventually became Mrs. Uriah Smith; another, her sister Angeline, eventually became Mrs. J.N. Andrews. [8]

In September 1849 a remarkable meeting was held for the believers who lived in Paris, Maine. The Whites, Joseph Bates, Stockbridge Howland, and several other early leaders attended. As prayer was offered, Brother Howland's face shone with heavenly light, the Spirit descended "something as it did on the day of Pentecost," and parents and children, confessing their wrongs, were united in understanding and love. The members of the Andrews family were there. John was so impressed with the evidence of God's leadership in the Sabbath-and-sanctuary movement that he exclaimed earnestly, "I would exchange a thousand

errors for one truth."

Later Ellen White said that the blessing of God was poured out on this occasion especially for the sake of young John. "The Lord was bringing out Brother Andrews to fit him for future usefulness, and was giving him an experience that would be of great value to him in his future labors. [9]

Near the end of the following year, James White issued volume one, number one, of the Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald. On its masthead, as a member of its three-man publishing committee, the name of J.N. Andrews appeared. It was a clear indication of the confidence White felt he could place in young John.

The printing office didn't tarry long in Paris, Maine, and neither did Andrews. Immediately he stepped into the field as a minister, sharing in the experience and sacrifices of the other "traveling brethren." After the Review office was located in Rochester, he spent part of his time there, where, with the other helpers, he often subsisted for days

on little more than beans and mush while laboring beyond his limits. Other helpers also subsisted on the same diet while laboring beyond their limits, a circumstance which damaged the health of several and contributed to the death of Annie Smith.

In October 1851, while the Review was still in Saratoga Springs, he wrote from Cincinnati, "In the midst of tribulation and affliction my soul is joyful in God. I was never more deeply impressed with the importance of the work in which we are engaged, than at the present time. My heart is bound up in it, and in a work so sacred I would cheerfully spend and be spent. Souls are perishing, who may now be reached, the time for labor is short, the night in which no man can work is at hand. Shall we not then while the day lasts, do what we can, so that by any means we may save some?" [10]

He meant every word. If anything, he was too willing to spend and be spent. In a short time he came very near spending everything he had. This is why he retired for a while to Waukon; and that is

where in 1856 he married Angeline.

Ellen White had said that God was fitting him up for usefulness; and useful to the cause he most certainly proved to be--preacher, student, writer, administrator, as well as pioneer missionary.

In 1855 he proved conclusively that the Sabbath begins at sunset and not at sunrise as a few of the Adventists had contended, or at six o'clock in the evening, as Joseph Bates and most of the others insisted.

His research three or four years later led to the practice of systematic benevolence. In 1861 there appeared a scholarly work from his pen entitled History of the Sabbath and the First Day of the Week, which, revised and republished, remained the standard Seventh-day Adventist work in the field until well into the twentieth century. It was said that Andrews could study in seven languages, and he claimed to have memorized the New Testament.

Andrews was a member of the committees which (in 1860) voted the name "Seventh-day Adventist" and (in 1863) organized the first General Conference. He served as the third president of the General Conference (1867 to 1869), and for a number of years he was an editor of the Review and Herald. In 1863 he went to Washington to explain to the government the Adventist position on military service.

Little wonder that Ellen White wrote of him to the Swiss in 1878, "We sent you the ablest man in all our ranks"! [11]

But that was long after he arrived! It's time now for the year 1874--a banner year in Adventist history.

On March 16, 1874, the Seventh-day Adventist Educational Society was incorporated, in preparation for the founding within the year of Battle Creek College, the first Adventist institution of higher learning.

On June 4, 1874, Signs of the Times was launched, paving the way for the founding of the Pacific Press the following year.

In August 1874, a joint camp meeting and General Conference was conducted in Michigan--the largest assemblage of Sabbath keepers, Uriah Smith observed correctly, to meet anywhere in the world for many centuries.

At this camp meeting-General Conference, James White argued again for someone to carry the third angel's message to the rest of the world. "Ours is a world-wide mission," he insisted.

Now on Wednesday, the first of April of this same memorable year, while the Whites had been living temporarily in Oakland, California, Ellen had received a most notable vision. Shortly thereafter she wrote it out, recording the words spoken to her by a heavenly Messenger:

"You are entertaining too limited ideas of the work for this time. You are trying to plan the work

so that you can embrace it in your arms. ... [But] your house is the world." She named specifically Australia, Europe, and the islands of the sea as sites for intensive missionary endeavor. She prodded the leaders with this vital sentence: "You are to hold forth the word of life, that all may have an opportunity of receiving truth if they will." Picking up the words of the heavenly messenger again, she implored: "Never lose sight of the fact that the message you are bearing is a world-wide message. It is to be given to all cities, to all villages." [12]

Unlike some of her brethren, Ellen White never forgot the reason why the Seventh-day Adventist movement exists. Jesus has entered the most holy place to engage in the work of ridding His people forever of their sins. To encourage ultimate holiness, He stands by the ark shedding on earth the glory of Sabbath sacredness. But He will not stay there long, and when He leaves, every case will have been decided for weal or woe.

The message of the Sabbath, of loyalty to God based on a vital relationship with Jesus, must go to

every living soul, so that everyone can have a chance to change his ways before probation's dose, and the onset of the seven last plagues, and Satan's cruelest attack in the time of trouble. "Not one" she wrote, "is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and been rejected. ... Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently. The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty." [13]

On August 14, 1874, the General Conference responded at last to her appeals--and to those of her husband and the Swiss. Under the flapping canvas of a camp-meeting tent the historic action was voted that moved Adventism officially out of North America: "Resolved, That the General Conference ... instruct the Executive Committee to send Eld. J.N. Andrews to Switzerland as soon as practicable."

Andrews was ready. On September 15, one month later, he set sail from Boston bound for Liverpool on his way to Switzerland.

With him aboard the Cunard liner, Atlas, were Ademar Vuilleumier, his initial French interpreter, and his surviving children, Mary, aged twelve, and Charles, aged seventeen. Andrews had been seventeen when he accepted the Sabbath in Paris, Maine. Angeline had passed away in March 1872. Two infant children had also died. "He leaves nearly half his family in the silent grave," James White observed with compassion.

The absence of a wife and mother was to have dire results for the health of this missionary family, but Andrews had faced untold difficulties as a home missionary, and he was not to be deterred by any consideration as a foreign missionary. His children, too, were surrendered to the will of God.

Immediately on arrival, Andrews plunged into his work. He called a conference of believers and received a royal welcome. He traveled with Erzberger into Prussia to fellowship with a group of non-Adventist Sabbath keepers there. But the great burden on his mind was to publish a French

Signs of the Times, Les signes des temps. Knowing that the French are not attracted to foreigners who torture their syntax, he bent every effort to master their language to perfection. He wanted no needless barrier between his message and the people. Mary and Charles joined him in this. After two years they were ready to enter into a solemn covenant, written out and duly signed, pledging to talk at home only in French. German they might use by exception if they wished. English must be reserved only for distress.

Home for the three was an apartment in the German-speaking Swiss city of Basel. Here Andrews more or less reproduced the early "Rochester model," using the apartment as a publishing office as well as a home. Andrews laboriously composed articles for his paper, or translated them accurately from the Review and the California Signs, Charles, just as laboriously, set the type, Mary, who learned to speak French like a native, helped read proof.

Pages of type were then trundled in a

wheelbarrow to one of a succession of printers. Andrews had chosen Basel partly on its reputation for fine printing; but to his perfectionist eye, all the good printers were dishonest and the honest ones no good. Once he stopped a press fifty times during a single run to correct the pressman's sloppy work.

He begged Battle Creek for a press of his own and men to run it. James White launched a $10,000 fund drive but little came of it at the time.

It appears that Andrews was not assigned a regular salary but was expected to take his personal expenses out of the contributions that came on occasion from the States. For the man who pioneered systematic benevolence, this was ironic. Being a conscientious Christian, he was embarrassed to draw a penny beyond what he deemed absolutely essential. In practice, he drew rather less than was essential. For months one year he and his children ate barely more than bread, potatoes, Graham mush, a few grapes in season and occasionally some other fruit.

The parallel with Rochester was too exact in other ways also. By 1878, when Maude Sisley and the William Ingses had come over to help them, Mrs. Ings began to suspect that all was not well with Mary. Ominous word reached America that the missionary families feared "consumption" was fastening upon her.

Andrews was invited to the 1878 General Conference. He asked if he might bring Mary along--and promised he would pay her fare. He still had a little left from selling his home before leaving.

It was Mary's last trip. Even brilliant young Dr. Kellogg could offer no hope. Mary missed her mother and asked her father to sit with her. Dr. Kellogg warned him of the probable consequence; but Mary had gone willingly to Europe without a mother and stood by him like a brick, and he would not let her down.

Before the year ended, she passed away, at seventeen.

Andrews, who had entered a slow decline in health when his wife died in 1872, never recovered from his daughter's death. "I seem to be having hold upon God with a numb hand," he sighed shortly after.

God loved him in his loneliness. He gave Ellen White a message for him--that Angeline, Mary, and the two sleeping babies were safe in Jesus and would rise to live again. [14]

The following summer Andrews willingly retraced his steps. Charles was glad to see him! They devised new ways to attract the attention of the public, and the circulation of Les signes rose from five hundred to as many as five thousand. Even without Mary he had a staff of half a dozen now, and they had the use of a sunny, well-equipped type room. They were putting out tracts in German (for Erzberger) and in Italian, as well as in French. Les signes was going to addresses in fifty of the sixty-two districts (departements) of France, and to almost all the countries of Europe--

Sweden, Austria, Hungary, Prussia, Saxony, Alsace, Belgium, Holland, England, Wales, Scotland, Italy, Sicily, and Spain--not to mention Switzerland, of course, and also Russia, India, Egypt, and both North and South America. [15]

Andrews traveled into Italy, Germany, England, and France, but the paper alone taxed his strength. He began to notice Mary's symptoms appearing in himself, one after another. As his condition worsened, the General Conference proclaimed a day of prayer and asked J.N. Loughborough, his convert from the Rochester days, to leave England (where he was doing evangelism) to anoint him. Andrews rallied for a while, but the end would come. In the summer of 1883 his elderly mother arrived from Waukon accompanying Elder B.L. Whitney, who had been appointed by the brethren to "assist him in. his feebleness."

Andrews's mind remained clear and his spirits hopeful in the Lord. He lay in bed, a living skeleton, dictating to his helpers almost to the last.

He passed away at sunset on Sunday, October 21 1883, at the age of 54.

Standing at his grave in the Wolf Cemetery outside Basel, one can almost hear his voice repeating his own words: "Souls are perishing, who may now be reached, the time for labor is short, the night in which no man can work is at hand. Shall we not then while the day lasts, do what we can, so that by any means we may save some?"

Notes:

1. S.N. Haskell to W.W. Prescott, August 23, 1907, in Robinson, S.N. Haskell, p. 26
2. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 147-149
3. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 113-116; 631-636; 669
4. Ibid., p. 123
5. Review and Herald, August 12, 1937, pp, 4, 5
6. Review and Herald, March 22, 1870, p. 108
7. Review and Herald, August 26, 1873, p. 84
8. Biographical data about Andrews are based primarily on correspondence deposited in the

Ellen G. White Estate. See also Mrs. Marian C. Stowell Crawford, General Conference Bulletin, 1901, p. 116, and Watchman, April 25, 1905, p. 278, for the story of Andrews's conversion to the Sabbath. See also Everett N. Dick, Founders of the Message (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1938), pp. 299-333

9. Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, p. 127; Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, pp. 116, 117
10. Review and Herald, November 25, 1851, p. 54
11. Ellen G, White, letter 2, 1878
12. Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, pp. 208-215; Testimonies, vol. 7, pp. 34-36
13. Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 605
14. Ellen G. White, Letter A-71, 1878, in In Heavenly Places (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1967), p. 272
15. Review and Herald, May 20, 1880, p. 332

Chapter 23

World Missionary Movement

After Elder Andrews's death, no eulogy in his honor appeared in the Review.

It was what he wanted; and the editors of the paper reluctantly complied. But a grand eulogy has been written nonetheless. Missionaries and missionary families who have left their homes in an ever flowing stream to serve the Lord in unfamiliar climes have done him the ultimate honor of following where he led.

Here may be the great qualitative difference between his missionary service and that of M. B. Czechowski. Because Andrews left the country in harmony with and at the behest of his brethren, the whole organization in a sense went with him, and in no time the church as a whole saw itself as a world missionary movement.

Not that it understood the concept fully at the

time. Not that it does so even yet. But almost immediately it began taking its worldwide task seriously. The very next year it voted James White of Battle Creek, John Loughborough of California, and John Andrews of Switzerland as its three-man executive committee, which was also its missionary board. The arrangement seemed "very appropriate" to editor Uriah Smith, for, said he, "the message which S. D. Adventists are giving is a world-wide message." [1]

Having mentioned Czechowski again, by the way, it may be only fair to observe that Andrews, too, had the gospel treasure in an earthen vessel. I appears that he did not need to die so soon. Ellen White as the Lord's messenger frequently counseled him not to work nearly so hard and to take much better care of his health. Andrews promised to try, then justified his excessive labor by saying that the success of the cause required it. By hindsight it is very easy to sympathize with him but not so easy to accept his judgment. Near the end he confessed repentantly that he had done wrong. [2]

Yet God wonderfully blessed him. And He used his dauntless spirit of resolution to impress thousands of other earthen vessels to serve devotedly in faraway places.

Mary's sacrifice also had an influence. Her funeral called out the largest congregation to that date in the history of Battle Creek and, along with her father's solemn appeal to the youth on that occasion, impressed many a young man and woman attending Battle Creek College to emulate her consecration someday. [3]

Living in the jet age, it is hard today to conceive that shortly before the Andrewses' departure for Europe, General Conference President George I. Butler had excused missionary reluctance on the part of some by remarking that "our young men would look upon such an undertaking with fear and almost with horror." [4] Ten years later, when Butler was again in office as General conference president, he had so far overcome his trepidation as to undertake a trip to

Europe himself, during which he helped establish publishing houses in Switzerland, Norway, and England, and improved the emerging organization of the whole work there. That was the year following J. N. Andrews's death. By then there were a thousand European Seventh-day Adventists, and missionaries were at work not only in Italy, France, and Switzerland (lands where Andrews and Czechowski pioneered), but also in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, where the John Mattesons and others were laboring, and in England, under the William Ingses and the John Loughboroughs and others. In 1882, Stephen Haskell of Tract and Missionary fame helped convoke the first European Council of Seventh-day Adventist Missions (initially, the European Conference) in Basel, with representation from the British, Scandinavian, and Central European fields.

To tell the story of Adventism in each new country would literally require many volumes. Almost every land had its own "Joseph Bates," reduced perhaps to the equivalent of a York shilling but advancing against more or less overt or

subtle opposition through doors opened by God's divine providence. [5]

Like Andrews, John G. Matteson followed the Rochester model in his ministry to Scandinavia. He had learned something about printing in America. When his converts there asked for tracts in Danish and the Review office discouraged him, he had raised $1000 from his handful of Danes and Norwegians, taken the train to Battle Creek, learned how to set type, and prepared the publications himself. In Norway he set up a press in the building where his family lived. Unfamiliar with local products he mismatched ink and paper for his first issue and the copies were slow to dry. With the help of his family he hung the pages on clothes lines for a week. But minor inconveniences didn't keep Matteson and his associates from laying a firm foundation for Adventism in Scandinavia.

Among the first Seventh-day Adventists in Russia were Romualdo Bartola, [6] an Italian merchant traveler, and Gerhard Perk, a former Mennonite. Either Andrews or Czechowski had

helped win Bartola; German-speaking relatives in America had sent papers to Perk's German-speaking friends, who had taken one look at them and warned, "That literature is so dangerous it would deceive even a Mennonite." Curiosity won. Hiding in a haymow, Perk read a copy of The Third Angel's Message, accepted its argument, and applied to Battle Creek for more.

Working in Germany at the time of Perk's conversion was L. R. Conradi, a young German who had migrated to America, accepted the Sabbath while cutting wood in Iowa, graduated in record time from Battle Creek College, and quickly demonstrated an astonishing gift for winning large numbers of other immigrants. The General Conference asked him to return to Europe to assist Elder Erzberger. Attracted by Perk's correspondence, Conradi took the train on into Russia and did a strong work there along with Perk, finding Sabbath keepers waiting for them in many places, baptizing them, and, among many adventures, getting thrown (with Perk) into jail. Subsequently Conradi became for decades the

leader of Adventism in central Europe--and a world missionary in very truth, conducting evangelistic missions in Africa and South America as well as in Germany, and writing a number of important books.

The first Seventh-day Adventist in Turkey appears to have been Theodore Anthony, a Turk who, like Conradi, had left his birth-place and accepted the Sabbath in America. He was repairing shoes in San Jose, California, when the Spirit summoned him back to his home.

Hong Kong became an Adventist mission field under circumstances that have become widely known. Abram LaRue, sometime sailor and shepherd but currently wood chopper in Sonoma County, California, heard John Loughborough preach the third angel's message during the early days of Adventism in the Golden West. Burdened with the needs of China, he begged the brethren to authorize him for work among the millions of that vast country. He asked no wages; only endorsement. But the leadership declined on

account of his age. He was sixty.

Defeated but undaunted, he secured an alternative assignment to "one of the islands of the Pacific." Because he had formerly lived in Hawaii, it was assumed he would go there; and he did colporteur in Honolulu for a while, raising up such an interest that evangelist William Healey was dispatched to reap his harvest. Then he quietly moved on to the place his heart was calling him, to Hong Kong, a very Chinese island of the Pacific.

Africa, the continent many think of first when someone says "missionary," hosted its earliest Seventh-day Adventist in 1863! Miss Hannah More, while visiting Connecticut, received from Stephen Haskell a copy among other things of John Andrews's new work, History of the Sabbath. When she returned to Liberia as a missionary of some other denomination, she studied everything through carefully, and also all the other publications that Haskell made sure she received through the mail.

Devoted to Sunday, she found it hard at first to make the change, but by the time she wrote her first letter published in the Review, on January 2, 1864, she had already won another missionary to the third angel's message, the Australian, Alexander Dickson. Oh, she assured the readers of the Review, your people have "whole-hearted Seventh-day Adventists" out in Africa! It's summer here, she continued (in January): "The birds are singing, frogs peeping, insects humming and flowers blooming, and all nature smiling.

Man alone is vile. Oh what a pity that vile man should forbear while all nature sings." [7]

What a pity, too, to tell the sad end of this attractive lady. Her own missionary society, on discovering her new convictions, relieved her. But discouraged not at all, she visited the other mission stations on the west coast of Africa and left literature at each one. Returning to America, she was baptized in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, and continued to distribute literature, some of which bore fruit, on her way to Battle Creek. [8]

At Battle Creek, however, she found the minds of the believers set on earthly things. The Whites were away. Miss More, financially destitute, sought employment among folk who didn't care. Too late she found a home with another former missionary of her former faith far up the Michigan peninsula and passed away before her time, bewildered by inhospitality but a wholehearted Adventist still.

Hearing of her bitter experience, Sister White hewed the church in Battle Creek like a true prophet, not for being worse than others but for not being a whole lot better. They had failed to entertain an angel unawares. [9]

Perhaps Hannah More, a missionary in Africa, sharing her faith in the Christ of Sabbath and sanctuary in 1863, should be honored as the first Seventh-day Adventist overseas missionary. Why not?

The torch of "present truth" was rekindled on

the African Continent by Romualdo Bartoli, whom we met a moment ago in Russia and who raised up a company--and baptized them--during a business trip to Alexandria. Then the torch was carried by Dr. H.P. Ribton, an English physician who accepted the Sabbath from the American missionary, Andrews, while living in the Italian city of Naples, and proceeded to Egypt in 1878 for his daughter's health. After doing a good work, Ribton was killed with two of his Sabbath keepers in 1882 during a riot against foreigners.

South Africa can tell of William Hunt, a miner who carried the Sabbath with him from the gold fields of Nevada to the diamond diggings of Kimberly. Like LaRue, he accepted the Sabbath while Loughborough was opening the work in northern California; and, like LaRue also, he served the Lord at his own expense. Meanwhile, in South Africa, Peter Wessels and G. J. Van Druten, Afrikaaner farmers, were learning about the Sabbath on their own. Wessels, a devout member of the Dutch Reformed church, became so concerned about milking his cows on Sunday that

he got his neighbor, Van Druten, to study the Sabbath question with him in the Bible. Soon both men were observing the seventh day, unaware of any other Sabbath keepers in the world. Providentially they came in contact with William Hunt (either through literature or by a "chance" meeting in a diamond field--accounts differ), and through Hunt the two Afrikaaners to their delight discovered the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Other members of the Wessels family besides Peter also became Seventh-day Adventists. Their generosity, based on the sale of a farm rich with diamonds, wrote a chapter in the story of Adventism not only in Africa but also in Australia and even in Chicago, too, where they helped Dr. Kellogg finance his outreach to the urban poor.

So far, the African work in Egypt, Liberia, and the South had been conducted chiefly for Christianized immigrants and their descendants and other nonblacks. The first worker specifically dedicated to African non-Christian blacks was George James, an English violinist who became a

Seventh-day Adventist in America. In the early 1890s, when he volunteered for missionary service, the General Conference Foreign Mission Board (which had replaced the executive committee in this capacity) declined to send him on the basis of insufficient funds.

Forthwith, James sold everything he owned except his violin and his clothes and paid his own way. For two years in the heart of the dark continent he attracted native people by playing his "box that could sing." His heart lighted up at the news that the denomination had inaugurated a regular mission station at Solusi, and he set out with joy to greet his brethren there. But on the way aboard a little river steamer he died of malaria, and in a lonely, unmarked grave by the riverbank he was buried.

On the way to Solusi. In 1894, the year in which, on land authorized by Cecil Rhodes, Seventh-day Adventists opened their first regular mission station among a non-Christian people (the Matebeles). [10] Twenty years past 1874. Half a

century after 1844.

The next year they opened a second station for non-Christians (the Hindus) in Calcutta.

The limitations of this book prevent our saying much about the origins of Adventism in most places, even in Australia, that biggest of islands and smallest of continents, to which Alexander Dickson took the message, warm from the heart of Hannah More, and preached it in the 1860s, only to grow discouraged at his results and give it up. In 1886 the ubiquitous S. N. Haskell with his family and a fine crew of associates with their families and, predictably, with a printing press, got the message moving there. From 1891 till 1900 Ellen White labored there herself.

But back to Africa for a moment. At about the same time that George James went there on his own, the General Conference asked Elder Lawrence Chadwick to survey the missionary potential of the west coast. When his vessel glided into the tiny port of Apam, Gold Coast (now

Ghana), he was welcomed enthusiastically by three or four dozen Seventh-day Adventists! Indeed, their leader, Francis Dolphijn, a native of the Fanti tribe, rowed out to the steamer to meet him and fairly leaped up the rope ladder several rungs at a time shouting at the top, "Is Elder Chadwick here?"

Chadwick had also found other groups of converts awaiting him, one in Sierra Leone led by a Pastor Coker, and another in Liberia, by a Mr. Gaston. Dolphijn and, apparently, Coker had read themselves into the truth through publications shipped out by Tract and Missionary Society members in the U.S.A. Gaston had heard the Word on a trip to South Africa and returned to tell it to his people. [11]

We referred back to Africa only as one way to call attention, again, to the work of laymen in the missionary endeavor of Seventh-day Adventists. Dolphijn and Gaston were not ministers, but they effectively shared their faith before ever meeting an ordained missionary. Ribton, LaRue, Anthony, Bartoli, Hunt, all left home and became foreign

missionaries without being ordained--or even paid! It is axiomatic, a simple truism, that most persons won to the Christ of Sabbath and sanctuary in America and around the world have been won wholly or in part through the missionary outreach, home or foreign, of unordained persons, earnest Christian laymen.

This reminds us to pay tribute to that special breed of layman minister, the literature evangelist, honorably titled for centuries, the Christian "colporteur." In many countries he was the pioneer.

In Chile, for example. The very first believers in Chile were French-speaking immigrants who had adopted the Sabbath after reading Les signes des temps in Algeria! But the first "workers" (1894) were Claire Nowlen, a colporteur from Argentina, and Frederick Bishop and Thomas Davis, colporteurs from California. Bishop and Davis sailed through the Golden Gate with little more than the clothes on their backs and some books in a box. They knew no Spanish and carried hardly any cash; but among their converts were the

remarkable Thomann brothers, Edward and Victor, whom God introduced to them by a dream. Edward and Victor became colporteurs themselves, enduring such close times for a while that they were reduced to a single pair of shoes between them. But they took turns wearing the shoes one canvassing while the other stayed home to pray. Later Edward became a leader in his own country, and both served as missionaries.

If Claire Nowlen left Argentina for Chile in 1894, then Argentina was a "home base for Seventh-day Adventist foreign missionaries" in 1894! Indeed. Italy had become an unofficial Seventh-day Adventist home base in 1865, when Czechowski persuaded Geymet to accompany him as a foreign missionary to Switzerland. Under Czechowski, Switzerland became the unofficial home base of Erzberger and Albert Vuilleuimier for their labors in Germany and France. It became an official home base when B. L. Whitney and G. I. Butler organized the Swiss Conference in 1884.

In the 1890s Ellen White prophesied that

Australia, too, would become a home base for foreign missions. [12] It was partly to implement this exciting prediction that the sparse and impoverished Australian membership sacrificed so much to make its college a reality.

Under L. R. Conradi, Germany became a home base that commissioned a great many missionaries, especially to the German colonies in Africa. When these colonies fell to the British Empire in the first world war, Britain became a great home base, bleeding itself almost white. In 1920 alone some twenty couples were sent out, and many more in 1922, among whom W. T, Bartlett and S. G. Maxwell became particularly prominent.

So vigorously grew the work "overseas," that already by the late 1920s more Seventh-day Adventists lived outside than inside North America. From the standpoint of the 1970s, this means that Seventh-day Adventism has been predominantly a non-American religion for half a century. Today over 80 percent of the membership lives outside the land where the church was born.

Whereas in 1863 there were 3500 members located almost exclusively in the northeast and central United States, today over 2,500,000 members live in more than 190 countries, a very large number of which have become home bases for foreign missionaries.

Seventh-day Adventism is today a world missionary movement. And since Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14), is it not natural to expect Christ's return very soon? Perhaps within a week or two at most? Perhaps, who knows, even tonight?

In 1892 Ellen White warned Seventh-day Adventists not to say at that time that Christ would come back within one or two or even five years. [13] In 1892, when they were operating in only a score of countries, they were expecting Him momentarily! They didn't seem to understand.

Do they understand today? Jesus said the gospel must go to every "nation." The Greek word employed here in the oldest manuscripts is ethnos. A curious misunderstanding in the English-speaking world, based perhaps on the King James? translation of this term, has misled many eager Christians to anticipate the second advent long before the conditions have been met. Although the word ethnos as used in Jesus' day did mean "nation," it also meant "people," "company of people," "class," "caste," and "tribe." It even meant "nation" in the limited sense of a "nation of copper-smiths," that is to say, a guild or local labor union. The plural form, ethne (and this is what we have in Matthew 24:14), meant "foreigners"--to the Greeks, "non-Greeks," and to the Jews, "Gentiles."

Quite obviously, Jesus was not talking merely about the 200 or so countries, commonwealths, colonies, dependencies, territories, and possessions listed in modern almanacs. And He certainly didn't mean that as soon as a missionary family arrives in a country, commonwealth, colony, dependency, etc., and distributes a few tracts, that entire land,

with all its population, language groups, tribes, subnations, and subcultures, can be checked off as having had the gospel preached to it. India has half a billion people speaking 880 distinct languages and dialects and Jiving in 550,000 villages. Nigeria, with 80 million people, counts 250 separate ethnic components, each speaking its own language, only a very few of which are Christian.

"Never lose sight of the fact that the message you are bearing is a worldwide message. It is to be given to all cities, to all villages, [14] says the heavenly Messenger.

In the broadest and most gracious sense, Jesus meant that the gospel is to be preached to every Jew, to every Gentile, to every person, and only then can the end come.

Of course! How could it be otherwise? God so loved the whole world that He gave His only-begotten Son. Jesus died that whosoever might be saved. He didn't die for Americans as a people, or China as a nation, but for every single sinner

whose lungs draw breath. He loves each soul as distinctly as if there were not another one for whom He gave His life. And He is not willing to come again until every person living at the time has had a chance to hear and (if he will) to believe and live. "Preach the gospel to every creature," He commanded in Mark 16:15. "Go and tell it to the world!"

But when Ellen White, in 1892, cautioned the Adventists not to place Christ's return so soon as one or two or five years in the future, she also warned against speaking of it as ten or twenty years away.

In 1892. Think of it. It seemed reasonable to the prophet, who more than anyone else was aware of the worldwide task facing the church, that the end could arrive within ten or twenty years after 1892.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." (Zechariah 4:6) God smashed the language barriers at Pentecost in a single instant

and when He has a people ready, He'll do it easily again. He won't finish the work all by Himself; if doing that were in His plan He might have done it long ago and had it over with. The commission is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel." (Mark 16:15) When God's true believers dedicate themselves to mission service, in their neighborhoods as well as in the whole world, when Christians feel the passion for lost souls that Jesus feels for them, when they "remove the rubbish" from their Laodicean lukewarm Christless hearts and let Christ the Saviour in, His Spirit will fill them as never before, and the work of God will spread through the earth like fire in the stubble.

Jesus is in the business of blotting out sins. He is at work cleansing sin and selfishness out of people's hearts and lives. And when they let Him clean their sins and selfishness all the way out, He will bring Himself all the way in. He will fill them with His Spirit--but not as water fills a cup. He will fill them as water under pressure fills a hose! He will lavishly pour out His goodness through them to the world. And when He has a movement of men

and women, boys and girls, worldwide, filled as dedicated instruments, consecrated tools in His hand, then men will say, "See, the latter rain is falling; the earth is being filled with the glory of the Lord."

"Cod will do the work," Ellen White promised near the close of her life, "if we will furnish Him the instruments." [15]

Notes:

1. Review and Herald, August 26, 1875, p. 60
2. Ellen G. White, Testimony to the Battle Creek Church (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1872); J. N. Andrews to Ellen G. White, September 17, 1883
3. Reported in the Review and Herald, December 5, 1878
4. True Missionary, March 1874, pp. 20, 21
5. For reports on how the SDA work began in countries around the world (see the SDA Encyclopedia articles on these countries. See

also Spalding, Origin and History)

6. J. N: Andrews to S. N. Haskell, December 23, 1879, gives the spelling "Bertola"
7. Review and Herald, March 29, 1864, p. 142
8. Review and Herald, December 17, 1872, p. 8
9. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 632, 666-680
10. The first regular mission station for black Africans was opened a few weeks earlier among the Fantis of the Gold Coast (now Ghana). The Fantis, however, were already Christianized, leaving Solusi to be the first SDA station for non-Christians
11. George Elmer Bryson, "The Beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana (Gold Coast), 1888-1905" (term paper, Andrews University 1975)
12. Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, pp. 372-376
13. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 189
14. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 7, pp. 35, 36
15. Ibid., vol. 9, p. 107

Chapter 24

Leading Ladies

"Where is that 'every creature' to whom the gospel call must go?" asked an impressive feminine voice at the 1899 General Conference in South Lancaster, Massachusetts. "Where is that every creature to be found?"

"In all the world," other voices answered from the floor.

"Yes, yes, in all the world," the speaker agreed, "but also somewhere else. The world is very big!"

"Right nearby," offered a cooperative soul.

"How near?" prodded the speaker; then, answering her own question: "Right in your very own home!"

The spokeswoman on this occasion was not Ellen White. Sister White was still far away in

Australia. She was instead Sarepta Myrenda Irish Henry, one of the most remarkable women to join the advent movement.

Mrs. S. M. I. Henry had been a prominent promoter of temperance and other reforms for some thirty years before a severe sickness led her to Battle Creek. Treatment and prayer resulted in her healing in 1896, and also in her conversion to the Sabbath. She joined the Adventists assuming that a people with so wonderful a message must be verging on perfection. Disappointed but not at all discouraged, during the few remaining years of her life she bore an effective witness.

On the occasion in question she addressed herself to one of her favorite topics. "The home is the heart of the church," she pointed out, "and the mother in the home is its center of life. What the mother is, so is the home." Before the gospel can be taken to every creature outside the home, she continued, the believers' homes must be equipped with power; and the needed power is readily available to parents and children alike. The Bible

says in the book of Acts that the promise of the Spirit "is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." [1]

Mrs. Henry, though more outstanding than most, was only one of thousands of women whose talent and devotion have contributed to the success of the advent movement.

We have already met several. Mrs. John Couch, you remember, had the Christian courage courteously but forthrightly to interrupt Elder Joseph Bates and introduce Samuel Snow to the congregation, who in turn introduced the congregation to the midnight cry. Mrs. Rachel Oakes introduced the Sabbath to the Adventists in Washington, New Hampshire. Annie Smith cheered the earliest believers wither happy songs. Hannah More was the first to cherish the third angel's message on the continent of Africa. Annie Butler and the youthful Mary Andrews were "first" female missionaries to Europe. A Mrs. Armstrong and Mrs. Catherine Revel were among the first

Sabbath keeping converts there. And, of course, Ellen G. White, the inspired and inspirational guide of the whole movement, was herself strictly feminine!

All these and more we have met. But there were many others. [2] Women have exerted a vast influence on the course of Adventism through their dedication to service, the variety of their contributions, their loyalty, and their humility. They have served as secretaries, teachers, nurses, missionaries, and Bible workers, and also as writers, editors, composers, founders, administrators, financiers, and preachers.

Yet for the most part they have served with little recognition. Their salaries have ordinarily been much less than those of men. They have rarely petitioned for higher responsibilities or titles. They have done virtually everything, asked virtually for nothing, and received their reward in knowing that they have done what they could. Let us meet some notable examples.

Though her name is almost forgotten today, Minerva Jane Chapman, sister of Elder J. N. Loughborough, was very well known in Adventist ranks during her lifetime. In 1877 she was elected treasurer of the General Conference. At the same time she was editor of the Youth's Instructor, secretary of the Publishing Association, and treasurer of the Tract and Missionary Society! She served nine years as editor of the Youth's Instructor, refusing to accept any salary for her services in that capacity.

Elder and Mrs. Chapman moved to Battle Creek in 1866 not long after the General Conference was organized and the Civil War was over. She set type by hand for a while but rapidly advanced step by step to become treasurer of the Review and Herald, and then to the responsibilities already mentioned. After retiring in 1893 she continued to live at Battle Creek, healthy and active until the day she died while taking a nap at ninety-four. [3]

Maria L. Huntley was born into one of the first

Adventist families to keep the Sabbath in Washington, New Hampshire. In time she became secretary of the Vigilant Missionary Society, that group of energetic, dedicated missionary-minded ladies in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, that we read about in chapter twenty. When their local society expanded into the General Tract and Missionary Society for the whole denomination in 1874, she became its secretary and continued to hold this position as long as she lived--adding first one, then another, then a third, and finally eleven assistant corresponding secretaries to help her. During the 1888 General Conference in Minneapolis she was asked to address the assembly on laid activities. She insisted that "many would gladly work if they knew how," and begged the ministers to develop effective plans for training laymen. [4] In contrast to Mrs. Chapman, Miss Huntley died at the age of only forty-three, while organizing soul-winning activities in Chicago. [5]

In 1866 a fifteen-year-old girl, Maud Sisley, came to Battle Creek and got a job at the Review and Herald. Her father had died some years before

while the family was still in England. An older brother was the first to leave for America. When the rest followed, they found him "keeping Saturday for the Sabbath" and joined him in doing the same.

Including Maud and her brother, there were seven children in the Sisley family. Of the four girls, Josephine became a missionary teacher in Australia, Martha worked as a printer at the Review and Herald, and Nelly studied at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, became a nurse, married Elder George B. Starr, and with him accompanied Ellen White to Australia.

And what about Maud? She was one of the first Adventists to pay a full tithe. She became a kind of student missionary, taking a six-month vacation without pay to do self-supporting work in Ohio. In 1877 she went to Switzerland to serve as a single overseas missionary. There she set type in Italian, even though she didn't know the language. Later she returned to America, married C. L. Boyd, president of the Nebraska Conference, and

accompanied him to South Africa as part of the first group of Adventist missionaries to non-Christians on that continent.

It deserves to be mentioned that the three boys in this family also became workers in the cause. John became a minister. Robert became a self-supporting missionary and died in a mission field. William (his full name was William Conqueror Sisley) became an architect and builder, designing and constructing some of the main buildings at Battle Creek College, Walla Walla College, Union college, and at other institutions in Australia, South Africa, and England. [6]

What the Sisley family achieved is an indication of their mother's skill and consecration. As mothers, thousands of other Adventist women who also have brought up their children for God have contributed incalculably to the success of the movement.

It should be noted that when the General Conference set up the Foreign Mission Board in

1879, allocating to it the missionary-oversight previously vested in the Executive Committee, three of its nine appointed members were women whom we have just named: Minerva Jane Chapman, Maria L. Huntley (age thirty-two), and Maud Sisley (twenty-eight). [7]

Another famous family in early Adventism was composed of the redheaded "Rankin girls," nearly a dozen of them altogether. Most were teachers, some of them unusually effective.

Ida Rankin was the first dean of women ("preceptress" in those days) at Battle Creek College. Mary Rankin became the mother of Dr. E. A. Sutherland, the man who, with Percy Magan, helped transform Battle Creek College into Emmanuel Missionary College (now the undergraduate school of Andrews University) and later founded Madison College. [8]

The most famous of all the Rankin girls was Helen, who after her marriage to Alma Druillard came to be known as "Mother D." and "Aunt Nell."

Naturally good with figures, Mrs. Druillard was elected treasurer of the Nebraska Conference. After her marriage she was a missionary wife for several years. In 1901 she became treasurer of Emmanuel Missionary College. When her husband died in 1904, she had a sizable family fortune at her command, was sixty years of age--and was about to be launched into a new career.

In that same year, 1904, E. A. Sutherland (her sister Mary's son) and Percy T. Magan, his co-worker, resigned from being president and dean of Emmanuel Missionary College and moved into the South to pioneer Adventist educational work there. Mrs. White was also in the South about this time, visiting her evangelist son, Edson. Edson proposed that they all take a ride on his missionary steamer, Morning Star.

On the first day out, when they needed to make repairs, Mrs. White took advantage of the delay to look at an acreage the brethren had been considering as a site for a new school for

underprivileged youth. Much of the land looked poor, but Ellen White was convinced it was the place God wanted them to buy, not only for a school but also for a sanitarium. Back on the boat, every morning for three days she summoned Sutherland and Magan and begged them to find the money and buy the property.

Sutherland and Magan went back again to look the place over. It seemed so bleak that they actually wept! But they resolved to follow the Lord's guidance and determined that Sutherland should approach his aunt, Mrs. Druillard at Emmanuel Missionary College, and ask her to donate the money.

He went to Berrien Springs and made his request. She let him know that she thought the project totally foolish. Sutherland turned to leave.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"To find someone else who will help us. I am going to obey the Lord, come what may."

Soon she was standing beside Mrs. White, looking at the property. On the basis of Mrs. White's assurance, the wealthy lady decided to go ahead.

No one was disappointed. Madison College and Madison Sanitarium grew and prospered, training thousands of students, producing hundreds of graduates, and stimulating the establishment of similar self-supporting institutions all over the South and in countries around the world.

On the day that Mrs. Druillard arrived to assist in this project, Sister White said to her, "Nell, you think you are just about old enough to retire. If you will come and cast in your lot with this work, if you will look after these boys [Sutherland and Magan, still in their thirties] and guide them, and support them in what the Lord wants them to do, then the Lord will renew your youth, and you will do more in the future than you have ever done in the past."

Words truly spoken. Mother D. did cast in her lot for the poor of the South. God sustained her through a ripe and active old age. She died at ninety-four after founding yet another institution, this one entirely for black people, Riverside Sanitarium. [9]

Kate Lindsay grew up in a large family in the same Wisconsin farming area as did the Rankin girls. Granddaughter to a cousin of David Livingstone's and fascinated with what Florence Nightingale was doing in England and the Crimea, she left home for Battle Creek in 1867 to offer her services to the little Western Health Reform Institute that Adventists had started up the year before. Soon she was off to New Jersey for a two-year nursing course, and then to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor as a member of the second group of girls ever allowed to take the medical course there. One of ten girls among 1300 men, she took her share of ridicule and skeptical remarks, but when she debated in favor of women's franchise, she won the day and the boys' respect. Ultimately she finished first in her entire class.

Arriving back at the Western Health Reform Institute, now renamed the Medical and Surgical Sanitarium, she specialized in women's and children's diseases about the same time that John Harvey Kellogg became the institution's medical director. Being a fearless and persistent soul, she at last persuaded Kellogg and the board to start a nursing school in 1883, which she continued to champion and guide till she left for Africa in 1897. Later she served in the Boulder Sanitarium in Colorado.

Punctual, thorough, and tenderhearted, Dr. Lindsay made an unforgettable impression on thousands of nurses, doctors, and patients. During her years in Battle Creek her only home was the little room next to her office! She wished to be continuously available for service. And it is because of her devotion that Kate Lindsay Hall, the dormitory for student nurses at Loma Linda University, is named in her honor. [10]

Georgia Anna Burrus volunteered for service as

a single-woman missionary and became one of the first Seventh-day Adventist workers in India. It was brave of her to go so far without either husband or family. Just before she landed, a terrible loneliness struck her. At the depth of her homesickness she dropped her watch on the deck and it stopped running. She had lost her last friend! She thought forlornly that if only she could hear it tick again she could carry on and be a missionary! Kneeling in her stateroom, she begged God to pity her and make the watch run again. God loved her for making so simple a request. (She didn't ask to return home. That never entered her mind.) Fearfully yet trustingly she picked up her timepiece and held it to her ear.

It ticked!

And it never stopped. She had no more trouble with it. She went right on into India, her homesickness entirely removed. Later she married Luther Burgess, another missionary, and together they spent thirty-two years pioneering among the various peoples of that subcontinent. On a furlough

to America taken so that Elder Burgess could receive medical treatment, they found that the General Conference had no money to send them back. Mrs. Burgess went out on the streets and sold 20,000 copies of "Bible Training School" at ten cents a piece to buy their tickets herself. [11]

Speaking of women missionaries to India, we must not forget Anna Knight, the first black missionary to that country. As a child in Mississippi she had learned to read sooner than any of her playmates and was converted to Adventism by reading Signs of the Times and Steps to Christ. After a period of study at the Adventist academy in Graysville (forerunner to Southern Missionary College), she returned home 380 miles for a summer vacation. The community ridiculed her. On Sabbaths she took her Bible, Sabbath School Quarterly, Sabbath School Worker, Review and Herald, Youth's Instructor, a dog, and a revolver out into the woods. The dog was to fend off wild hogs. The revolver was to fend off people! (As a child she had made her own bows and arrows and was reputed able to hit a knothole at 100 yards.)

Later at the Battle Creek Sanitarium she became a nurse. Dr. Kellogg took special notice of her and had her appointed a delegate to the great 1901 General Conference. In that same year she went out as a nurse to India.

In India she colporteured, taught school, nursed, and mingled with wealthy and poor alike all over the northern and eastern parts of the country. Untiring, sustained by constant prayer, she was guided, healed, and even fed by a succession of miracles.

Once weak from hunger after thirty-six hours without food or water while traveling by train, she looked behind her in her compartment and was astonished to see on the seat a plate of bread and a cup of warm drink. As she gratefully ate, she expected that at any moment the unusually dressed stranger pacing back and forth on the platform would put his head in at the window and ask for his pay. But when she finished and tried to return the dishes to him, he had disappeared.

In due course Miss Knight returned to her school work in Mississippi; then she went on to start the first "colored" YWCA in Atlanta. She served as Home Missionary, Missionary Volunteer, Education, and Sabbath School secretaries all at once for the southeastern and Southern Unions, her only office at times being her trunk and her handbag. Finally she settled down to be a mother to Oakwood College. She had traveled, not counting her time in India, half a million miles, had conducted nearly 10,000 meetings, and had handwritten or typed 49,000 letters. [12]

Many other women have contributed to the story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, helping fulfill its commission to tell it to the world." We cannot entirely pass up Lora Clement, daughter of Melissa Rankin (and hence a Rankin girl herself), who edited the Youth's Instructor, predecessor to Insight, for an amazing twenty-nine years, during which her column, "Let's Talk It Over," was one of the most appreciated literary productions in the denomination.

How many thousands of women have made contributions as Sabbath School leaders and teachers? Flora Plummer, secretary (that is director) of the General Conference Sabbath School Department from 1913 to 1936, wrote many books, and, of course, was assisted by innumerable women and girls in local Sabbath Schools around the world.

What about teachers in elementary schools, academies, and colleges? Martha Amadon has been succeeded in Adventist education by who knows how many thousands of women! And time would fail to tell of the host of women who serve and have served as writers, matrons, secretaries, stenographers, bookkeepers, and librarians, and in countless other positions in the church, not excepting the pulpit.

Ida Riggels Burden, for example, Sabbath School secretary of the Oregon Conference in the early twentieth century, was a frequent worship-hour speaker, and she was only one of many

women preachers. The wife of Elder E. B. Lane was widely known as a preacher and carried a ministerial license in her own name, though not the ministerial "credentials" of the ordained minister.

Ordination of women was discussed at the 1881 General Conference, stimulated it may be by the fact that the Seventh Day Baptists had recently ordained some women. In America during the Great Depression and in Europe during the second world war women served unordained as local pastors. Their ordination to the gospel ministry is much discussed in the 1970s, and several in the United States have been ordained as local elders. At the same time considerable interest has been shown in a statement made by Ellen White in 1895 apparently endorsing the ordination of women to a kind of deaconess or welfare-worker role: "Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands." [13]

There was a strong feminist movement in the United States in the nineteenth century as well as in the twentieth; like its later Counterpart, the nineteenth-century movement called at best for the restoration of legitimate rights and clamored at worst for free sex and anti-motherhood. The Seventh-day Adventist response a century ago was an emphasis on the role of women as capable office holders and as teachers and guides of the young at church, in school, and especially at home. After all, it is not to diapers that "unliberated" mothers are chained but to little people formed in the image of God and capable, when mature, of spreading the message to the world. Indeed, even when young, children are among the "every creature" to whom the gospel must go, as Mrs. S. M. I. Henry so aptly observed.

Ellen White was emphatic and constant in exalting these aspects of noble womanhood, but she did not do so one-sidedly. She also called for the redress of womanly grievances and demanded, in the name of the Lord, proportionate remuneration for womanly labor. Wrote she: "The

Lord has a work for women, as well as for men. They may take their place in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them." [14] "God is a God of justice, and if the ministers receive a salary for their work, their wives, who devote themselves just as disinterestedly to the work as laborers together with God, should be paid in addition to the wages their husbands receive, notwithstanding they may not ask this." [15] "This question is not for men to settle. The Lord has settled it. You [she wrote to the leadership] are to do your duty to the women who labor in the gospel." [16]

When James White ordained a minister by a lake in the summer of 1867, he at least asked the minister's wife to kneel beside her husband on the basis that she was being set apart as his helper. He thought such a practice should be followed at all ministerial ordinations. [17] When Robert H. Pierson accepted his re-election at the 1975 General Conference session in Vienna, he asked his wife to stand at his side as a symbol of all workers' wives who share their husbands' burdens.

Happy the wife who can share her husband's burdens directly. Many, especially when the children are small or their husbands are away, must share their burdens at a distance. With reverence we read tender lines that Angeline Andrews (then in her late thirties) penciled into her diary day by day around the year 1860: [18]

"I miss my husband very much. Seems as though I could not endure the idea of his being away several months longer."

"I can hardly be reconciled to his long absence. How my heart would pound to meet him again. He is one of the kindest and best of husbands."

"I want John to do just right."

"It is my earnest desire that God's hand may guide him."

"There is a want in my heart which remains unfulfilled. I do not seem to get much satisfaction either in making or receiving letters."

"My dear husband has come! How precious the moment of meeting."

"My dear husband left this morning on his way to join the Minnesota tent. Sad moment, these parting scenes!"

Notes:

1. Slightly adapted from an apparently verbatim report of her sermon "Woman's Work" General Conference Bulletin, 1899, pp. 172-174
2. A useful study on the subject of this chapter is John G. Beach, Notable Women of Spirit: The Historical Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1976). See also appropriate articles in the SDA Encyclopedia
3. Obituary notice by A. G. Daniells, Review and Herald, January 3, 1924, p. 22; SDA Encyclopedia, article Chapman, Minerva Jane (Loughborough)"

4. General Conference Daily Bulletin, 1888, p. 3
5. Review and Herald, April 29, 1890, p. 271; SDA Encyclopedia, art. "Huntley, Maria L
6. Spalding, Origin and History, vol. 2, p. 50; SDA Encyclopedia, art. "Sisley, William Conqueror"; E. K. Vande Vere, The Wisdom Seekers (Nashville, Tenn: Southern Publishing Association, 1972), p. 52
7. Review and Herald, December 4, 1879, p. 184
8. Spalding, Origin and History, vol. 2, pp. 45-47
9. Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 107-175
10. Kathryn Jensen Nelson, Kate Lindsay, M.D. 1842-1923 (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1963)
11. SDA Encyclopedia, art. "Burgess, Georgia Anna (Burrus)"
12. Anna Knight, Mississippi Girl, An Autobiography (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1952)
13. Review and Herald, July 9, 1895, p. 434
14. Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), p. 464
15. Ellen G. White, Manuscript 43, 1898;

manuscript release no. 267

16. Ellen G. White, Evangelism, p. 493
17. Review and Herald, August 13, 1867, p. 136
18. Slightly edited from Angeline Andrews, Diary, manuscript deposited in the Heritage Room, Vernier Radcliffe Library, Loma Linda University

Chapter 25

Inspired to Save Souls

Mrs. James White was a real mother as well as a "mother in Israel." leaving her boys in the care of a cook and a housekeeper while she traveled with her husband at the call of the lord was a constant source of concern to her and, boys being what they often are, a constant opportunity for misbehavior to James Edson and little Willie. Especially to James Edson.

Just before Edson's sixteenth birthday, his mother with many a sigh penned him a very earnest letter. "When all around me are locked in slumber," she wrote, "I am kept awake with anxiety" about your spiritual condition and "can obtain relief only in silent prayer." "In our presence you may comply with our wishes, but ... you disobey us in our absence. You have followed your own will and projects so many times, concealing all from us, going directly contrary to all our counsel, advice, and prohibitions, that we cannot depend upon you.

... Instead of being a comfort, you are a source of painful anxiety." "Thorns and briers have sprung up in my garden and choked the seed which I have tried to sow." Even worse, "a gloom which I cannot express shrouds our minds in regard to your influence upon Willie. You lead him into habits of disobedience and concealment and prevarication. ...

"Oh, Edson, it is the knowledge of these things that is wearing me out and bringing upon me discouragement" which may cause me even to leave my public labors. [1]

When Ellen White admonished parents to pray for their children with fingers planted firmly on Bible promises and voices pleading as only a parent's can, with deep humiliation, earnest importunity, and unwavering faith, she knew what she was talking about. [2]

She also knew by experience what it was to write to young people, to "the students in our schools" and to "my dear young friends" and to Paul and Delbert and Anne and Mary and to any

other youth, including her own, whom the Lord might lay on her mind. As she appealed to these young people to give their hearts to Christ and get ready for His appearing and serve someone other than themselves, it must have occurred to her to ask a hundred times why so few young people showed the same interest in winning souls that she had shown when she was young.

Go back to Ellen's childhood. Tiptoe late at night with Mrs. Harmon to the door of the bedroom Ellen shared with her twin Elizabeth and listen.

"O God, Martha isn't ready yet!" a voice whispers in the room. "Please, please help me know what I can do to help her.

"Thou hast already helped me bring several of my friends to Jesus," the voice continues after a pause, "Rebecca, and Rachel, and Suzanne, and Viola and her husband, and Anna and her husband, and Lois, and Fannie, and Patience. I am so happy for each one of them. I thank Thee, I thank Thee very much. ... And I'm so glad that Jesus is coming

soon. But Martha must be ready! Please, help me know how I can help her."

Mrs. Harmon knows that Ellen has waited for Elizabeth to fall asleep and has then slipped out of the covers and knelt down by the bed. She also knows that she is likely to continue pleading this way all night long, and that tomorrow night she will get permission to go to Martha's home with her older sister Sarah, and that she will not come back until Martha has given her heart to the lord, even if it takes all night. The effort is seriously undermining Ellen's health, but the girl doesn't seem to mind. In a short time, she believes, there will be new bodies for everyone; for everyone, that is, who is ready when Jesus comes. And so her intercessions for Martha and others continue.

Mrs. Harmon listens until weariness overpowers her, and she stumbles on to her own room, and bed, and knees, and sleep. [3]

Our last chapter focused on women in the advent movement. It said little about the most

prominent of all Adventist women.

Ellen G. White was many things to the Seventh-day Adventist Church: author, prophet, counselor, fund raiser, and cofounder of institutions. But to understand her, one must know what sort of person she was basically. First and last Ellen White was a soul winner. She wanted to see people saved--not only as a youth, but all her life long.

Years after her marriage she and James got lost once in the woods. A settler's family gave them food and directions, and she left literature with them and shared her faith. Long after, she met the same folk again at a camp meeting, all converted Seventh-day Adventists. On another occasion, delayed five hours at a railroad station, she held an extended spiritual visit with one lady and gave a Bible study to another. Getting her watch repaired in Switzerland, she invited the young clerk in the shop to visit her home. When he came, she secured his decision to give up his job, which involved Sabbath breaking, and give his heart to the Lord.

In no way did she consider her ministry confined to the church. On the contrary, she often found the demands of the church confining, limiting her soul winning, preventing her from filling her true mission. "I have not come to this part of Australia," she said to a group of new believers down under, "to devote my time and strength to keeping you in good spirits. ... It is my mission to go to the regions beyond, to those who sit in darkness, and have no light." [4] At the 1901 General Conference she told the assembled leaders, "My heart is panting and longing for the salvation of souls." [5] But back for a minute to her youth.

Within a month after she turned seventeen, Ellen Harmon received her first vision. [6] It took the saints from the disappointment to the tree of life. She sang "Alleluia" with the angels and became more eager than ever to see people saved. She had seen heaven! She knew by observation that no worldly dress, no comfort, popularity, or financial consideration, could compare with life in the City of God.

But being a soul-winning prophet was to be harder than being a soul-winning teen-ager. As a prophet she would be called to a more mature work. Like the prophet John she would have the joy of visiting heaven and talking with Jesus; but like Isaiah she would also be required to "show my people their sins." Like Jeremiah she would sometimes weep at her unpopularity. Like Paul she would have to travel a great deal, often in danger and discomfort. And so it came to be. [7]

Loved and appreciated by many, she was derided by some people as a fanatic, a meddler, or a fraud. At first when God commissioned her to make a person's sin plain to him, she sometimes softened the rebuke to make it seem more agreeable. Then Jesus appeared before her in solemn earnestness. She read the loving concern in His face. She saw that if people continued to sin because she failed to correct them, they would lose their souls. [8]

The message hit home. She had prayed all night

for people and then pleaded all night with them. If telling them their sins was essential to their salvation, she would do it. Of course.

Her reluctance, nonetheless, reappeared now and then, especially when she was uncertain how to persuade particularly difficult persons. To one esteemed but easily upset pastor she revised a testimony repeatedly and got it to him only on his deathbed. [9]

But usually she overcame her reluctance and passed along God's word as His faithful messenger. No sacrifice was too great--if it meant souls could be saved.

Today Ellen White is known best for her books. She was prolific. She produced more than 40,000 pages of printed material and over 50,000 pages of letters and manuscripts. She wrote on morals, family life, and theology; on the principles of education, business management, and health; on the interpretation of history and the explanation of Scripture; and on very much more besides. To find

the time to do this she often went to bed early and got up while the house was quiet, at five, or three, or even one o'clock in the morning.

Well-known for her books Mrs. White deserves to be known better as a public speaker. [10]

In her youth she was often plagued by a chronic hoarseness that would leave her dramatically a few moments after she began, in faith, to address a congregation. This phenomenon reappeared often throughout her life. God could have healed her outright, but evidently He preferred to provide this proof of His nearness when she stood up to speak. Ellen White lived as healthfully as she could, then depended on God to do the rest. She would pray, "I have done all I can do, Lord, using Thine own means, and now I ask for the special blessing which Thou alone canst give to sustain me." Often she said to James when he was still alive, "If only I could have the assurance beforehand, how much good it would do me!" He replied, "God has never failed to bless you the moment you rise to speak; so whatever may be your feelings, you must put

your trust in Him, hanging your helpless soul on His promises." "This I have tried to do," she said. "I have learned that we must act our part, cooperating with God. He gives strength for every duty." [11]

During most of her mature years Sister White preached with a remarkably clear and powerful voice. Long before the introduction of microphones she could be heard readily by crowds of five thousand people and more than once by fifteen or twenty thousand. [12] A patient at the Washington Sanitarium once sat on the second-floor balcony and heard her clearly as she addressed a camp-meeting audience in a tent pitched in the woods nearby.

She didn't shout. Listeners at the front thought she was talking Just to them. She didn't explain her ability as a miracle either, though she gave God the glory. Instead, she practiced scientific diaphragm support and paid thoughtful attention to articulation and tone production. It was a spiritual matter with her. Proper delivery would increase her

effectiveness in communicating the third angel's message. Deep breathing would strengthen her lungs and lengthen her life of service. Correct speaking would thus help her save more souls. She taught that anyone could learn to speak effectively in public if he studied and observed the same rules she did. [13]

People who heard her commented afterward on the "respectful attention" shown by her audiences, the "rapt attention," the "breathless attention," of the "profound silence" of the "spellbound" assembly, and of the "solemn hush of the congregation as she entered the pulpit."

Her demeanor while speaking was grave and earnest but with a pleasant smile on her face. After a sermon in Europe delivered through a translator, the people, unable to speak English, shook her hand with tears of gratitude and instant affection. A reporter for the Detroit Post described one of her General Conference sermons in Michigan as a "remarkable and thrilling" experience. "Although her eloquence and persuasive powers were well-

known by the audience," he wrote, "still they were unprepared for the powerful and unanswerable appeal which she made. She seemed indeed almost inspired as she implored sinners to flee from their sins. The effect of her magnetic speech and manner was most remarkable." [14]

Her public prayers were sometimes even more effective than her sermons. In Colorado in her eighties she was heard clearly at an evangelistic meeting as rain drummed an anvil chorus on the corrugated-iron roof. [15] At the close she invited everyone to kneel. Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, members of many denominations, were moved to tears almost immediately by the sweet sincerity of her petitions on their behalf. A sailor once commented about her prayer, "She brought God right in there and presented us to Him for His blessing and I must be a better man." [16]

Once in a great while she would be humorous. While she spoke in the little chapel at the Saint Helena Sanitarium in her later days, her son, W. C. White, fell asleep in his seat behind her on the

platform. Noticing him, Mrs. White stopped a moment and remarked, "When Willie was a baby, I used to take him onto the platform and let him sleep in a basket beside the pulpit, and he has never gotten over the habit."

Mrs. White's fun about her son was "family" humor, and this reminds us that because of her public labor her career as a homemaker (with which this chapter began) is often overlooked. Her books Child Guidance, The Adventist Home, and Messages to Young People grew out of her experience as well as out of her visions. She told parents not to shout at their children or spank them in anger but to calm down for a few hours and then take them aside for prayer (and a spanking if necessary). Before she gave this counsel she practiced it first. [17]

She believed that a mother cooking healthful meals in the kitchen serves God just as surely as a minister preaching sermons in the pulpit, [18] and she often wished that she herself could stay at home to serve the Lord instead of being required to

travel and preach so much.

When her first baby came, she thought that surely now she could stay at home for a while. She and James had met during an evangelistic tour, and they had traveled almost constantly ever since. But God said He needed her to witness to the struggling, scattered Adventists. Sadly she handed little Henry to the Stockbridge Howlands, returning to see him with a present once a year like Hannah. She made it a rule never to complain about anything unkind people did to her; but when as a young mother she heard that people were saying she was lucky because she didn't have to stay home and change diapers, she did not quite manage to keep from complaining. [19]

Because of her prominence, it is also often overlooked that she was married to an outstanding person. [20]

If Ellen White furnished her husband with the inspiration to start a paper and found the first Seventh-day? Adventist publishing house, it was

Elder White who did most of the work, gathering and organizing the materials and staff. His first press grew into the Review and Herald Publishing Association, which today grosses some $20,000,000 a year. James White also founded the Pacific Press, a corporation today equally as large. He energetically supported and guided the Western Health Reform Institute, which grew into the great Battle Creek Sanitarium. He helped to launch Battle Creek College and was its first president. [21]

James White was a forceful writer, an effective speaker, and a warm friend. He was also an excellent manager. During one year (1869) when he was too ill to manage the Review, the publishing house lost $3,000. The first year he took it back (1870) it gained $7,000. [22] Sometimes overwork and an overeagerness to see the work finished made him irritable. Illness brought repentance. A testimony came accepting his contrition. It began with the words, "I was shown in vision, December 25, 1865, the case of the servant of the Lord, my husband, Eld. James

White." [23]

The servant of the Lord, Elder James White, had become Ellen's husband on August 30,1846. He had noticed her some years before this when the ministers in Portland, Maine, had asked her to witness to their congregations during the good Millerite days. She didn't notice him until they met at Orrington, Maine, shortly after the Lord told her to travel and tell her visions. They shared many experiences visiting the disappointed Adventists but had no thought of getting married, because they supposed the Lord would come too soon. In due Course Evangelist White made a personal call for decision, applying quite a bit of pressure. And "so we were married," commented Mrs. White many years later, adding affectionately, "I feel that he is the best man that ever trod shoe leather." [24]

Many people thought well of him. "He is the poor man's friend as many can testify with grateful hearts," wrote B. F. Snook in 1863. He made a point of paying people who worked for him more than their wages, while working himself at less

than his wages. He often returned money with interest that had been lent to the Review without interest. Once he personally lent money at no interest to a poor minister even though he was paying 10 percent. Frequently he refused donations if he saw that the donor was really hard Up. [25]

In order to be so generous, and also, at first, in order to pay the cook and housekeeper whose services made it possible for Ellen to write, counsel, and travel, he worked extra weary hours buying and selling stationery, books, and other things; but there never seemed to be enough for his philanthropy. On one of their last walks together Elder and Mrs. White discussed the case of a black washerwoman whose home they passed. "Wife," said Elder White, "we must look after this poor woman. Let us not, amid our busy care, forget the poor souls who have so hard a struggle to live. ... If I had means at my command, I would build suitable houses ... to rent to these poor people. We will see what can be done to make their lot more comfortable." [26]

James and Ellen had four children, all boys. Henry came back into their family when he was five, "a well-trained, praying boy." The Howlands had matched their trust. [27] The boys suffered the usual sicknesses common to children in those days of medical ignorance. Their mother learned a lot about home remedies and the value of pure water and fresh air. She also learned what it means to pray for a child hovering near death, and to know the comfort that comes from having a companion with equal faith. Many times their children were healed in answer to prayer; nevertheless, two of them died young--nothing uncommon in those days. John Herbert, the fourth child, died when he was three months old. Henry lived to only sixteen. He was a cheerful boy with a nice singing voice, and they missed him terribly.

Willie seemed to be a right-minded boy from the start. After Elder White died of malaria and overwork in 1881 at the age of sixty, Ellen White invited Willie to be her constant companion. God showed her in vision that He had prepared him for this work with "the spirit of wisdom and a sound

mind." [28] Like his father, he became an accomplished administrator.

It was Edson, the lad who was born when the Present Truth was begun, who was for years his parents' heartache. Even the letter his mother wrote him just before his sixteenth birthday didn't seem to change him much. Perhaps he even grew worse. When the Battle Creek believers were constrained by conscience in 1870 to apologize publicly for failing to support Elder and Mrs. White as they should, Edson submitted an apology of his own. It is sad that he had to, but it showed his heart was heading right.

It was hard for Edson to settle down. He tried his hand at printing and founded his own publishing firm much as his father had, though he used it for his own private business. He issued several hymnbooks in association with Frank Belden, his cousin. He tried his hand at commercial photography in its experimental days. And for a period he worked on a river steamboat. Though always an Adventist, he found it difficult to

dedicate himself entirely to the Lord.

Then all at once, shortly after his mother left for Australia, Edson found himself and his Lord in a new way. [29]

He came across neglected testimonies Mrs. White had written calling for someone to evangelize the black people of the American South. These testimonies said that the blacks should be taught to read so that they could understand the Bible for themselves, and that above all they should be treated as true children of God.

The experience Edson had gained in his various lines of work was now concentrated on a great cause. He designed a river steamer, outfitting it (ultimately) with a printing press, a photographic darkroom, a chapel, and living quarters for himself and his helpers. Then he set off down the Mississippi. To finance his venture he promoted the sale of his Gospel Primer, an elementary-reading textbook based on the Bible, which was printed for him in Battle Creek. He prepared slides

to help hold the attention of illiterate audiences, and on his own little press on board he printed tracts.

Soon he was teaching blacks how to read and how to understand the Bible. In five years he started fifty churches!

His success, unfortunately, was not universally admired. One angry white man was prevented from beating one of Edson's assistants to death only when a more friendly white man drew a gun and protected him. By 1900 racism was so rampant that in many places whites could no longer work safely for blacks. Providentially--largely through Edson White--God had raised up black Adventists to bring the third angel's message to their own race.

Edson's shipboard press was transferred to a chicken house and later developed into the Southern Publishing Association, the third printing house established by the White family in America. His Gospel Primer sold over a million copies. It is said to have been the first book of its kind in the

United States, a unique Adventist contribution to the advancement of black Americans.

As we have seen, Mrs. White's earlier years were spent traveling with her husband around the Northeastern states. In 1853 they visited as far west as Michigan and in 1855 moved to Battle Creek. Their travels stretched farther into the Middle West, and then into the Far West. In 1872 they made their first trip to California, where in 1874 and 1875 they started Signs of the Times and the Pacific Press.

James White died in 1881. Four years later Ellen White sailed to Europe as a missionary for two years (August 1885-August 1887), accompanied by her son, W. C. White. In 1891 she embarked for Australia, serving as a pioneer missionary there for nine years. When she returned in 1900, she settled near the Saint Helena Sanitarium, where she purchased a country home,"Elmshaven." It was large enough to house her secretaries and to entertain the constant stream of people seeking counsel.

During her late seventies and eighties she helped found Paradise Valley Sanitarium, the College of Medical Evangelists at Loma Linda (now the Schools of Nursing and Medicine at Loma Linda University), and Pacific Union College, a few miles up the hill from her home.

At "Elmshaven" she completed the "Conflict of the Ages" series and wrote numerous articles and letters besides preparing seven other books. From there in 1909 she traveled by train to Washington, D.C., to attend a General Conference session for the last time, addressing the delegates with her usual clear voice. On the same trip she also returned to Portland, Maine, her girlhood home, where she had waited for Jesus to come on October 22, 1844, and had received her first vision a few weeks later.

As an elderly lady she continued to work hard on her books and correspondence. But in her hours of leisure she liked to tell stories to children while they combed her hair, to sing happy hymns to

herself about the second coming, and to visit her neighbors for Christ. Families in Napa Valley long remembered "the little old woman with white hair, who always spoke so lovingly of Jesus." [30] She was still seeking souls.

She passed away, triumphant in faith, on a sunny Friday afternoon, July 16, 1915. Her last words to her son were, "I know in whom I have believed." [31] She had seen Sabbath-keeping Adventists grow from a handful to 137,000. The New York Independent honored her: "She lived the life and did the work of a worthy prophetess."

Her final public appearance had been at a chapel service at Pacific Union College. Frail and feeble, she was physically assisted by two ministers in reaching the pulpit. Her message that day was a challenge to Adventist youth to arise and finish the work of winning souls, so that Jesus could come again soon.

Notes:

1. Ellen G. White, Letter 4,1865; manuscript release no. 224
2. Ellen G. White, Testimonies vol. 5, pp. 322, 323
3. The prayer and the names of persons are conjectural, based on Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, pp. 17-46. For the personal life of Ellen White see Arthur L. White, Messenger, pp. 99-127, and SDA Encyclopedia, art. "White, Ellen G."
4. Review and Herald, May 29, 1894, p. 348
5. General Conference Bulletin, 1901, p. 26
6. Ellen G. White, Early Writings, pp. 13-17. Note that the bottom paragraph on p. 17 begins a later vision about the new earth. Cf. Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, p. 52
7. Among the dangers she faced while preaching were at least four physical attacks by deranged persons. One would-be assailant leaped at her from a balcony. In no case was she harmed. On each occasion she resumed her sermon after the briefest pause, apparently unruffled.

Horace J. Shaw, "The Speaking of Ellen White," pp. 509, 510.

8. Ellen G. White, Early Writings, pp. 76, 77; Life Sketches, pp. 90, 91
9. Ellen G. White, Letter 1, 1883
10. The chief study on Ellen White as a public speaker is Horace I. Shaw, "The Speaking of Ellen G. White" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1959)
11. Manuscript 111, 1901, in Shaw, "The Speaking of Ellen G. White," pp. 495, 496
12. "The Eminent and Self-made Men of Michigan," in In Memoriam, A Sketch of the Last Sickness and Death of Elder James White" (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald Press, 1881)
13. Ellen G. White, Evangelism, pp. 665-670
14. Detroit Post, in Review and Herald, August 18, 1874, p. 68
15. Recollection of H. M. S. Richards, presented at a meeting at Andrews University, 1969
16. Shaw, "The Speaking of Ellen G. White," pp. 513, 628
17. Ellen G. White, Child Guidance (Nashville,

Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1954), pp. 244-247
18. Ellen G. White, The Adventist Home (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1952), pp. 231-239
19. Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, pp. 88, 128, 129
20. SDA Encyclopedia, art. "White, James Springer"
21. Sidney Brownsberger, usually listed as the first president, served under White at first (See Vande Vere, Wisdom Seekers, p. 27)
22. The Battle Creek Church [of SDA], Defense of Elder James White and Wife (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1870), pp. 111, 112
23. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 613
24. "Interview with Ellen G. White re Early Experiences"; manuscript release no. 310
25. Vindication of the Business Career of Elder James White (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1863)

26. In Memoriam, p. 55
27. Review and Herald, November 1, 1853, p. 133
28. Ellen G. White, Letter 125, 1898; cf. idem to F. M. Wilcox, in Jemison, A Prophet Among You, pp. 338, 339
29. See SDA Encyclopedia, art. "White, James Edson"; also Ron Graybill, E. G. White and Church Race Relations (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970) and Mission to Black America (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1971)
30. Ella M. Robinson, "Stories of My Grandmother," Junior Guide, January 2, 1963, and "Hymns My Grandmother Loved," Youth's Instructor, May 22, 1951; Arthur L. White, Messenger, p. 108
31. Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, p. 449

Chapter 26

Happy, Holy, and Healthy

Obituary. Died of diphtheria. Jessie Alvira, aged 10 months and 15 days. This is the second child that Bro. and Sister Ross have lost within one week by diphtheria. ...

Obituary! Died of consumption, Dorcas Z., wife of Alfred Hurlburt, aged 31 years. She leaves a husband and five small children to mourn her loss. ... [1]

Announcements of the deaths of infants, youth, and young parents courageously smile through their tears in almost every issue of the mid-nineteenth century Review. Often elaborated with details of disease, the dedication of the deceased, and the words, "asleep in Jesus," their frequency--by modern standards all out of proportion to the size of the Adventist movement--readily convinces us that something serious was wrong. Surely God would have preferred His trusting children to live,

not sleep, in Jesus.

Light on Christ's work in the most holy place, standing by the Ten Commandments blotting out sin, quickly convinced Seventh-day Adventist pioneers that Jesus wanted His followers to be holy and that by His grace they could cooperate in sanctification through purposefully attending to His moral laws. Awareness that heaven was prepared also to help them be healthy through purposeful cooperation with physical laws took many years to come about.

We have already seen how sick John Andrews and James White were at times. They were not the only ones. It has been said that the only pioneer who kept really well was Joseph Bates. He was ill only a few days in his entire life, not counting his brief final illness. And he knew why he was well. He drank no tea or coffee, ate a sparse vegetarian diet, and spent much of his time in the out-of-doors traveling to convert sinners and establish saints.

But, you say, they must have known what the

matter was with themselves, so why didn't they do something about it?

The answer is that they did not know what was wrong with themselves. [2] Even doctors in those days did not know what caused disease. An entry in Angeline Andrews's diary is enlightening:

"Carlos Beeman died this morning about 5. He had had a sore throat for some days. Yesterday he had it lanced and thought he was going to have a good night's rest. Ate quite a hearty supper. About 11 his wife gave him a dose of morphine which the doctor had ordered. He immediately went to sleep, from which he never awoke. Some attribute his sudden death to one thing, some to another. The doctor calls it the putrid sore throat." [3]

The germ theory was yet in the future. As late as the 1840s some physicians still bled their patients, believing that too much vitality caused disease. Opium, calomel, mercury, arsenic, and strychnine were commonly used to "break up disease" in the 1850s. By such means, doctors may

have slain more sufferers than would have died if left alone.

Surgery was still in its infancy, with anesthetics only just coming into use. There were no X rays, antibiotics, or antihistamines. Practically nobody "went to the hospital," hospitals not being readily available. Even aspirin was as yet unknown.

Most people ate and drank whatever was available and appealed to them, often in large quantities heavily spiced at any hour of day or night. They saw no relation between their diet and their disease, between their aliment and their ailments. They kept their windows closed for fear of catching cold. They pulled their blinds to avoid fading the furniture. They rarely bathed. They overworked or underexercised as the mood or necessity struck them. Almost all failed to see that their way of life was a way of death.

As one of them acknowledged later: We had "little other idea of headache, dyspepsia [indigestion], nausea, fevers, etc., than that these

were, for the most part, wholly beyond our control and ... ordered by God's hand ." [4]

Adventists never allowed liquor, of course, and in the 1850s they became quite conscious of the evils of tobacco. More than one believer cast his pipe into the stove or buried it in a furrow. But an attempt by a rather cantankerous couple in 1858 to compel the young church to give up pig meat brought a testimony from Sister White to the effect that angels were leading the church no faster than they knew was wise, and that individuals who run ahead of them have to retrace their steps.

"God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals, here and there, one believing this thing, another that," she said. [5] The great issue confronting the movement in 1858 was organization. Apparently God wanted the brethren to link up as a team, trusting one another in leadership positions, unified as one in Christ, before He introduced this further light.

But once the organization of the General

Conference was in the past, the angels evidently were instructed that it was time at last to talk about eating pig, and about many related matters as well.

Organization was achieved on Thursday, May 21, 1863. Light on the laws of health came in a vision fifteen days later, on Friday night, June 5, in Brother A. Hilliard's plain little farmhouse by the side of a road that still runs through green meadowland in the gently rolling country west of Otsego, Michigan, about thirty miles northwest of Battle Creek. Merritt Cornell and R. J. (not Horace) Lawrence were conducting tent meetings in the village of Otsego. Attendance was poor, perhaps because of a general anxiety over the Civil War, which would reach its climax at Gettysburg early in July. The Whites and a few others decided to drive over for the weekend to help with the preaching and cheer the brethren on. They held sundown worship at the Hilliard place. Near the end of their prayer season, Ellen placed her hands on James and pleaded for his health. All at once her thrilling exclamation, "Glory! Glory! Glory!" announced another vision. The group took their

seats and awaited the outcome.

Forty-five minutes later, after the vision was over and she had taken her characteristic deep breaths, they asked her to tell what she had been shown but all she could say was that it was so strange they would not be able to understand it all at once.

The vision covered a comprehensive list of items. Ellen White's report written sometime later, [6] and likely augmented by the content of subsequent visions, began with a description of Adam and Eve in their Edenic beauty. It very solemnly indicted "animal food" (meat) as a chief cause of the decline of the human race. "Swine's flesh" was denounced in particular, but all other kinds of meat were also blamed.

The vision spoke against the use of alcoholic drinks, spices, and rich desserts. Tobacco was denounced as "a poison of the most deceitful and malignant kind," and tea and coffee, as having effects "similar to those of tobacco" but to a lesser

degree. Eating too much even of good food, and snacking between meals or just before going to bed, were shown to be distinctly unhealthful. Overwork was presented as a great evil. And for the treatment of disease, Ellen White was instructed to sound an alarm against the use of "drugs"--arsenic, strychnine, calomel, etc.--as the word was used in those days.

The elimination of these unwise foods, practices, and prescriptions would surely have helped anyone to live better; but there was counsel on the positive side too: drink lots of water, exercise regularly out of doors, bring sunshine and fresh air indoors, and take a daily bath.

It was all so sensible! It is difficult today to understand why she didn't know how to explain it at first. But new and strange it most certainly appeared to be at the time.

Not that everything she saw in her visions on healthful living was first introduced to human knowledge through her revelations! Adventists

make no such claim. Dr. Russell T. Trail's Water Cure Journal had been read by some of them for years, and at least John Loughborough, Annie Smith, the J. P. Kelloggs, and the J. N. Andrewses were acquainted to some extent with "rational methods" and hydrotherapy (or "hydropathy"). Even the Whites had tried a few water treatments and for some time had been keeping their windows open at night. James White had even begun a series of reprint articles on health in the Review.

The salubrious effects of hot and cold water were, after all, widely known and keenly appreciated in the Roman Empire! Arnold of Villanova, whom we met while discussing the 2300 days, taught water treatments and vegetarianism in the Avignon papal palace in the fifteenth century, and Luigi Cornaro taught similar ideas in Italy in the sixteenth. John Wesley's counsels on health were respected by his followers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Even in the Millerite movement Dr. L. B. Coles articulated many ideas similar to those Ellen White expressed later; and we haven't even mentioned the

famous vegetarian Sylvester Graham.

In short, through the influence of many previous and contemporary voices, water treatments, vegetarianism, the use of whole wheat bread, and a number of other health-directed reforms had all gained a following in America before 1863. As Ellen White began to read more widely on the subject after her 1863 vision, she was impressed by the parallels between what she was reading and what she had been shown, and in her book, How to Live, she published a number of articles by other reformers along with chapters of her own. She evidently expected that the similarities would act as a kind of endorsement in helping people accept her visions.

But without the visions the pattern wasn't clear. The knowledge that individual Adventists had picked up was fragmentary at best. And along with the many good ideas promoted by the professional reformers there were many notions, advocated with equal zeal and show of truth, that modern science has since proved to be utterly false. Even Dr. Trail,

so often wise in the ways of water and good food, totally banned salt and sugar on the ground that the former was a "mineral poison" and the latter, "not a food at all." [7] Ellen White, relying on her revelations, avoided such pitfalls.

The claim that Seventh-day Adventists make for Ellen White's health visions is that they (a) recommended only good foods and procedures, ignoring or warning against the bad, and (b) provided intelligent religious motivation effective in directing millions to a balanced and useful life of health and, through better health, to greater spiritual victory.

Speaking for Seventh-day Adventists as one of their prominent evangelists and theologians, J. H. Waggoner as early as 1866 made the point that "we do not profess to be pioneers in the general principles of the health reform. ... But we do claim, "he went on, "that by the method of God's choice"--Ellen White's visions--"it has been more clearly and powerfully unfolded, and is thereby producing an effect"--the general adoption of the principles

by Seventh-day Adventists--"which we could not have looked for from any other means." The visions, Waggoner went on, have placed healthful living lion a level with the great truths of the third angel's message" as "the means whereby a weak people may be made strong to overcome, and ... fitted for translation. [8]

In the terminology of the day, the new life-style was labeled "health reform." The word "reform" was popular. Many other reforms were being or had recently been advocated in America: prison reform, insane asylum reform, agricultural reform, educational reform, marriage reform, and others.

It was the "Era of Reform," a time when Horace Greeley could write, "Not to have been a reformer is not to have truly lived." Had health reform come to light a century later, in the 1960s, "reform" might have appeared as "revolution," and the whole concept as a "fitness revolution."

It was evidently designed of the Lord to revolutionize people's lives for the better, to help

them be healthier and holier and, thereby, more happy too.

Notes:

1. Slightly adapted from Review and Herald, June 30, 1863, p. 39, and June 23, 1863, p. 31
2. Many matters dealt with in this chapter have been presented earlier in Dores Eugene Robinson, The Story of Our Health Message (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1943, 1955), and Ellen G. White Estate, A Critique of Prophetess of Health (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1976)
3. Angeline Andrews, Diary, entry for September 14, 1860
4. J. N. Andrews, in Ellen G. and James White, Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene. (Battle Creek, Mich.: Good Health Publishing Co., 1B90), p. 263. Cf. J. N. Andrews to James White, February 1877
5. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 207
6. Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, vol. 4a, pp.

120-151
7. R. T. Trall, "Hog Milk for Humans," Health Reformer, October 1869, p. 76, in Ellen G. White Estate, "Ellen G. White and Health Reform" (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1975), p. 32
8. Review and Herald, August 7, 1866, pp. 76, 77

Chapter 27

Christmas Present, 1865

The new emphasis on health was truly a "fitness revolution," but it was designed to accomplish more than self-improvement. Its value lay in helping people feel good, not only so that they could be good but also so that they could do good. [1] It was directly related to the church's mission to take the gospel to "all cities, to all villages," to tell it to the world.

Health reform lay at the root of "medical missionary work." Medical missionary work in the Seventh-day Adventist movement has become many things. At one end it is an accredited medical college turning out physicians with various specialties. At the other end it is a Christian layman doing a kindness for his neighbor in the hope of relieving his distress and leading him to Christ.

Mrs. White practiced this latter kind of medical missionary work most of her life, continually

taking sickly people into her home and nursing them until they got better, and frequently calling on neighbors to give home treatments to their children or to bring attractive food to adults who were not eating well. [2]

In 1902 she wrote, "We have come to a time when every member of the church should take hold of medical missionary work." [3] They could do it, she explained in various articles and testimonies, by teaching people how to cook and dress intelligently and how to give home treatments; also by praying with them when they were sick. At the 1901 General Conference she urged that medical missionary work and gospel missionary work were "never, never" to be separated. [4]

In brief, medical missionary work is the gospel in practice. It is doing kindness to others in demonstration of the love of God. It is intelligent kindness, directed toward helping people not merely to meet an emergency of illness or poverty but also to live above it ever after. And its ultimate goal is to do for others the ultimate good; namely,

to bring them to Christ.

Important as sanitariums, hospitals, and medical colleges obviously are in carrying out medical missionary work, they are not the most important features of the program. "It is not numerous institutions, large buildings, or great display that God requires, but the harmonious action of a peculiar people, a people chosen by God and precious. Every man is to stand in his lot and place, thinking, speaking, and acting in harmony with the Spirit of God." [5]

The new light, incidentally, proved of special benefit to Ellen White and her own family. For example, a couple of years before her death at the ripe old age of eighty-seven--which wasn't bad for a person who, at seventeen, had been given three months to live--Arthur W. Spalding, the storyteller and historian, while visiting "Elmshaven," her home in California, offered at the close of an interview to help her up the stairs.

"Oh, no thank you," she responded brightly. "I

am very able to climb the stairs by myself. Why, I am as spry as when I was a girl."

She caught herself. "As when I was a girl?" she exclaimed. "I should say so! When I was a girl, I was ill and weak and in wretched health. But now the Lord has made me well and strong, and I am better, much better, than when I was a girl." [6]

During the early years of their marriage she and James suffered more than their share of illness, for they worked too hard, slept too little, and ate too sparingly. They did so because they felt the burden of the work and received so little help from the scattered flock. (In time they came to see that God did not expect such extreme sacrifices. [7]) Besides this, Ellen suffered much more sickness than her share because, as God's special messenger, she was also Satan's chosen target. She learned this particularly in connection with the "great controversy" vision of 1858. [8]

In her early years she was often healed instantaneously. In her later years she maintained

her faith when sometimes God chose not to work a miracle. Some of the finest passages in The Desire of Ages were written when she was "trusting while suffering" with rheumatoid arthritis in Australia.

The health reform vision of June 5, 1863, did not provide her with improved health without her making some radical changes in her own way of life. She had been a heavy meat eater, and she could not stand the taste of brown bread.

But she dearly wanted a healthy body so that she could serve God more effectively, and she made up her mind to obey.

She prepared a vegetarian meal and baked a batch of whole wheat bread. But it looked too repulsive to eat.

And so, as she told the story herself, she folded her arms on her lap and said, "Stomach, you may wait until you can eat bread. I will eat simple food, or I will not eat at all." [9] After the second or third missed meal she could eat. And there after she

remained a vegetarian all her life, with the exception that she ate meat occasionally, especially when traveling, until 1894. After 1894 she ate no more meat during the twenty-one remaining years of her life, even on her extensive travels, convinced from the light she had received that it was unwise to do so. [10]

Elder James White was elected General Conference president in 1865. The Civil War was coming to an end and so also, for the time being, was his marvelous stock of energy. A stroke left him partially paralyzed.

Elders Loughborough and Uriah Smith were also ill at the same time, and together with the Whites they made their pathetic way to "Our Home on the Hiffside," a health resort operated by Dr. James C. Jackson and built literally on the side of a hill in Dansville, New York. The Whites knew enough by now not to depend on ordinary physicians, and Dr. Jackson offered some of the best water-and-sunshine treatments available in the country.

Uriah Smith recovered in a short time, and Loughborough too was soon well enough to go back to work. But James White, whose condition was much more serious to begin with, made only discouraging progress. Furthermore, Ellen White became increasingly worried about some of Dr. Jackson's techniques.

Dr. Jackson required his patients to relax by dancing and playing cards, and he told them to take their minds completely away from religion and to do no work at all. For a high principled, active, religious man like Elder White this was drastic indeed. In the midst of a December storm the Whites left, hoping that he would improve more rapidly at the home of some friends in Rochester.

After two weeks of special prayer on behalf of Elder White, the believers in Rochester observed December 25, Christmas Day, 1865, as a full day of fasting and prayer for his return to health. God responded by giving them (and the world) a remarkable Christmas present.

In a vision that day Ellen White was shown that the complete-rest-without-religion cure was entirely wrong, and that Adventists should establish their own water-cure-and-vegetarian institution where a properly balanced, God-fearing course of treatments could be made available not only to Adventists but to the public generally, and where they could not only be treated with sensible remedies but also be taught "how to take care of themselves and thus to prevent sickness." [11]

Two immediate results of this great "health institution" vision were (1) an inspiring demonstration in the Whites' own family of what a woman can do in nursing a sick husband, [12] and (2) the founding in 1866 of the Western Health Reform Institute in a remodeled old house in Battle Creek.

The man who did the most to build up this Health Reform Institute, and, indeed, to promote health reform in much of the world over the succeeding many years, was a diminutive (5'4"),

determined, and dynamic physician by the name of John Harvey Kellogg. He well deserves a few moments of our time. [13]

John Harvey Kellogg was born into a family of sixteen children in the same year, 1852, that his father, J. P. Kellogg, accepted the Adventist faith. In 1855 Mr. Kellogg gave a fourth of the money needed to put up the little factory to house the Review and Herald handpress, and in 1856 he moved his family to Battle Creek, where he opened up a broom shop.

At the age of ten John Harvey was at work in his father's business and in 1866, at the age of fourteen, was a proofreader for the Seventh-day Adventist publishing house. This was the year when the Western Health Reform Institute was inaugurated, with J. P. Kellogg making the first and largest individual donation of $500. Little did either father or son foresee the part John was to play in the development of that institution. His ambition then was to be a schoolmaster.

As a matter of fact, John did teach school for a year; but his future lay elsewhere. In 1872 he began studying medicine at Dr. Trall's Hygeio-Therapeutic College in New Jersey, soon transferring to the medical college at Ann Arbor, Michigan, and finally to the Bellevue Medical College in New York City, the finest in the nation. Somehow Elder James White managed to find $1000 to help him with his expenses, and young Kellogg used much of it to hire faculty members to tutor him privately outside of class. His appetite for study was insatiable.

Equipped with a top-quality medical degree, Dr. Kellogg returned to Battle Creek in 1875 and a year later was made medical superintendent of the Western Health Reform Institute. There were twenty patients registered at the time. When word went around that a boy-doctor of twenty-four was taking over, it is said that six of them got up and left.

Their empty beds were soon filled. So many patients streamed into Battle Creek to take

advantage of the skills of the fabulous new medical director and of his carefully selected associates that an almost continuous building program was required over the next twenty years. The name was quickly changed to Battle Creek Medical and Surgical Sanitarium, defined as a place where people "learn to stay well." By the time two of its main buildings burned in 1902, the complex had rooms for several hundred (perhaps a thousand or more) patients.

Dr. Kellogg was brilliant. He kept abreast of medical developments by reading the latest journals in various languages and by traveling repeatedly to Europe to study under the foremost physicians there. He wrote fifty books, several of them large medical tomes. He founded a medical college. He performed countless operations, closing up the wounds so neatly that the "Kellogg scar" became a hallmark. He was constantly in demand for public lectures. He invented many types of treatment apparatus, several of them still in use around the world. And he developed scores of foods, the most famous of which, the cornflake,

changed the breakfast habits of the nation and catapulted his brother Will (W. K. Kellogg) to great wealth after he took over its manufacture in 1906. The claim that the doctor invented peanut butter poses problems, especially since Indians in South America had long enjoyed a goober paste not very much different. But there's no doubt that Kellogg did his bit to promote its popularity just as peanuts were generally swinging into vogue in the United States. [14] And it also seems true that he coined the term "Granola," so widely used in the 1970s.

After the disastrous fire In February 1902 Dr. Kellogg rebuilt the sanitarium. Especially in the 1910s and 1920s it basked in warm public favor. President Coolidge, Henry Ford, Percy Grainger (the pianist), and Homer Rhodeheaver (the gospel song writer) were only a few of his illustrious guests. Admiral Byrd consulted Kellogg repeatedly about the diet for his polar explorers. Many other notables came frequently, some annually.

You see, although the Battle Creek Sanitarium

did expert surgery and included a large hospital for acute patients, it was most famous as a place where people came to lose weight, rest their nerves, and get generally toned up. The atmosphere in the sanitarium proper was more that of a hotel than of a hospital.

Dressed (in his later years) in a smart white suit, white shirt, white tie, white socks, and white shoes, the doctor gathered a crowd in the sanitarium parlor every week to deliver an entertaining lecture on the latest in medical progress. A primary purpose of medical missionary work was to teach people how to stay well.

In 1907 Dr. Kellogg broke with the church, a step he may have contemplated as early as 1890. [15] There were several factors. Natural differences with denominational leadership over administrative policies had been unfortunately aggravated by the reluctance of some ministers to practice certain features of health reform. Kellogg, not quite consistent with healthful principles himself, worked to the point of exhaustion (which for him

took some doing), and this helped make him irritable.

Theology also played a part. The biblical concept that the body of the Christian is a "temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:19), he carried to extremes in a kind of pantheism that made God personally resident in every living thing, in animals, insects, and plants, and even identified God with gravity and sunshine. Such a position undermined the foundational Adventist doctrine of Christ in a heavenly sanctuary and laid a potential basis for fanaticism and immorality (on the basis that if God fills me, anything I want to do must be all right, a conclusion Kellogg himself never reached).

Kellogg toyed with his pantheistic ideas for a decade or more, earning several earnest motherly letters from Sister White. When he published his theory in The Living Temple (1903), a full break with the church became a matter of time.

More fundamentally, his severance from the

denomination stemmed from his repudiation of Ellen White as the Lord's special messenger. He cherished her counsel as a young man and even lived for a while in her home. But as she warned him against pantheism, overwork, and excessive ambition, and urged him to pay close attention to the souls as well as the bodies of his patients, he veered farther and farther from her influence. Anyone reading her correspondence with him and her published appeals to ministers on his behalf knows how deeply his departure wounded her heart.

If Kellogg had stayed with the movement, how much more he might have done to tell its message to the world. Suppose, with his talent and influence, he had persuaded a Henry Ford or a President Coolidge to keep the Sabbath and adopt the advent hope!

With Kellogg's separation from the church imminent around 1903 and the use of his medical school no longer desirable, Ellen White, now in her middle seventies, set about launching a new

medical school in southern California. She was also burdened for additional sanitariums in that area.

Kellogg had established a string of twenty-seven or more sanitariums around the world, a notable achievement. Typically, each one specialized in physical medicine (hydrotherapy, exercise, massage, etc.) in addition to offering where possible some general hospital-type medical care. California had only one Adventist sanitarium so far, located near Saint Helena in Napa County at Sanitarium (now Deer Park). Ellen White was emphatic that the new ones must be located outside major cities. "Build no sanitariums in the cities," she warned the General Conference of 1903. [16]

With the help of John A. Burden and other loyal supporters, she located a potential sanitarium building in Glendale, a village a few miles away from Los Angeles. Other suitable buildings were discovered in National City, a few miles south of San Diego, and in Loma Linda, a little distance from each of the three cities of Riverside,

Redlands, and San Bernardino. As they prayed, prices on these properties tumbled downward. The Lord's aged messenger persuaded reluctant brethren to approve their purchase. The needed contributions came in--once from clear across the country on the very day when the mortgage would otherwise have been foreclosed. The whole experience is a saga in itself.

As for the new medical college, Ellen White wrote to the brethren that the Lord wanted an institution whose graduates could pass any appropriate examination in the land. And so amid the hills and orange groves at Loma Linda the College of Medical Evangelists came to birth, its first cry one of faith, its first breath a prayer. Today the original organization is represented by the schools of nursing and medicine at Loma Linda University, to which have been added in the meantime schools of dentistry, public health, and others.

In 1975 Seventh-day Adventists opened a second medical school in Montemorelos, Mexico.

In the 1970s, to help make people happy, healthy, and holy, Seventh-day Adventists operate two multi-million dollar medical colleges, a cordon of health-food factories, a small fleet of medical launches, an airborne fleet of medical-relief planes, and a worldwide network of more than three hundred hospitals and clinics. A fellowship of thousands of physicians, dentists, nurses, and other health-care personnel make it all possible--not to speak of managers, treasurers, engineers, secretaries, and custodians. The denomination as a whole, now over two and a half million strong, cherishes the concept of physical fitness as a spiritual privilege and the practice of "medical missionary work" as a religious responsibility.

Who would have thought that so much would burgeon from an idea that first emerged on a Friday evening in June 1863 in an unpretentious farmhouse a few country miles west of Otsego, Michigan?

Or from a "Christmas present" opened with

tears by a fasting, suffering prayer band in Rochester in 1865?

Notes:

1. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 158, 159
2. Review and Herald, July 26, 1906, p. 8
3. Review and Herald, July 29, 1902, p. 7
4. General Conference Bulletin, 1901, p. 205
5. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 293
6. Spalding, Origin and History, vol. 1, p. 407, note for p. 351
7. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 205, 206; The Desire of Ages, pp. 359-363
8. Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, pp. 162, 163
9. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 371, 372
10. Ellen G. White, Counsels on Diet and Foods (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1938), pp. 173-178, 491
11. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 494
12. For a fascinating episode in this story see

Spalding, Origin and History, vol. 1, p. 363

13. For the paragraphs dealing with Dr. Kellogg, see Richard W. Schwarz, John Harvey Kellogg, M.D. (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1970)
14. F. Roy Johnson, The Peanut Story (Murfreesboro, N.C.: Johnson Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 90, 91, 158-173
15. Schwarz, Kellogg, p. 69
16. Review and Herald, April 14, 1903, p. 19

Chapter 28

For the Joy of Service

There wasn't a grave misdemeanor the faculty surer to vex
Than tossing, in public or private, a smile at the opposite sex;
And always I wondered and wondered--I'll wonder the rest of my life--
How under the moon, while in college, I managed to capture a wife.
But one thing there was uncertain, which now very clearly I see.
That all of these stiff regulations, were truly a blessing to me. [1]

Nearly everyone who has attended a Seventh-day Adventist college can identify heartily with this bit of wisdom and can praise God in retrospect for the "stiff regulations"--and nearly everything else besides--that made his Christian college different.

It may be helpful to review how this difference came about; for at times anyway it came very near not coming about.

All eyes turned toward Sidney Brownsberger.

Ellen White, recently back with her husband from California after starting Signs of the Times, had just finished reading an extensive testimony revealing God's ideals for Adventist education. The first Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher learning, Battle Creek College, was in the processes of birth, its classroom building was under way, and the board of trustees was meeting to develop plans and to hear the word from the Lord. The first principal, Professor Sidney Brownsberger, M.A. (University of Michigan, 1869), had been invited to attend in view of his obvious significance to the success of the venture.

"Well, Brother Brownsberger," one of the board members inquired, "what can we do about this instruction Sister White has just given us?"

Everyone waited expectantly for his response. What they heard was candidly honest: "I do not know anything about the conducting of such a school." [2]

It was not an auspicious way to begin.

This was not, however, the very beginning of Adventist education. In 1852, when parents were neglecting their children's education on the basis that "Christ was so soon coming" that they couldn't accomplish much anyway, James White rebuked them. His own contribution was the denomination's first youth paper, the Youth's Instructor.

In 1853 and 1854 quite a number of Adventist families set up little day schools in their homes. The best known of these was the one conducted by nineteen-year-old Martha Byington In Buck's Bridge, New York. In a year or two, all these home schools died out. This is regrettable, for as a result Sabbath-keeping young people in public schools suffered considerable ridicule on account of their "peculiar" ideas. And though many endured,

expecting Jesus to come any minute and take them to heaven, many others gave up and were lost to the cause. [3]

A few years after the Whites moved from Rochester to Michigan in 1855 and the Review and Herald office moved with them, Adventists began a church school in Battle Creek, which they operated under a series of different teachers for about six years. It was abandoned when a fine new public school went up nearby.

Adventist families apparently sent only their elementary children to this public school in Battle Creek. Their teen-agers found jobs, as many as possible of them going to work at the rapidly expanding publishing house and the Western Health Reform Institute.

It was while working at the Review one day that Edson White observed a stranger splitting logs for the woodpile that supplied the ever-hungry fire that heated the boilers that furnished the steam that ran the machinery at the press. After working hours

Edson and his friend, George States, and some of the other fellows chatted with this stranger and learned that his name was Goodloe Bell.

A number of years before, Mr. Bell told the boys, he had attended Oberlin College in Ohio, then one of the most revolutionary schools in the country. It was the first to offer coeducation. It stressed the need of having industrial and farm work accompany formal studies. It was also a very religious institution. Bell went on to say that he had taught school in various places for several years, and that when overwork made him ill, he had been pleased to hear about the new Western Health Reform Institute at Battle Creek. It had sounded as "reform" minded as Oberlin.

Sure enough instead of dosing him with calomel and strychnine, the doctors here had prescribed hot-and-cold treatments and assigned him to convalesce at manual labor out of doors. Bell said he liked the Health Reform Institute and that he liked what he had learned about Seventh-day Adventism.

"Would you also like to teach night school for some of us fellows, Mr. Bell?" the boys asked eagerly.

No sooner said than done. In the long warm evenings of the summer of 1868 Goodloe Bell conducted a "select school" for twelve Adventist youth including, besides both of the White boys, two of J. P. Kellogg's sons--John Harvey, the future world-famous physician, and Will K., the future cornflake king. It was a prodigious student body.

And Mr. Bell was a fine teacher, well ahead of the times in his methods. He had his students learn their material solidly, but not by rote. He required them to understand it so thoroughly that they could explain it at a moment's notice.

The school went so well that in the fall many more boys asked to enroll. It was decided that Mr. Bell could use the original little building that J. P. Kellogg and others had put up to house the Review

plant in 1855. To make a home for his wife and four children, Bell patched the cracks in its dilapidated lower walls. His students climbed the rickety outside stairs to attend classes in the long, low-ceilinged room above.

By 1872 the General Conference Committee was so convinced about Bell's ability that they voted to sponsor his select school as the first official Seventh-day Adventist school.

The year 1872 is notable not only for this adoption of Professor Bell's baby, but also for the birth of Ellen White's testimonies on the nature of true education. The first of her many hundreds of pages on the subject appeared that year in Testimony no. 22. [4]

Testimony no. 22 begins with this sentence: "It is the nicest work ever assumed by men and women to deal with youthful minds."

The "nicest" work. Not nicest in the sense of sweetest or most joyous, even though teaching may

sometimes certainly be this; but nicest in a nineteenth-century usage of the word: "requiring meticulous choice, tactful handling, careful consideration, or precise and scrupulous conduct." [5]

What Ellen White meant was that education is not a pastime for untrained teachers and unqualified parents, but is a lofty career demanding thorough preparation and intense dedication.

The second sentence in the testimony makes this clear: "The greatest care should be taken in the education of youth to so vary the manner of instruction as to call forth the high and noble powers of the mind."

Please read that again. What is this variety of instruction that she felt must be observed if the "high and noble powers of the mind" are to be adequately called forth?

Her answer follows. The sincere Christian teacher is to be equally interested "in the physical,

mental, moral, and spiritual education of his scholars." Teaching is the "nicest" work because it must deal in a balanced way with the "whole" of each student while at the same time taking into account the different temperament that marks each individual. It must pay discriminating attention (1) to the salvation of students, (2) to their health, (3) to the practical knowledge they should acquire in order to be useful in farming, business, household duties, or in whatever career they take up, and (4) to the development of their ability to reason soundly. And it must (5) lead students toward dedicated service for others.

Since this kind of education is essential, it obviously cannot be confined to a classroom. Consequently parents as well as teachers are frequently referred to in this testimony. Parents should make the salvation of their children their "first and highest consideration." They should also make it their "first and constant care" to see that their children have healthy bodies. The two "firsts" are given equal weight, because spiritual health is so greatly influenced by physical health. In view of

their responsibilities, mothers should regard their home duties as "sacred," and as being far more important than the work of a stenographer ("copyist") or musician. Indeed there is "no employment more important" than that of homemaking.

A well-organized school (returning now to the role of teachers) is definitely required to provide "agricultural and manufacturing establishments" where students should devote "a portion of the time each day" to active labor. And it's not enough for students merely to put in time at their jobs. They must be given "a thorough education" in the different kinds of work so they can turn out quality products. They should be "taught labor as well as the sciences."

Bible study, of course, should occupy a most prominent position, yet not to the exclusion of the sciences.

And what is the purpose of this balanced, all-embracing education? "The great object of

education is to enable us to use the powers which God has given us in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God." "The truths of the Divine Word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified by those who serve Him intelligently."

Later, Ellen White summarized and enlarged her philosophy in these famous words: "True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world, and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come." [6]

True education is not ordinary education; neither is it something separate from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church is to be made up of men and women who understand, believe, and

live God's special last-day message and who unite to fulfill their mission of telling it to the world. At best, Seventh-day Adventist education has come to be the church's primary means of achieving this end. It seeks not only to make ministers, doctors, nurses, and teachers, but to prepare every student to be an intelligent soul winner, whatever his calling.

"One great object of our schools is the training of youth to engage in service in our institutions and in different lines of gospel work"; but all Adventist children should have the benefit of a Christian education, whether they are to become denominational employees or not, so that they can fill "places of responsibility in both private and public life." "True education is missionary training. Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary." [7]

Not long after the General Conference adopted Bell's select school, it formed an educational society and set about laying plans for a combination college and secondary school.

Land must be secured. "Let there be land enough for manufacturing and agriculture," Ellen White counseled as the Lord's mouthpiece. She favored moving to a lakeside tract a few miles out of town.

The county fairground nearer town was also on the market--50 acres. She would settle for this piece of ground. The Whites caught the train for California and left the brethren to make the deal.

"If only the fairgrounds were closer to the Health Reform Institute," a timid boardmember worried one day, "then it would be easier for the students to get jobs there." (Actually the distance was only a long block!) "If we locate the school so far out, we'll likely have to move the Institute. Think of the expense!"

And Battle Creek itself seemed rural enough. The streets were unpaved, and the sidewalks were boardwalks. In the fall, turkeys could be heard gobbling in the adjacent woods. Like Lot when he

was commanded to flee from city life, the brethren looked to Battle Creek as a Zoar and pleaded with their consciences, "Is it not a little town?"

Suddenly Erastus Hussey offered to sell his 12 acres across the street from the Health Institute! The Board pounced on it--then sold off five acres, leaving seven, and congratulated themselves on how much of the Lord's money they had saved.

Ellen White reflected on how much of the Lord's will they had rejected. But, hiding her sorrow, she appeared at their board meeting in the autumn and outlined again God's plans for His school. It was on that occasion that everyone heard Professor Brownsberger say he knew nothing about running such an institution.

Mr. Bell was in harmony with the new principles, but his talent seemed to lie more in teaching than in administration, [8] so perhaps they had no other choice. At any rate it seemed important to have a man with a university degree. Brownsberger was appointed principal with James

White acting nominally as president.

Brownsberger, though dedicated, soon proved his own words, that he truly did not know how to do the job God wanted done. His education was in Greek and Latin classics. Not only did he ignore industries and farming, he scarcely even offered a Bible class. There was a Bible course, a sound but somewhat stuffy one by Editor Uriah Smith that perhaps one fifth of the students attended, and chapel services were often used to teach the Bible. Most students took the "normal" course, leading to public elementary teaching. Others, preparing to be ministers or to fill jobs in conference and association offices, accepted a call as soon as one came along, even in the middle of a term.

God blessed. He did the best He could with the college His people had launched. From time to time thrilling revivals swept the student body. And with several hundred Adventist youth thrown together even for only a few months at a time, a new sense of denominational unity was engendered.

In 1881, mounting problems embarrassed young President Brownsberger. (He had been made full president in 1880.) Regarding himself a failure, he quietly resigned and drifted northward in Michigan to take up logging and teaching. But in 1882 the California Conference called him to head their new Healdsburg Academy and College. He accepted, laid plans at once for industries and Bible courses, and quickly proved that in a few years he had learned a great deal about running God's kind of school. [9]

In selecting its next president, Battle Creek again bypassed Bell in favor of an amiable talker with the likely name of Alexander McLearn. No matter that he was not a Seventh-day Adventist! He kept the Sabbath and attended the Tabernacle, and he had a degree--in theology, indeed.

He lasted one year and, after splitting the student body In two, departed to join the Marion party. [10] (One angry lad is said to have tossed Professor Bell down the stairs.) Battle Creek

College closed its doors in June and took a year out to think things through (1882-1883). At the invitation of S. N. Haskell, Bell left to help start South Lancaster Academy (now part of Atlantic Union College).

The crisis that climaxed in closing the school was productive of good. Board, faculty, and student body rethought their regard for educational principles. Attitudes changed. When classes resumed in the fall of 1883, there was an entirely different spirit in the halls--and the church had three schools in place of one: a secondary school in Massachusetts, and two colleges, one in Michigan and one in the Golden West.

The new college president in Battle Creek was W. H. Littlejohn, a blind pastor whom G. I. Butler, General Conference president, asked to serve until he found his man. His man turned out to be William Warren Prescott.

Prescott had a degree. He also had experience as a newspaper editor and reporter. He had a way

of inspiring young people to seek personal dignity and self-control. He was a good Adventist. And he deeply desired to follow Ellen White's inspired ideals.

He made the Bible increasingly prominent, participated in a number of wonderful revivals, and actually inaugurated a number of small industries.

But in 1889 the faculty voted to have no more industries! Soon Ellen White was warning against dangers in the entertainments and competitive sports that were filling the place that manual labor should have occupied. [11]

In 1891 Union College opened in Nebraska and, in 1892, Walla Walla College, in Washington. Prescott served as president of all three--at the same time.

In 1891, also, Prescott helped Ellen White and others conduct in Petoskey, Michigan, the first nation-wide Seventh-day Adventist teachers' institute. About a hundred believers teaching in

scattered Adventist schools and in public schools came together to camp in tents and discuss, for the first time, "Christian education." It was a landmark.

In 1894 Prescott was called to travel around the world, and Professor G. W. Caviness succeeded him at Battle Creek College. Probably Caviness, too, wanted to be a reformer; but, if so, like his predecessors, he didn't know how--and what could he have done anyway on so restricted a campus? He did require everyone to take at least one Bible class. But Ellen White wrote from Australia that the shorter the time the students spent at Battle Creek under the present circumstances, the better. A month later she wrote again. If God and the Bible were given the central place in education they were supposed to occupy, then students might pursue their studies as far as they wished. [12]

Now there were a few men in the church who not only wanted to reform Seventh-day Adventist education but had ideas about how to do it and the energy to do it with. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg was one of these. Percy Magan, in his late twenties and

a member of the college staff, was another. Ed Sutherland, also young, was a third. While teaching history at Battle Creek College in 1892 Sutherland had aroused the students to get meat removed from the college menus. That was an innovation! Now he was president at Walla Walla, founding industries, encouraging religious fervor, and fostering in his students a sincere dedication to the service of God. Down in Australia Ellen White was demonstrating what her testimonies meant, at Avondale carving an exemplar college out of poverty and eucalyptus.

At the 1897 General Conference Ed Sutherland was voted in as the new president of Battle Creek College, with Percy T. Magan as his dean. Kellogg was jubilant.

Changes were made! Classics were out. Degrees were out. Mission-oriented courses were in. The Bible became the textbook above all others; it was used even in certain math classes. In a symbolic gesture, as Sutherland held the handles, Magan guided the team, and 220-pound Professor

Lamson sat on the beam, the new administration plowed up the playing field and prepared it for a food crop. Eighty acres in addition were farmed elsewhere; Students enrolled in ministerial and canvassing courses and in other curricula leading toward missionary nursing and missionary medicine, as well as to missionary farming and missionary merchandising, and so on. "Missionary" meant selfless dedication, the willingness and the ability to be self-supporting, and perpetual activity in soul-winning. Many students also enrolled in the one-year "normal" course--but no longer with an eye to teaching public school.

Guided by Ellen White's instruction that every church with six or more children should have its own church school, [13] Sutherland and Magan persuaded their normal students to offer themselves as teachers for Adventist church schools. Somehow they found time and energy to search out a large number of Battle Creek alumni and other Adventists who were scattered around the area teaching in public schools, and appealed to them also to start church schools. Many responded.

And many made real sacrifices. One girl, when she learned that the local church that wanted her could offer neither pay nor privacy and only an outside privy in lieu of a bathroom, did not make the sacrifice. But another girl stepped immediately into her place. She was willing to sleep in the unheated attic of the same home where she taught school and, because there was no money for a library, to use The Desire of Ages and second-hand copies of the Youth's Instructor as her basic textbooks for reading, geography, and English literature. She loved the children, and they and their parents loved her.

When she returned the next fall, a stove had been installed, and the attic walls had been papered with the children's precious Instructors. [14]

A young couple in Pennsylvania launched their marriage and their careers in an ancient dwelling that provided shelter not only for themselves and their schoolroom but also for nine of their fifteen pupils, two helpers, and (if you please) the three

members of the school board. [15] Between 1897 and 1900 about 150 elementary schools were started, mostly by former students of Battle Creek College, enrolling 4000 children.

In 1901 the college constituency and the General Conference voted to close the college in Battle Creek and move it to the country.

Sutherland and Magan loaded their bikes on a train, took passage to the depot nearest the latest possible site they had heard of, and then hit the roads and trails of southwestern Michigan in search of a truly rural property on which to locate their new school. One day after cycling twenty-five miles northward over sandy trails from South Bend, Indiana, they caught their breath under the big maples that lined Mr. E. F. Garland's apple orchard at the resort town of Berrien Springs, Michigan. Soon Emmanuel Missionary College (now part of Andrews University) was rising there on 272 acres.

Evening classes were conducted that first year

in the abandoned Berrien County jail and courthouse, as side by side, students and teachers spent their days working on the farm or constructing the wooden buildings together. Ellen White insisted that such cooperation between faculty and students was so essentially a part of Christian education that it was "in no case" to be neglected. [16]

Curricula were simplified to the point where students took only one solid course during a term. Four main buildings were erected, three of which were scarcely heated, even in winter--so students could accustom themselves to any rigor of mission life. Only two meals a day were served, and, of course, there were again no baccalaureate degrees.

It was a little too much--or perhaps, much too little.

Union College in Nebraska had also tried two meals and no heat, but it was offering degrees to Seventh-day Adventist youth who wanted them; and in 1903 Kellogg, turning his back on the

church, reopened Battle Creek College. The enrollment in Berrien Springs remained meager. Criticism mounted. Sutherland and Magan asked Ellen White if they could start a new school in the South, secured her approval, and left, taking some of the faculty with them.

Sutherland and Magan had gone too far. For instance, Ellen White had never spoken against degrees as such; and when the College of Medical Evangelists began at Loma Linda around 1910, she specifically counseled that its graduates be able to meet every reasonable academic qualification. [17] She recommended two meals a day, but she cheerfully allowed the students at Avondale to eat three, and she always made a third meal available to the members of her own staff. [18]

But Sutherland and Magan had manifested incredible courage, faith, and energy, and they had done a good work. They had moved the college to the country. They had begun agriculture and industries in connection with it. They had put Scripture and selfless service into lofty

prominence. They had set faculty and students at manual labor together. They had arranged weekly student-faculty conferences for the making and interpreting of rules. [19] They had erected necessary buildings economically. In all, they had achieved a first-rate breakthrough.

The presidents and faculties that followed them at Emmanuel Missionary College completed the process. Under Professor Frederick Griggs (1918-1925) blueprint balance was rather largely accomplished. Agriculture and industries provided income, execise, character building, and student-faculty fellowship. The religion department flourished. Curricula led sensibly to degrees, and at the same time every activity was openly directed toward the salvation of souls.

Students were enthusiastic; and they departed, well educated, with a desire to serve the Lord wherever He called, to go and "tell it to the world."

In 1896 General Conference President O. A. Olsen personally assisted in the physical labor of

founding Oakwood College, in a grove of sixty-five oaks on a 360-acre farm near Huntsville, Alabama. Known at first as Oakwood Industrial School, it provided opportunities for practical as well as academic experience right from the start.

About the same time (1892) another college was started in the South as Graysville Academy, which several years later (1916) was moved from Graysville, Tennessee, to Collegedale. The academy soon outgrew junior college status to become another four-year educational institution under the name of Southern Missionary College.

In the meantime many other Adventist colleges had been founded--in Canada, in various European countries, in Africa, South America, India, and elsewhere. In the United States, Healdsburg College had moved out of the little town that had grown around it and had reestablished itself as Pacific Union College in the craterlike depression atop Howell Mountain. Near the new General Conference offices in Takoma Park, Washington Missionary College was designated the official

school for preparing overseas workers. In the orange groves of southern California the College of Medical Evangelists (now a part of Loma Linda University) arose to take the place of Dr. Kellogg's American Medical Missionary College of Battle Creek and Chicago.

In 1874, the year that Battle Creek College opened its doors, James White, with characteristic vision, called for four other colleges as soon as possible, sprinkled all the way from the Atlantic to the Pacific. [20] Had he lived till 1920 he would have seen his dream fulfilled many times over in lands circling the globe. He would have been pleased.

In the 1920s some Adventist colleges in North America, in order to undergird Loma Linda's standing with the American Medical Association, secured junior-college accreditation for their premedical program. A few faculty members, mature and experienced, were sent for this purpose to universities to earn doctor's degrees. In the 1930s, after much soul-searching, several colleges

earned senior-college accreditation. Also in the 1930s, Pacific Union College saw the birth of a General Conference institution that later developed into the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

In the 1940s great changes occurred in Adventist colleges in America with the influx of Girls--mature, married, and driving cars--after World War II. The 1950s were notable for the large number of faculty members sent off to earn doctorates. In the early 1960s Emmanuel Missionary College was enlarged into Andrews University; and the College of Medical Evangelists was merged with La Sierra College and with schools of nursing, dentistry, and others to become Loma Linda University.

No other denomination does so much for its young people as does the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Since 1852 it has provided youth publications now numbering scores around the world. Its

Sabbath School, Youth, and Education Departments exist largely or entirely for youth. And today it provides the largest Protestant system of elementary and secondary education in the world. In the mid-1970s, Seventh-day Adventists operate 4300 schools and employ 19,500 teachers serving 437,000 students.

Today the Seventh-day Adventist denomination continues to pour millions of dollars into its youth programs, convinced that its young people are the hope of its future, and that men and women must understand, live, and tell God's special truth for this time.

Notes:

1. D. K. Nicola, in Everett N. Dick, Union College, Fifty Years of Service (Lincoln, Neb.: Union College Press, 1941), p. 45
2. Many unfootnoted data in this chapter are taken from E. K. Vande Vere, Wisdom Seekers. This work on the early history of SDA education in general and the history of

Andrews University in particular supersedes Spalding's history in Origin and History, vol. 2, ch. 6

3. Review and Herald, August 19, 1852, p.63; November 6, 1888, pp. 689, 690; July 7, 1927, p. 2
4. The material in the nine volumes of Testimonies for the Church is made up of thirty-seven individually numbered Testimonies, the first thirty-four of which were originally issued as separate pamphlets. The section of Testimony no. 22 under discussion here now appears in Testimonies, vol. 3, pp. 131-160, and has been republished in Fundamentals of Christian Education (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), pp. 15-46
5. Webster's Third New International Dictionary
6. Ellen G. White, Education (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903, 1952), p. 13
7. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 133; Counsels to Teachers, p. 44; The Ministry of Healing, p. 395

8. Ellen G. White, Testimony to the Church at Battle Creek, pp.1-8
9. Vande Vere, Wisdom Seekers, pp. 20-22; H. O. McCumber, The Advent Message in the Golden West (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1946, 1968), pp. 129-132
10. Review and Herald, August 14, 1883, p. 528. Later McLearn joined the Seventh Day Baptists
11. Ellen G. White, Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 378
12. Ibid., pp. 334-367 (dated March 21, 1895) and pp. 368-380 (dated April 22, 1895)
13. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 199
14. Youth's Instructor, February 21, 1956
15. Student (a publication of Battle Creek College), January 1898, p. 65
16. Ellen G. White. Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1913, 1943), p. 211
17. Ellen G. White, Manuscript 7, 1910
18. Ellen G. White, Counsels on Diet and Foods,

pp. 173-178, 491
19. Ellen G. White, Education, p. 290
20. Signs of the Times, August 13, 1874, p.44

Chapter 29

Matchless Charms of Christ

On a wintry day in 1868, John G. Matteson knocked at the cabin door of a fellow Danish immigrant named C. Nelson, a Baptist preacher. Young Matteson asked if he could come in for a visit, but the Reverend Nelson said, "No."

Thereupon, Matteson tells us, "I felt sorry for him. Quietly taking out my Bible and standing in the snow, I began to read from the Scriptures concerning the love of God and sweet communion in Christ. The preacher was deeply touched! and finally invited me to enter. We wept and prayed, and then we studied the Bible." That same evening Nelson accepted the Adventist message, in due course becoming a Seventh-day Adventist minister. [1]

The love of Jesus presented by Ellen White as she portrayed the "glories of the kingdom of God and the matchless love of a crucified Redeemer"

melted the heart of teen-ager Elbert Lane in 1853, leading him into a lifetime of service for His Lord. [2] Her presentation of the same wonderful theme in 1858 following her "great controversy" vision, moved the Battle Creek congregation as they had never been moved before.

None of this should be a surprise. The advent movement was born with its eyes on Jesus. "Jesus is coming soon" was the watch-word of the Millerites. "What is Jesus doing now?" was the question that followed the disappointment. "He has a work to do in the most holy place" was the answer Edson and others discovered and which Sabbath-keeping Adventists set out to tell the world. Seventh-day Adventism is basically a message about Christ and what He has done and is doing to save sinners.

What is surprising, then, is that by the 1880s Seventh-day Adventists were to a large extent losing sight of their Lord. O. A. Olsen, soon to become General Conference president, urged a camp meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1885 to

regard their present Sabbath keeping as too legalistic and to embrace anew the righteousness of Christ; [3] but Olsen was an exception. Many other ministers--not all--were emphasizing the obligation of the Sabbath until they had almost excluded a personal relationship with the Lord of the Sabbath. Ellen White spoke often of the charms of Jesus, but her now familiar words, so effective in the 1850s, fell on numb ears. When writers in the Review talked about how men are saved, they were careful to say the right things: We are saved by Christ alone; no man can keep the law in his own strength. But something was missing. Or rather, Someone was missing. Christ was a doctrine, but He was no longer a personal friend to many Adventists as He had once been.

The church was painfully in need of a new depiction of Christ, delineated by dedicated new draftsmen. The artists destined for the job unveiled their new protrait at the General Conference session held in Minneapolis in 1888.

"Minneapolis."

"1888."

The terms go together in Adventist history like husband and wife. [4] They designate one of the most important General Conference sessions, ranking along with 1863 and 1901. Unlike these other sessions, however, Minneapolis 1888 is not famous for either organization or reorganization, but for its proclamation of righteousness by faith.

The twenty-seventh General Conference session convened from October 17 to November 4, 1888, in the brand-new Seventh-day Adventist church at the corner of Lake and Fourth in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was not a large General Conference by modern standards. World membership at the time was only 27,000. The number of delegates present was around ninety.

The progress of new mission fields, the "distribution of labor," city evangelism, a ship to serve the South Sea Islands, and many other such items were taken up; but all the ordinary business

of this conference is largely forgotten today. What is still remembered is that "the Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. ... It presented justification through faith in the Surety. It invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God." [5]

Unfortunately, however, this is not quite all that is remembered about Minneapolis 1888. Ellen White also wrote, "I have been instructed [by God] that the terrible experience at the Minneapolis Conference is one of the saddest chapters in the history of the believers in present truth." [6]

Minneapolis 1888 stands in Adventist history as another great opportunity, like the Laodicean appeal of the 1850s, when believers accepted God's offer only in part and rejected it in part. An expectant Father was once more left to wait patiently for His hesitant children. The promise of 1888 is, however, still available to-day.

The two men (our "artists" of a moment ago) who made a most outstanding contribution to this General Conference were Alonzo T. jones and Ellet J. Waggoner. Elder A. T. jones had been born in Ohio in 1850. At twenty he enlisted in the army, where he served for three years, some of the time at a camp near Walla Walla. To make use of his spare hours he studied history, the Bible, and Seventh-day Adventist literature that came his way. After his discharge he was baptized by I.D. Van Horn, married the minister's sister-in-law, and, in course of time, was called to unite with E. J. Waggoner as coeditor of Signs of the Times. In 1886 he and Waggoner became coeditors as well of American Sentinel, the predecessor of Liberty. Jones was especially interested in church-state relations and in the fulfillment of prophecy.

Elder E. J. Waggoner was born in 1855, took a medical degree from Bellevue Medical College in New York (the same school where Dr. J. H. Kellogg earned his degree), and served as a physician at the Battle Creek Sanitarium. After a number of years he left medicine for the gospel

ministry and in 1884 joined the staff of Signs of the Times.

In the meantime, on an overcast day in 1882, at a camp meeting near Healdsburg, California, Elder Waggoner enjoyed a noteworthy experience. He was seated at the edge of the congregation. "Suddenly," he wrote later, "a light shone around me, and the tent was, for me, far more brilliantly lighted than if the noon-day sun had been shining, and I saw Christ hanging on the cross, crucified for me. In that moment I had my first positive knowledge, which came like an overwhelming flood, that God loved me, and that Christ died for me." [7] This wonderful assurance was to have an effect, of course, on all his future career.

Waggoner and Jones were different men in rather conspicuous ways. Jones was tall and angular, Waggoner, short and slight. Both became highly effective speakers. The two also became such close friends that they thought alike. On one occasion, when they were scheduled to preach in the same church on two successive Sabbaths, they

were surprised later to learn that they had both preached the same sermon. [8]

In a moment we shall look at the message they presented at Minneapolis; first, however, let us ask why it was not accepted by the delegates as it should have been.

For one thing it was, as we indicated in beginning, a new emphasis on Christ, or at least a renewed one. And it wasn't altogether clear to everyone that the message was indeed the truth about Jesus. Waggoner's sermons (he was the principal speaker in this area) were formulated as an interpretation of the "law" in the books of Romans and Galatians. His object was to show that men are saved by the righteousness of Christ, not by obedience to the law. With this basic concept everyone agreed.

But in developing his theme, Waggoner interpreted some verses as referring to the moral law which many Adventists had supposed referred to the ceremonial law. Galatians 3:24, 25, for

example, refers to a "schoolmaster" law that brought us to Christ but which "we are no longer under" now that faith has come. For years Adventist evangelists had interpreted this as the ceremonial law, but now Waggoner said it was the moral law, the Ten Commandments.

It is perhaps understandable that some in the audience, not knowing at first what he had in mind, suspected Waggoner of undermining the Sabbath. But this scarcely excuses their hostility. "Many had lost sight of Jesus," Ellen White wrote later. "For years the church has been looking to man ... but not looking to Jesus." [9] Waggoner, however, in connection with what he said about the law had a great deal to say about Jesus. Many in the audience felt he said too much about Him. The world did need to hear about Christ, they conceded, but present truth was the fourth commandment, and if we don't emphasize that, they said, people will think they can go to heaven without it.

So Waggoner's emphasis on Jesus (in relation to the law) was unfamiliar, arousing suspicion.

Something else, however, was all too familiar, and it aroused quarrels. This was a debating spirit. Theological debates are rare today, but a century ago they were popular. The position of Adventist evangelists on the Sabbath and the state of the dead was so soundly biblical that they could beat almost anyone; and debates stirred interest in a community, drawing out crowds and leading to baptisms.

But they also nourished an instinct for combat. At the 1888 General Conference some of the delegates, instead of discussing Dr. Waggoner's sermons with him quietly, challenged him to debate. Both he and Jones refused. They had not come to debate, they said, but to study the Bible and to talk about Jesus. A minister, nonetheless, was appointed to take a service and to preach against their position.

At the following service Waggoner and Jones "replied" in a manner that many delegates remembered ever after.

They did not argue. Instead Waggoner stepped into the pulpit, opened the Bible, and read an extensive passage that revealed the truth and soundness of his emphasis on Jesus. The brethren assumed that he was reading the text for his sermon and waited impatiently for him to get through. But when he finished the passage he simply sat down without adding a word of his own. Then A. T. jones got up, read another passage, and sat down. The two of them kept this up alternately until they had read sixteen passages. The meeting was closed with prayer. That was all. The impression was profound.

A third problem at this meeting, in addition to the spirit of debate and the newness of emphasis, was the difference in age between the two men from California and the leaders from Battle Creek who opposed them. Whereas the General Conference president was fifty-four and Uriah Smith was fifty-six, Jones was thirty-eight and Waggoner, only thirty-three.

But we need not make much of this generation

gap. Mrs. White, who took her stand firmly beside Waggoner and Jones, was one of the oldest people at the session. She was sixty!

But another cause of misunderstanding, one we must not pass over lightly, was a mistake made by Waggoner and Jones themselves.

Their understanding of righteousness by faith seemed so wonderful to them that they could not wait to write a book about it and to publish articles on it in Signs of the Times during the years before the Minneapolis conference. They knew very well that they were in disagreement with the General Conference president and with Editor Uriah Smith, but they had the truth, the truth about Jesus, and they felt that they must proclaim it to the public no matter what the "old guard" in Battle Creek made of it.

If they had shown more tact, they might have saved much trouble for themselves and for the church. As it was, they caused the older leaders to look on them with deep concern--and this explains

to a large extent why the older men could not "hear" the beautiful things they said at Minneapolis 1888.

Mrs. White was in Europe when Waggoner and Jones published their new views. "I have no hesitancy in saying you have made a mistake here," she wrote. "You have now set the example for others to do as you have done, to feel at liberty to put in their various ideas and theories and bring them before the public, because you have done this. This will bring in a state of things that you have not dreamed of." She concluded: "We must keep before the world a united front. Satan will triumph to see differences among Seventh-day Adventists. [10]

But not everyone at the Minneapolis General Conference rejected the message. Not by any means. For some it was the beginning of a thrilling new experience. One delegate, for instance, returned to his church in Wisconsin so excited about righteousness by faith that a farmer in his congregation caught his enthusiasm, sold his farm

at once, gave a large donation to the denomination, and was accepted into the ministry. A young pastor who arrived in Minneapolis "full of prejudice" (to use his own words) was totally surprised at the beauty of the presentations, went out into the woods near the church, spent an afternoon with God and his Bible, and then and there found Christ as His personal Saviour. Elder S. N. Haskell, the chairman, Elder Louis Johnson, Elder. J. O. Corliss, and others were also greatly blessed. One minister, and possibly others, recognized that their new relationship with Jesus was so different from the old that they actually asked to be rebaptized.

Furthermore, during the early 1890s some of the delegates who had taken the wrong stand in 1888 made heartfelt confessions. Elder Uriah Smith was one of these. Shortly before Ellen White left for Australia in 1891, he not only apologized to her and to others in private, but he also stood in front of the great Tabernacle congregation to confess the wrong he had committed at Minneapolis. That took courage!

And many of the rank and file responded to the new message with hungry eagerness. Elder Waggoner, Elder Jones, and Mrs. White spent much of the year following Minneapolis 1888 conducting revival services in local churches, ministerial institutes, and camp meetings. In that one year between General Conference sessions, Ellen White, often in the company of one or both of the two men, visited Battle Creek (seven times), Potterville, Des Moines, South Lancaster, Brooklyn, Washington, Williamsport (twice), New York (twice), Chicago, Ottawa, Wexford, Kalamazoo, Saginaw, the state of Colorado, Healdsburg, and Oakland. These were not casual contacts but occasions of herculean labor, preaching, appealing, counseling, exhorting, praying, until opposition melted, tears flowed, sins were confessed, hands were reclasped in friendship, and radiant faces attested victory and new birth. On a Friday night at the end of a series in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, a testimony service started on its own accord and went on for several hours. Ellen White commented: "I have never seen a revival work go forward with such

thoroughness, and yet remain so free from all undue excitement." [11] In July 1889 she could say, "In every meeting since the General Conference souls have eagerly accepted the precious message of the righteousness of Christ." [12] And a few months later: "They [people attending the 1889 General Conference] say that the past year has been the best of their life." [13]

Elder Jones was soon looked up to as the leading theologian in the denomination. Elder Waggoner, sent as a missionary to England, was also highly regarded.

So wonderful, indeed, was the response that membership grew at an average rate of nearly 10 percent a year, almost tripling the 1888 total by 1901 despite the problems we shall have to take up in our next chapter.

Many looked for the latter rain to fall and for the work to end in a short while. In fact, Ellen White wrote, "The dispensation in which we are now living is ... the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

... It is the time of the latter rain." [14]

So much for the setting. Now for a look at the 1888 message itself.

As we have said, Waggoner's sermons in Minneapolis focused on Jesus Christ. Ellen White enthusiastically and gratefully summarized them as "the matchless charms of Christ." [15]

We do not possess today the actual message that Waggoner delivered. We may, however, arrive close to it if we examine the books he published before and after the conference. One of these is appropriately titled, Christ and His Righteousness.

The entire book talks about Jesus. Christ is our Saviour in the fullest sense of the word. There is no other name than His whereby men can be saved. Jesus is filled with all the fullness of the Godhead, and He desires to fill us too with divine power. Colossians 2:9; Ephesians 3:19.

This wonderful Jesus offers freely to forgive all

our sins and to clothe us with His righteousness. And the righteousness He wants to give us is not something make-believe. God does not forgive us while leaving us the same as we were before. God "does not furnish a cloak for sin, but takes the sin away. ... The forgiveness of sin is something more than a mere form, something more than a mere entry in the books of record in heaven. ... The forgiveness of sins is a reality; it is something tangible, something that vitally affects the individual." When he is forgiven, a sinner becomes a new creature. [16]

But, Waggoner suggested, it may be that you feel so unworthy that you cannot believe God can accept you as His child.

To settle this problem he asked a question: "Will a man receive that which he has bought?"

If a man goes to a store, Waggoner inquired, asks for something and then pays for it, will he suddenly change his mind and leave the place without taking it with him? Of course he won't. If

he pays for it, he will take it. And the more he pays for it, the more certain he is to take it. Now, Jesus has paid for us. He has paid the highest price possible, "the precious blood of Christ." (1 Peter 1:19) Indeed, He "gave himself for us." (Titus 2:14) Thus, Waggoner concluded, you can be certain that He will accept you!

But why would He pay so much for someone who is so very unworthy? He bought you because you are unworthy, Waggoner replied--so that when He has transformed you and is able to present you faultless before the universe, He can rejoice over the marvelous change He has made in you. [17]

But righteousness by faith is much more than forgiveness; it is also victory over sin. In His humanity Christ lived a righteous life, and "you may have the same power that He had if you want it," Waggoner continued. "What wonderful possibilities there are for the Christian! ... No matter how much Satan may war against him, assaulting him where the flesh is weakest, he may abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and be

filled with the fullness of God's strength." Christ, who is far stronger than Satan, may dwell continually in the Christian's heart; "and so, looking at Satan's assaults as from a strong fortress, he [the Christian] may say, 'I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.' " [18]

Strange as it seems, many Christians find that praying for help to overcome their sins only leaves them more inclined to do wrong than if they didn't pray. Why? What do they do wrong?

They make the mistake, Waggoner explained, of telling God their problems before reminding Him of His promises. Praying about problems directs our attention to our weakness, and thus makes us weaker. To get real help we should direct our attention to God's power and to His promises. At the very least, Waggoner said, a tempted Christian can remember the promise, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy 1:15) He can therefore begin His prayer by quoting this promise and fastening his attention on it; and as he does so, he will have faith.

"Then," Waggoner continued, "we remember that ... if God gives a promise, it is as good as fulfilled already. And so ... we count the victory as already ours, and begin to thank God for His 'exceeding great and precious promises.' As our faith grasps these promises and makes them real, we cannot help praising God for His wonderful love; and while we are doing this, our minds are wholly taken from doing evil, and the victory is ours." [19]

So much for Waggoner's presentations. Ellen White also spoke frequently at Minneapolis 1888. The sermon she preached on Sabbath afternoon, October 13, was especially helpful. [20] Her text was, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us," and her message was that we should do just that; we should train our minds to "behold," or think about, God's love for us. It was the same point Waggoner made--about thinking of God's promises instead of our own troubles.

How is the water lily able to float so pure and

white above the scum and dirt of the lake? She asked. Because it selects out of its environment only that which will make it a pure white lily! In the same way, she counseled the delegates, "do not talk of the iniquity and wickedness that are in the world, but elevate your minds and talk of your Saviour. ... Talk of those things that will leave a good impression on the mind."

If you are down in a basement of discouragement, she said, do not complain about the darkness. Grumbling won't make the lights come on. Step up out of the basement! "Come out of the dark into the upper chamber where the light of God's countenance shines brightly."

Don't complain, either, about the thorns and brambles of life. Gather the flowers! "We want to have our minds on the encouraging things."

"Let the sound be heard of what Christ has done for me,"

Elder Waggoner showed that righteousness by

faith happens when Christians claim God's promises. Similarly, Ellen White said, "I want you to take the rich promises of God and hang memory's halls with them. ... Oh, I want the promises of God to be the living pictures on memory's walls, that you can look at them. Then your heart can be filled with His grace and you may exalt Jesus."

The congregation listened with hushed rapture as she closed her sermon: "Oh, I love Him. I love Him, for He is my love. I see in Him matchless charms, and oh, how I want that we shall enter in through the gates into the city. ... I wish you would educate your hearts and lips to praise Him, to talk of His power and glory. ... God help us to praise Him more and to be found faultless."

In another major sermon, [21] Ellen White spoke of Christ at work in the heavenly sanctuary, making atonement for us. While He is cleansing the heavenly sanctuary, she said, we should cleanse our own "soul sanctuaries" by entering into the heavenly sanctuary with Him, confessing our sins,

and grasping His arm by faith.

In this relationship with Jesus there is not only forgiveness but also power to overcome. "We hear many excuses," she observed in this sermon. People say, "I cannot live up to this or that. What do you mean by this or that?" she asked. "Do you mean that it was an imperfect sacrifice that was made for the fallen race upon Calvary, that there is not sufficient grace and power granted us that we may work away from our own natural defects and tendencies?"

(It was hard for many Adventists to believe this wonderful promise. Sixteen years later, in 1904, Ellen White lamented: "In the lives of many of those whose names are on the church books there has been no genuine change. ... They profess to accept Christ as their Saviour, but they do not believe that He will give them power to overcome their sins." [22])

Shortly after 1888 (if we may leave Minneapolis) Ellen White published Steps to

Christ. In it she continued to explain righteousness by faith and how it works.

For instance, speaking of how fully and wonderfully God forgives sin, she said, "If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned." [23]

This is marvelous; but it isn't all. We can go on from day to day, knowing that He loves us and not worrying about our salvation. (The way to salvation is righteousness by faith, not righteousness by worry!) "We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved," she wrote. [24]

Does this mean there is nothing that we should do? No, there is something we must do. It is, again, the same thing Elder Waggoner and Ellen White emphasized in 1888. We must choose to think and

talk of His promises. "Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. Talk and think of Jesus. ... Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. ... Rest in God. ... If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him that has loved you." [25]

But doesn't the Bible say that Christians should watch and strive and pray? Yes it does, as in Matthew 26:41 and Luke 13:24. But Ellen White told Adventists in 1892 that they were not so much to strive against sin as to strive to think about Jesus. "Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to choose another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. ... In constantly beholding Him, we 'are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' (2 Corinthians 3:18)" [26]

It was a fresh breeze blowing in the church, this emphasis on the matchless charms of Christ.

Notes:

1. L. H. Christian, Sons of the North (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942), p. 130
2. Review and Herald, August 23, 1881, p. 143
3. Michael McGuckin, "The Lincoln City Mission: A. J. Cudney and Seventh-day Adventist Beginnings in Lincoln, Nebraska," Adventist Heritage, Summer, 1975
4. For further reading see especially Olson, Through Criss to Victory, and LeRoy Edwin Froom Movement of Destiny (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pubhshing Association, 1971), p. 237-268. Unfortunately both of these present a somewhat more optimistic picture than the Ellen White testimonies warrant
5. Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 91, 92
6. Ellen G. White, Letter 179, 1902, in Olson, Through Crisis to Victory, p. 39
7. E. J. Waggoner, "Confession of Faith," p. 5, copy deposited in the Heritage Room, James

White Library, Andrews University
8. A. T. Jones, funeral sermon for E. J. Waggoner, The Gathering Call, November 1916, copy deposited in the Ellen G. White Estate
9. Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 92, 93
10. Ellen G. White, Counsels to Writers and Editors, pp. 75, 76
11. Review and Herald, March 5, 1889, p. 146
12. Review and Herald, July 23, 1889, p. 466
13. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 361, 362
14. Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 511, 512
15. Ellen G. White, Manuscript 5, 1889, in Olson, Through Crisis to Victory, p. 48
16. E. J. Waggoner, Christ and His Righteousness (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1690 [Facsimile reproduction, Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1972], p. 66. Another of Waggoner's works, The Glad Tidings, published originally in 1900, was republished

in an edited edition in 1972 by the Pacific Press Publishing Association
17. Waggoner, Christ and His Righteousness, pp. 69-73
18. Ibid., pp. 29-31
19. Ibid., pp. 78-84
20. This sermon is printed in Olson, Through Crisis to Victory, pp. 246-256
21. Ibid., pp. 260-269
22. Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, July 7, 1904, p. 7
23. Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1908, 1956), p. 62
24. Ibid., p. 72
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.

Chapter 30

Sixteen Years of Crisis

"I give you my word of honor," Elder A. G. Daniells repeated to the plumbers, the plasterers, and the lumber merchants. "When the draft arrives in May from our General Conference in the United States, we'll pay you off immediately."

Little did Daniells realize the trial, or triumph, that his words would entail. [1]

It was the spring of 1899. Five years earlier a series of apparent miracles had encouraged the believers in Australia to establish a college that should in due course send out overseas missionaries as truly as the colleges in America were beginning to do. The idea seemed almost impossible, even foolish, to the members in attendance at the Middle Brighton camp meeting near Melbourne in January 1894 when Mrs. White urgently recommended it. How could a constituency of 1000 build and operate a college?

Ellen White pressed ahead, with the brethren reluctantly following after.

Soon 1450 acres were selected at the fantastic price of about $3.00 an acre. But even $4500 seemed unattainable. Besides, a government expert said the soil was sour, soggy, and sandy. "If a bandicoot tried to cross it," he added, "he would have to carry his lunch with him."

But in her visions Ellen White learned that God could make it fruitful beyond belief. To help convince the leaders, He showed her in vision a clean-cut furrow "about two yards long and about a quarter of a yard deep," plowed mysteriously in a forest clearing on the property; and when on May 24, 1894, the brethren went out to the place to look it over, the miraculous furrow was there to greet them. Next morning as they sought God's guidance with unusual earnestness, Elder Stephen McCullagh, near death from tuberculosis, felt a shock pass through his body and was completely cured.

Still, doubts persisted; and still Ellen White begged the brethren to believe God and buy the land. Somehow they made a couple of payments. Then in January 1895 members of the diamond-rich Wessels family (whom we met in chapter 23) arrived from Africa and were impressed to donate $5000. On March 6 a kind of preliminary College opened with a handful of students. In July, to demonstrate her faith in the enterprise, Sister White purchased 66 of the 1450 acres and began to build "Sunnyside," a home for herself and her helpers.

But when the school term closed in October or November, which is springtime in Australia, the project nearly folded. To worsen matters, their attorney lost an unnecessary lawsuit at an appalling cost of $2000.

The next July Ellen White in a dream received new arguments to present to the brethren and persuaded them to resume construction. Teen-agers and older members felled trees and sawed them into planks. They drained swamps and planted an

orchard. They labored into the night, with some holding candles while others drove nails.

In early 1897, after the girls' dormitory was finished and the dining hall was well begun and all available money had run out, Ellen White called for volunteers to work for nothing, and thirty agreed. In April 1897 the Avondale School for Christian Workers opened on schedule, with four teachers and ten students. Attendance climbed rapidly. The need developed for a church building adequate for Sabbath services. Non-Adventist businessmen donated supplies, laborers contributed part of their time, and soon the building was up.

By 1899 enrollment had grown to 100, and more buildings were needed to complete the complex. And, once more, funds were exhausted.

A. G. Daniells, president of the Australasian field, was in charge of raising money. With Sister White's encouragement he requested the General Conference in Battle Creek to match Australia dollar for dollar, and the leaders in America

agreed. Reassured, the Australian Adventists gave again, down to their last penny, then pledged even more. They wanted their youth to have a Christian education at any cost.

It was then, when the members had gone their limit, that Elder Daniells asked the plumbers, plasterers, and lumber merchants to furnish supplies and labor on credit and promised that he would pay them all as soon as the General Conference sent its generous draft in May.

On Tuesday, the second of May, 1899, an envelope arrived bearing the return address of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Battle Creek, Michigan. With what eagerness was it opened!

With what consternation was it found to contain no money!

Daniells was stunned. He read that the American brethren were faced with multitudinous needs at home at a time of continuing national

depression. They were sure that the Australian believers would understand. And as a matter of practical counsel, knowing that Australia was suffering a severe drought, they recommended that building plans be suspended until better days.

As news spread rapidly, someone likely remembered something that had been happily forgiven and forgotten; namely, that this was not the first time that the American leadership had let them down. Back in 1894, when they had needed money so urgently to purchase the 1450 acres, Ellen White in the name of the Lord had asked S. N. Haskell to find donors in California. He had responded by raising $10,000 in pledges, but when the first (and only) $1000 came in, an administrator on the west coast, entirely without malice but also without thinking of Australia, applied it to the very real needs of the California Conference. [2]

Sister White had responded at that time with earnest correspondence, and the administrator had tried to make things right.

But if the leadership in the United States, not fully sensing the needs of a faraway mission field, let Australia down, it appears that God did not. In 1895 He impressed the Wessels family to help. In 1899 He performed wonders to assist Elder Daniells.

The entire night after the money failed to arrive Daniells spent in prayer under the eucalyptus trees. He prayed until the sky grew light in the morning and an assurance came over him as an assurance had once come early in the morning to Hiram Edson, that his prayer would be answered and that God would solve their problem.

At eight o'clock that morning Daniells was on his way confidently to Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide to find the money he knew God had already placed in reserve for him.

Scarcely had he left when a cable arrived from New Zealand asking if the school could use $2500!

Over the next two weeks Daniells enjoyed a

succession of answered prayers. For instance, on Thursday morning his mind was strongly impressed with the words in Daniel 6:16, "He will deliver thee." In the margin he wrote, "7:30 a.m., 5/4/99." As he and a friend passed a bank at four o'clock that afternoon, a full hour after closing time, they noticed the door ajar. They walked in and were astonished to find the banker and his clerks surrounded with piles of cash, securities, and checks, the vault wide open, and no one standing guard.

The banker looked up and his face turned pale. "How did you get in here?" he stammered.

"The door was open."

"But it couldn't have been! I bolted it, turned the key, and hooked the chain with my own hands." Then sensing that these men must have had extraordinary assistance, the banker asked meekly, "Is there anything that I can do for you?"

Was there indeed! One hour later the banker

was smilingly handing them 300 Australian pounds, counted out as shiny golden sovereigns, satisfied to take no other security than a promissory note backed by their word of honor.

That evening Elder Daniells wrote beside Daniel 6:16, "Fulfilled, 5:00 p.m., 5/4/99."

More money came in under other surprising circumstances, and within two weeks every current obligation had been met. Avondale went on to become everything God had said it would: an excellent college, a training base for hundreds of missionaries, and a farm so prosperous that experts came to learn the reason for its success.

But what had gone wrong in America? Why was it that not once but twice in the 1890s the leadership there had let down a promising young mission field?

There is perhaps no simple answer. Our title, "Sixteen Years of Crisis" (1888-1904), suggests the breadth of the problem. "Crisis" may be defined as

a period when basic decisions are made affecting all future events, and as a situation when antagonistic elements sharply oppose one another. The 1890s, as we may roughly designate the years under discussion, were both a time of decision and a confrontation between the tragic and the glorious in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The glorious, first. Minneapolis 1888 introduced an emphasis on Jesus and righteousness by faith more wonderful than any that had preceded it in the story of the church; and with 1888 paving the way, the General Conference sessions of 1893, 1895, and 1897--not to mention many a camp meeting, ministerial institute, and local revival--were occasions for especially stirring addresses on the Heart of the gospel. Here was a message to tell to the world; so it was that as overseas personnel in mission stations read reports in the Review and the General Conference Daily Bulletins, hearts thousands of miles removed were strangely warmed and vows were renewed.

Not unrelated to this phenomenon was the

appearance of Ellen White's masterpiece, The Desire of Ages; also her Steps to Christ, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, and Christ's Object Lessons.

As we have seen, educational advances were notable during this period. In 1891 the first nationwide teachers' institute focused on "Christian education"; soon collegiate education began to move seriously into the country; and in 1897 church schools started to spring up by the hundreds. Entry into many new lands and the first mission stations for non-Christians also marked the 1890s, as did the second highest annual growth rate (9.8 percent) for any decade. In addition, several administrative reforms of consequence were implemented, of which we shall hear in the next chapter.

Then what was so bad? Viewed from some standpoints, nothing really! No Adventist of note is known during this period to have placed a bomb in a mailbox, held police at gunpoint, or kidnapped a tycoon's heir. Apart perhaps from working Sundays

here and there in defiance of blue laws, they were undeniably good citizens; nonetheless, in articles and letters that were subsequently published in Testimonies to Ministers, their prophet said some very grave things about them.

Repeatedly in these communications Ellen White presented the sublime beauty of Jesus Christ and then, in stark contrast, the evidence that leadership, laity, institutions, conferences, mission fields, and the church as a whole, were desperately in need of reformation. Over and over she stressed that "not a few, but many" (emphasis hers) have been losing their spiritual zeal and turning away from the light. There has been an "astonishing backsliding" among God's people. The church is "frigid," its first love frozen up. Leaders in Battle Creek have turned their backs to the Lord; many church members also have rejected His lordship and chosen Baal's instead. Conference presidents are behaving like medieval bishops, while "whole conferences" and "every institution" are being perverted with the same principles. Some leaders actually "boast" that they will not follow the

testimonies. A "strange blindness" has come upon the General Conference president so that even he is acting contrary to the light. So serious is the situation at the publishing house in Battle Creek that "all heaven is indignant." Indeed, the Lord "has a controversy with His people," and will soon "overthrow in the institutions called by His name." [3]

It was a serious series of charges. But what exactly were they doing wrong? Here is an answer from Testimonies to Ministers, page 441: "If you harbor pride, self-esteem, a love for the supremacy, vainglory, unholy ambition, murmuring, discontent, bitterness, evil speaking, lying, deception, slandering, you have not Christ abiding in your heart, and the evidence shows that you have the mind and character of Satan. ... You may have good intentions, good impulses, can speak the truth understandingly, but you are not fit for the kingdom of heaven."

Gossiping. Complaining. Doubting God. Jockeying for first place. That's all. They were

acting like ordinary Christians, when they should have been cooperating with Christ in blotting out sins, reflecting to the world the beauty of Jesus, radiating the glory of God's character in Sabbath holiness, and preparing themselves, by His grace, to be clean vessels for the outpouring of His Spirit to the world in the latter rain.

They had received tremendous light--in 1888 and, for that matter, since Millerite days. They reminded each other with tears of joy at their testimony meetings that they loved this light. But too many of them didn't live the light. "Let our ministers and workers realize that it is not increased light that they need ..., so much as it is to live out the light they already have," [4] cautioned Ellen White. Mrs. S. M. I. Henry analyzed the situation another way to the General Conference of 1899: "As the sweetest things, when they turn sour, become the most offensive, so to turn against the greatest light and truth is to fall into the greatest darkness and evil. This people have had wonderful light." [5]

It has been said that, unable to tempt the saints with vice, the devil gets them on their virtues.

The biblical call to separation from the world (1 Corinthians 6) was perverted by the enemy into drawing Adventists into colonies, especially at Battle Creek. As early as 1879, when Battle Creek counted 700 or 800 believers, the leadership published in the Review an appeal for no one else to move there without prior consultation. [6] In vain. Numbers increased by the 1890s to 2000. Crowded together, instead of telling the message to the world, they expressed their concern for the success of the cause by discussing other members' faults. Around 1900 a proverb passed current among the saints that if Gabriel paid a call to Battle Creek, even he could not escape their wagging tongues.

The wholesome desire to lead people to think well of the Adventist message by doing things that would "give character to the work," led to the construction of ever larger facilities and the purchase of ever more modern equipment until,

perversely, size itself undermined the character of both work and workers. The Review became, with stereotype, electroplating, and bindery departments and fifty steam presses, the largest publishing house in Michigan; but it failed to ask if it was necessary to be so big. What came to be necessary, in order to keep the expensive machinery running and the large staff employed, was to publish almost anything that came by Common novels, liquor ads, and even a spiritualist work were not turned away. [7] Ellen White said that God wanted Dr. Kellogg to win his patients to Jesus and the last-day truth; but the sanitarium, with all its floors one atop the other and all its buildings one beside the other, occupied too much of the doctor's time.

With the largeness came "worldly policy" and a lowered sense of mission. After 1897 Kellogg insisted that his sanitarium was "undenominational." At the Review the managers, especially Captain Clement Eldridge early in the decade and Archibald R. Henry later, managed to raise their own pay steeply while keeping the employees' wages low. Out went the simplicity of

the early days when everyone felt that he or she was making an equal sacrifice. Inequity bred discontent, complaint, suspicion. When Henry was relieved in 1897, he turned on the publishing house and sued it for $50,000 [8]--quite a contrast to the spirit of the Rochester model and the founding of Avondale.

One of the blemishes of the Sixteen Years of Crisis was, in fact, a series of lawsuits among believers. In anguish Ellen White invoked the early days of mutual dedication and cited Paul: "There is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" 1 Corinthians 6:7. She cautioned, too, as the Lord's messenger, that they were insulting Jehovah and might as well" stop praying to God, for He will not hear their prayers." In reference to at least one lawsuit of the times, Ellen White acknowledged that the suing party plainly had been wronged but insisted that injustice did not justify going to court. God will avenge, she reminded. "Have faith in God; for He has promised that He

will hear the prayer of faith." [9]

On a broader scale, the words of Christ calling for unity (John 17) were perverted by the enemy into a kind of overcentralization, known by contemporaries as "kingly power," which took its particular form from the basic structure of the church at the time.

You will remember that the first organization voted by Seventh-day Adventists was a publishing association. Two years later the General Conference came into being, modeled on the simplest possible constitution and legally separate from the publishing association. When the Western Health Reform Institute was founded in 1866, it was backed by an association also separate from the General Conference. This was the way the members wanted it. By the late 1890s the press, now very large, was still separate; and the Health Institute, which had grown into a chain of twenty-seven sanitariums, was administered by the International Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association, independent of the General

Conference.

The International Tract and Missionary Society and the International Sabbath School Association, both of which stemmed from the late 1860s and early 1870s, and the International Religious Liberty Association, founded in 1889, also had headquarters separate from the church's central leadership.

In a few words, by the 1890s there were both too little organization and too much. There was too little in that too many separate associations and societies operated more or less independently and sometimes actually in competition with one another. There was too much, because all major decisions and a great many minor ones were made in Battle Creek, either by the General Conference or by the appropriate "association" or "society" leadership residing there. Only limited freedom to make decisions was left to local conferences, associations, societies, or missions.

The tendency was, in fact, toward further

centralization. In the early 1890s steps were begun to merge the Review and Herald with the Pacific Press. Ellen White wrote strongly against such institutional consolidation and saved the day. She said the Lord wanted more, not fewer, men in decision-making positions, and she gave three reasons why: (1) to prevent one man's weakness from debilitating the whole work; (2) to develop more leaders by placing responsibility on more men; and (3) to cause more men to lean on God rather than on one another. [10]

In 1896 Ellen White wrote from Cooranbong, Australia: "The arrangement that all moneys must go through Battle Creek and under the control of the few men in that place is a wrong way of managing. ... What do these men know of the necessities of the work in foreign countries?" In the same document she recommended that a representative of the General Conference be assigned to work in each country, so that decisions could be made where the people lived. This representative, she added, could be a layman and should be assisted by a team of counselors. [11]

The custom of making all decisions in Battle Creek was especially harmful because the committees that made the decisions were so small, relatively speaking. For example, the 1863 General Conference executive committee of three was adequate when the membership was 3500. It was expanded step by step, reaching 13 in 1897, but by then the church was stretching around the world, and membership was racing past 70,000.

It was such an overall situation as we have described that explains the empty envelope that arrived in Australia on May 2, 1899. Yet in spite of the central leadership's ungenerosity with distant mission fields, finances were not in good shape at home. By 1901 the General Conference was driven to borrowing money even to support its missionaries. The Battle Creek Sanitarium was in debt an uninflated $200,000. The various schools and colleges owed $330,000. And in Europe, the publishing house at Oslo (then Christiania), Norway, was bankrupt and in imminent danger of passing, like Czechowski's, into the hands of its

creditors.

In the emergency, Ellen White pleaded with the children of the church to forego their Christmas presents and to ask their parents to donate equivalent cash to the cause. [12] In April 1901, looking sadly and earnestly into the faces of the leaders assembled for the General Conference session, she lamented with tears in her voice, "O, my very soul is drawn out in these things. ... That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be, that is past. What we want now is reorganization. We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle." [13]

Notes:

1. The story of the founding of the Avondale school has been retold many times. See particularly Arthur L. White, "Prophetic Guidance That Launched a College," two parts, Review and Herald, April 3 and 10,

1958; A. G. Daniells, "Establishing the Australasian Missionary College," in Arthur L. White, ed., Notes and Papers (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1962), pp. 265, 276; A. G. Daniells, The Abiding Gift of Prophecy (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1936), pp. 315, 316

2. Ellen G. White, Letters 40, 41, and 64, dated 1894
3. Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 449, 450; 162-168; 89; 467; 362, 359, 372, 373; 327; 467; 372; 373
4. Ibid., p. 439
5. Henry, 'Women's Work," General Conference Bulletin, 1899, p. 174
6. Review and Herald, May 1, 1879, p. 140
7. ct. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 7, pp. 164-168
8. David Neff, "A. R. Henry and His Lawsuit" (term paper, Andrews University, 1973)
9. Ellen G. White, Letter 61, 1898, and Manuscript 72, 1898; manuscript release no. 334

10. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 7, pp. 171-174; also Arthur L. White, "Confederation and Consolidation," manuscript deposited in Ellen G. White Estate
11. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 321
12. Ellen G. White, Manuscript 71,1900; manuscript release no. 419
13. Ellen G. White, opening address at the 1901 General Conference, General Conference Bulletin, 1901, p. 25

Chapter 31

Circle of Love

Leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not always exercise the wisest judgment in the 1890s, yet for the most part they were highly motivated men, dedicated to the discharge of their duties as they viewed them. They worked long hours, often too long for their own good, trying to buildup whatever unit of the denominational structure they were assigned to. [l]

The west coast administrator who failed at first to send that $1000 to Australia did not put the money into his pocket! He would never have thought of such a thing. But neither did he think about the needs of a mission field, even though they had been called to his attention many times.

In an hour that called for broad plans and great faith, the record of the church's leadership is disappointing, not so much because of what it was as because of what it might have been. [2] Who is

righteous enough to cast the first stone?

In order to assure a balanced appraisal today, it is helpful to recall once more the rapid advances that marked the Sixteen Years of Crisis--gains in membership, institutions, and countries entered, and in the "Christ-centeredness" of many sermons and publications. Certainly Ellen White did not despair! Knowing better than anyone else both the shortcomings and the excellencies of the church leaders, she recognized some who filled their top-committee assignments as "sober and right-minded men." [3] And she stoutly defended the denomination as a whole from those who used its weaknesses to justify their own waywardness. "The church of Christ," she wrote from Australia--referring devoutly to the church that has the faith of Jesus and keeps the commandments of God--"enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard." [4]

She put her life where she put her words. When in 1891 the General Conference asked her to go to

Australia, she did not want to go. She was 63, widowed, and overworked. But she went.

Upon her arrival she fell painfully ill with rheumatoid arthritis. Like many a new missionary, she wished she were back at home and wondered why she had ever left. Many a time at night when she couldn't sleep, she wanted to cry. Resisting the impulse, she talked to herself: "Ellen G. White, what do you mean? Have you not come to Australia because you felt that it was your duty to go where the [general] conference judged it best for you to go? Has this not been your practice?"

She answered each question in the affirmative and continued. "Then why do you feel forsaken and discouraged? Is not this the enemy's work?"

"I believe it is."

Dabbing her eyes, she concluded, "It is enough; I will not look on the dark side anymore. Live or die, I commit the keeping of my soul to Him who died for me." [5] "I followed the voice of the

[general] Conference," she wrote later the same year (1892), "as I have ever tried to do when I had no clear light myself. ... I am in Australia, and I believe I am just where the Lord wants me to be." [6]

She was surely right. Capitalizing on her isolation from the main center of the work and its leaders who were so slow to make changes, she hewed a college out of poverty and eucalyptus that was to become the revolutionary "blueprint" for all future Adventist education.

When people came to visit Avondale and examine the progress being made, Sister White spoke in such glowing terms of appreciation about the gifts that American and African Adventists had given from time to time that the visitors were deeply impressed. She drew the lesson that in view of these contributions "we are under great obligation, here in Australia, to give ourselves to the Master's work, and to educate and train young men and women that they may be fitted and ready to serve the Lord in home and foreign missions."

[7]

For public ears she made no complaints about unfulfilled promises or the shortcomings of administrators.

Even to insiders she could speak during those years with remarkable faith of the God-led future of the movement to which she had thus far given her life. "There is no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not succeed," she declared with prophetic insight. "God is at the head of the work, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong. Let us have faith that God is going to carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port." [8]

Events, as usual, have tended to prove her right. Some steps were, indeed, already being taken, and others were soon afoot, to remedy the problem of overcentralization and "kingly power," steps which today still affect the church for good.

In 1889 the conferences in North America were grouped into six "districts," each under a "superintendent" representing the General Conference.

In 1891 [9] A. T. Robinson was dispatched to organize a mission conference in South Africa. It was assumed that he would create the customary "societies" and "associations." But how could he? He had too few men for so many committees. He resolved to incorporate all the associations into the basic conference structure as one-man "departments." He sought permission from Battle Creek, a full month's mail-time distant. The leading brethren were strongly opposed to his plan but were as usual far behind in their work. Robinson interpreted their delay as approval and forged ahead. When their No finally arrived, the new system was working so well he didn't change it.

Meanwhile Australia had been designated "District No.7." In 1894 it reorganized itself as the Australasian Union Conference, the first union. The superintendent was replaced by a slate of

administrative officers and a committee that represented the local conferences.

In 1897 Robinson was called from South Africa to be president of the Central Australian Conference and found the usual bevy of societies and associations waiting for him when he arrived. He dissolved them into conference departments. A. G. Daniells and W. C. White were horrified--until they saw how well his "Victoria plan" worked; there upon they persuaded their other conferences and the new Australasian Union also to reorganize themselves with departments. Experience with departments and unions on a limited local level provided valuable evidence to the 1901 General Conference that the program was good.

In 1897 the General Conference session, which met at Union College, made the General Conference committee more representative by enlarging it to thirteen. (It had been enlarged from three to five in 1883, and then to seven in 1886.) The session also modified some committees, distributed the president's duties among several

men, and assigned a degree of autonomy to the European and Australasian fields but (impressive as this may have sounded) left the major needed improvements virtually untouched.

The 1899 General Conference was routine.

The 1901 General Conference saw marked progress.

Not that anyone thought it would. Ellen White herself said later "I did not want to come to Battle Creek. I was afraid the burdens I would have to bear would cost me my life." When the leaders asked her to attend, she said she could not. When in vision God asked her to go, she obeyed. [10]

On April 1, the day before the official session opened, Mrs. White, lately back in America from Australia, met the leaders in the college library. She had been shown the inner lives of many of them, had written testimonies to them, knew them better than they knew themselves. Here were the leaders of God's cause, and as a true mother in

Israel, she loved them all.

Solemnly she presented a summary of the messages she would bear to them publicly over the next several weeks, so they could have the benefit of knowing what to expect. Quietly the delegates adjourned to ponder her burden. Next morning they reassembled in the Tabernacle.

With its imposing clock tower, its red cushions, and its beautiful chandeliers, the famous "Dime Tabernacle," [11] the largest building in Battle Creek and certainly the largest church in the denomination, seated more than 2500 persons comfortably. On this occasion, thronged to the ceiling, it is said to have seated 4000 persons, no doubt uncomfortably. The well-known photograph of Ellen White preaching was made while she spoke at this General Conference session. In it hard-of-hearing delegates can be seen sitting on the stairs that ascended from the platform to the balcony. There is a piano in the picture, incidentally, but no organ. The members had desired a pipe organ, but from Australia Ellen

White had urged them to save the money for missions. [12]

President Irwin opened the meeting with appropriate remarks; then Ellen White stepped forward. It was her first General Conference in ten years.

She bore the delegates a straight testimony. [13] "You have no right to manage," she declared, "unless you manage in God's order!"

"God has not put any kingly power in our ranks."

"That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be the voice of God, ... that is past."

What then ought to be done? "What we want now is a reorganization ... upon a different principle."

The new principle was "love." What kind of love? Love such as Jesus showed us, she explained.

Love that works in the privacy of one's family. Love that keeps a person from gossiping and complaining when at work. Love that takes "the responsibility of fulfilling Christ's command, "Go ye into all the world.' "

"The time has come when this people are to be born again," she urged. Then looking earnestly into the sea of faces before her, filling main floor, balcony, and stairways, she said, "I want to have a home with the blessed, and I want you to have a home there. I want to work in harmony with you." "Let everyone of you go home [to your houses or your apartments where you are lodging] not to chat, chat, chat, but to pray."

As she sat down, the vast congregation was hushed, spellbound with regrets for the past, hopes for the future, and resolutions for the present.

After a pause, Elder A. G. Daniells arose. He had labored with Ellen White for years in Australia and through many an experience had learned to trust her guidance. His counsel on this occasion

was that ordinary procedures and preconceived plans be laid aside, and that a very large committee be nominated to effect a reorganization, operating under parliamentary rules for a "committee of the whole," the least formal procedure. His intention was to provide maximum freedom of discussion so that the Spirit might have ample room to work.

As this large committee brought in its reports from day to day for the consideration of the entire body, other sermons were rendered that added further to the session's sense of mission.

Dr. Kellogg gave stirring messages, emphasizing the role of medical missionary work in soul winning.

At 11:30 am on April 3 Elder Daniells urged home upon the delegates that the United States constituted only one twentieth of the world's population. "Outside of this country are nineteen twentieths of humanity!" "Yet of the 75,000 believers in the third angel's message, about 60,000 are here in the United States!" He jabbed his finger

toward a world map on the wall behind him. "There are in the world today 1,000,000,000 heathen. Of the 1,400,000,000 who are living, at least two thirds are heathen." [14]

Ellen White was on her feet again and again to add the weight of her testimony to such inspiring challenges as these. "The field is the world," she cried. But has the General Conference recognized this? She asked. Openly she reviewed her own experience. "I told the Lord that when I came to Battle Creek this time, I would ask why you had withheld means from the work in Australia. ... We desire that at this meeting the work shall be so established that no such thing shall take place again. Two or three men, who have never seen barren fields ... should not control matters." [15]

She also appealed repeatedly to physicians and ministers not to separate from each other and not to allow themselves to be divided by jealousy, misunderstanding, and quarrels. "I wish to tell you," she cautioned. "That soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical

missionary work." [16]

The delegates mellowed under these messages. Vast changes were effected, and at the end so many wished to praise God for the surprising work He had wrought in their hearts during the meetings that two lengthy testimony services were required.

The changes achieved remain of great importance. For example, the "districts" in North America (with the Southern field leading the way) set about organizing themselves into union conferences on the Australasian model. The result was that groups of conferences gained a measure of decision-making authority unknown before. When extended to the entire world, as in time it was, the plan proved stimulating and satisfactory. Fields far from headquarters were freed to make decisions previously handled in Battle Creek, and the General Conference was freed to care for basic policies and general oversight.

Next, the General Conference committee was enlarged (at that time to twenty-five) so that never

again would "two or three men" make major decisions for the entire church. The new number was not static. Every union conference president was declared a member ex officio, and this came to mean that men domiciled all around the globe and elected in local areas would become members of the General Conference committee as truly as officers living in the United States. In the 1970s membership in this top committee exceeds 300! Never again were major decisions to be made by men geographically confined to North America.

Policies were also inaugurated in 1901 to guarantee a current of cash from more prosperous to more needy areas of the church. A process was begun also for incorporating the various societies and associations (Sabbath School, Tract and Missionary, etc.) as "departments" of their respective conferences (local, union, and general).

In all these changes, awareness of the world field is apparent. Departments and union conferences had been developed originally in mission areas. And the entire reorganization was

designed to facilitate the management of money, men, and authority toward "telling it to the world."

Unfortunately, when it came to the matter of departments, the Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association hesitated. Though feelings between doctors and ministers improved remarkably during the session, a degree of mistrust remained. A temporary compromise was effected by voting that six of the General Conference committee members be chosen from the medical association.

The next General Conference was held in 1903 in Oakland, California (where the Pacific Press was located before it moved to Mountain View). The basic process of forming unions and departments was completed, and further attention was given to the medical work. Unfortunately, Dr. Kellogg's mistrust of the ministers had deepened rather than lessened in the interim. A motion was introduced to place all Adventist institutions under the ownership of either a local conference, a union conference, or the General Conference rather than under their own

semi-independent associations. Dr. Kellogg and a number of his close friends refused to go along, but eighty percent of the delegates voted in favor. Only the sanitarium in Battle Creek and one in Mexico there after remained outside the denominational organization.

In the meantime (February 1902) the main building of the Battle Creek Sanitarium had burned to the ground. While Dr. Kellogg was in the process of rebuilding it, the Review and Herald Publishing Association main building also burned to the ground (on December 30). Ellen White's messages about moving away from Battle Creek suddenly focused. The 1903 General Conference recommended to move its offices and those of the Review and Herald away from Battle Creek.

The mid-course correction was complete. The Adventist Church had cut the umbilical cord that held it to Battle Creek, Michigan, and to the United States. As it moved to the capital of the country, it also moved outward in its vision to take in the world--grateful for its streamlined organizational

structure that provided optimum freedom for decision making balanced with optimum coordination of effort.

Two other prominent reorganizational developments of later years should also be mentioned. At the prodding of workers in Europe, the General Conference session of 1913 set up a new administrative unit, the "division," of which there are currently a dozen. A division is conceived to be a section of the General Conference operating in a given portion of the world. At the same time, each embraces a particular number of unions. Since unions in turn are composed of local conferences and local conferences of local churches, the intention is that there shall be no administrative break between the church member and the top officer of the General Conference, and that the denomination shall be one interlinked and continuous whole.

The second major administrative unit created since 1901-1903 is found at present only in North America. At the turn of the century there were, all

told, only a few hundred black Adventists in the United States. As their membership grew, so did the number of their pastors. Ellen White urged that the voices of the blacks be heard in representative denominational committees. With the growth of black membership, this counsel was followed at the General Conference level. Then around 1940 several local conferences made it a point to include a black minister on their conference committees to represent the interests of the black race. In 1944 a new policy opened the way for black believers to form conferences of their own (known variously as "colored," "regional," or "black" conferences) within existing unions, and except in the Pacific West they chose to do so. In consequence many blacks have been brought into leadership positions, and a remarkable expansion in black membership has taken place.

Looking back at the 1901 and 1903 sessions, Sister White had reason to feel pleased at the administrative changes. And she was pleased. Whereas once she had said that the day had passed when the General Conference was as the voice of

God, in 1909 she felt free to say, "When, in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered...» [17] In 1913 she added, "I am encouraged and blessed as I realize that the God of Israel is still guiding His people, and that He will continue to be with them, even to the end." [18]

But she was not and could not be entirely pleased with 1901. Sometime later a vision at noon, while she held her pen ready to discuss that session, carried her back to what did not happen. In this vision she saw the delegates responding fully to God's appeal for reconversion. Confessions lasted far into the night. Rejoicing followed never before heard in the Dime Tabernacle.

The vision faded. The prophet found herself still pen in hand. Divine words were spoken: "All heaven was waiting to be gracious." "This might have been." An agony of disappointment swept over her at the thought. [19]

The 1901 session was no doubt a great victory. But personal feelings continued between ministers and doctors; and when Sister White thought of Dr. Kellogg, her heart almost broke. She felt like David after the victory in the woods of Ephraim: "O Absalom, my son, my son!"

But the medical-ministry polarization, instead of neutralizing, sharpened and actually expanded into a triangle after the 1903 session. Kellogg's pantheism in The Living Temple and his independence at the 1903 session confirmed many ministers in their alienation from him. Meanwhile, Ed Sutherland and Percy Magan, leaders of the reforming educators, grew impatient with the ministers when they failed to endorse all their new ideas at Emmanuel Missionary College. At the 1904 "Berrien Springs Meeting" of the Michigan Conference, held on the college campus, the Sixteen Years of Crisis came to a head.

"Mother White," as she was affectionately known by then, held out arms of reconciliation to

all three groups. But Sutherland and Magan, in a huff at the ministers, resigned their positions at the college, while Kellogg and the ministers remained obdurate in mutual distrust. One afternoon Kellogg was giving a talk when he noticed that all eyes had shifted to someone behind him. He turned, saw elderly Sister White coming onto the platform, and offered her the pulpit. There upon the prophetess opened her heart wide in a great motherly appeal to save the doctor if at all possible. Kellogg moved to the back wall. His brother Will was in the audience. Sister White recalled the day when their mother, before she died, made Ellen promise to take her boys with her into the kingdom. Will wept. The doctor stood sober--then examined his watch, noticed that it was time to catch the train for Battle Creek, and stepped outside.

His departure was symbolic.

But Mother White never gave up. Kellogg indeed she could not reclaim, but she bent her aged back unflinchingly to the task of saving the others.

She started the College of Medical Evangelists in Loma Linda and encouraged the ministerial leadership to staff it with physicians trained in Battle Creek. Daniells responded, the physicians responded, and old wounds began to heal. She followed Sutherland and Magan into the South (as we have seen), gave them a testimony of rebuke which they received with repentance, guided their establishment of Madison College and Sanitarium, became an active member of their board--the only time she ever sat on a board--and held them, too, in the church and in the broad fraternity of Adventist workers.

The years 1901 and 1903 were fundamental and pivotal. 1904 was too. Mother White took her position amid the triangle and drew a circle of love large enough to take in all the parties--and welded them into enduring union. [20]

Notes:

1. On the topic of this chapter see C. C. Crisler, Organization (Washington, D.C.: Review and

Herald Publishing Association, 1938); Arthur L. White, "The Story of the General Conference of 1901," three parts, Review and Herald, March 29, April 5, and April 12, 1956; SDA Encyclopedia, art. "Organization"

2. General Conference Bulletin, 1901, p. 24
3. Ibid.
4. Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 15
5. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 233, 234
6. Ibid., p. 239
7. Review and Herald, October 18, 1898, p. 661
8. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. 2, p. 390
9. General Conference sessions were held annually through 1889, then biennially through 1905, approximately quadrennially through 1970, and are now described as "quinquennial."
10. General Conference Bulletin, 1901, p. 43
11. The name "Dime Tabernacle" came from the fact that Adventists all over the United States were asked to contribute one dime each per

week for a year, and a fair part of the total cost of $26,000 was raised in this way. For one description see Arthur W. Spalding, Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists, vol. 2, p. 112. Another "dime" project was the purchase of the missionary ship Pitcairn

12. Daily Bulletin of the General Conference, 1893, pp. 13-15
13. General Conference Bulletin, 1901, pp. 23-27
14. Ibid., pp. 48, 50
15. Ibid., pp. 84, 85
16. Ibid., p. 204
17. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 260
18. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. 2, p. 406
19. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 104-106
20. For interpretation of the 1904 meeting I am indebted to Emmett K. Vande Vere, professor emeritus, Andrews University

Chapter 32

Aglow With His Glory

On Sabbath morning, October 21, 1944, the day preceding the centenary of the great disappointment, a group of Seventh-day Adventist leaders held a memorial service in honor of the advent pioneers. Next morning, Sunday, October 22, they made a brief pilgrimage to William Miller's grave in the cemetery near his home.

Two years before this, "The Voice of Prophecy" had gone coast-to-coast. As the brethren arrived at Miller's resting place, it was nearly time for the weekly program to commence. They left the car radio turned on and the windows rolled down lest they miss even a measure of the King's Heralds' opening theme.

In the weathered marble headstone they deciphered William Miller's name and the date of his death, 1849. Could it be, they must have wondered for a moment, that a century's delay had

proved Miller's hope altogether false? Then they noticed one of his favorite verses, also carved into the worn surface: "At the time appointed the end shall be." Daniel 8:19. And as they mused on this assurance of prophecy, the sound of the King's Heralds came floating through the air: "Lift up the trumpet and loud let it ring, Jesus is coming again."

Praise His name! He is coming again.

But when?

Seventh-day Adventists have long cited a passage from page 69 of Ellen White's Christ's Object Lessons published in 1900: "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."

The words are a comment on one of Jesus Christ's own promises: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the

sickle, because the harvest is come." (Mark 4:28,29)

When the fruit is brought forth. Immediately. Because the harvest is come.

Farmers don't reap fields when green shoots first appear, or when seed heads begin to form. They watch the growth process keenly, gauging moisture content, color, and every other indicator of crop condition until optimum maturity is achieved. Then they roll out the combines and reap the harvest, at once.

Jesus waits for the perfect reproduction of His own gracious, forgiving, outgoing, patient, generous character. Indeed! As High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary He has for over a century shed onto the harvest field the radiance of Sabbath sanctification; intensely He has engaged in "blotting out sin," not only from records but also from lives in the real world. How wonderful to think that someday His dream will be fulfilled. How sad that He has had to wait so long.

Another passage in Christ's Object Lessons (page 419) correlates with the one on page 69. It says, "All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts."

The same page adds, "It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love."

Waiting for perfect characters and waiting for channels to communicate God's grace are not two different things. They are two aspects of the same thing. God is waiting evidently for a people who are perfect for a purpose. He wants them victorious over sin not only for their own happiness but also for usefulness in perfectly representing His lovely

character to sinners far and near.

How better could Seventh-day Adventists "tell it to the world"--to every city, village, and person in the world--than by living His love every day in their own homes, neighborhoods, places of employment, and everywhere else, worldwide?

How much longer will God have to wait?

As early as 1884 Ellen White wrote: "If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844 had received the third angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people." [1]

"Years ago," before 1884. What a dream! Suppose that a hundred thousand Millerite Adventists in the United States and thousands of

Adventists in Europe and elsewhere had accepted and proclaimed the message of Sabbath and sanctuary. According to this passage Christ might have come before the American Civil War! Pickett's brigade might never have marched to death at Gettysburg. A million men need not have suffered in the mud at Verdun in the first world war. Hiroshima and Nagasaki could have escaped atomic bombs in the second world war. Sharing as He does the sorrow of every widow and orphan, how God must have longed to send Jesus before those wars were fought! And evidently He could have, if--

Expectant Father, hesitant children.

To the few Adventists who did accept the third angel's message, the letter for Laodicea came with power in the 1850s. Jesus appeared at their hearts' doors seeking ultimate entrance. The latter rain stood at attention, ready to flow through them to a needy world. Victory and finality were at their fingertips. God gave "the message time to do its work." They advanced a little way, then rested

satisfied.

Expectant Father, hesitant children.

At Minneapolis 1888 the Spirit hovered preciously near. Once more it was "time for the latter rain." Gains multiplied on every hand. But instead of "entering the most holy place with Jesus," too many believers chose Sixteen Years of Crisis instead.

Expectant Father, hesitant children.

Then "Mother White," apparently on Christ's behalf, drew a circle of love large enough to take in all these hesitant children. The circle of love has endured, reinforced with Bible truth and Testimonies for the Church and widening like a wave year by year to enclose the ever-extending reaches of the Adventist Church. Differences intrude, but harmony prevails. Seventeen hundred delegates, black and yellow, red and white, mingled at the 1975 General Conference session, subjects of almost every political ideology on the

earth. I sat with the 173-member nominating committee. I saw, heard, and felt how deep beneath little ripples of controversy flowed the currents of confidence and accord.

In this present account of the story of Seventh-day Adventists we have confined ourselves chiefly to how their "cause" began. Its beginnings belong in a special sense to their whole worldwide church of today. The early discovery of truths about Jesus and the conviction, courage, and generosity of their pioneers explain best what makes the movement still move. Had we the space to do justice to the twentieth century, stories of faith and sacrifice and statistics of liberality and growth could be multiplied almost interminably. Even discoveries of further light could occupy chapters.

Here and there we have already referred to some twentieth-century advances in missions, medical work, organization, and education. Much more would like to be said!

Adventism in the twentieth century has still

been large-hearted laborers, giving their lives, sometimes giving up their lives, to carry the message in difficult places. It has been W. R. Smith of Korea, walking, cycling, riding ponies, day and night, sometimes days and nights, in mud, rain, and snow, freezing a hand and a foot, slipping down a precipice in the dark, meeting appointments, ruining his health, raising up schools and churches. And J. P. Anderson, lifetime China worker, electing to remain when enemy troops overpowered Canton, hoping through prayer, tact, and fortitude to preserve the mission hospital from looters--and handing the institution back to the church years later without the loss of a towel or a bed sheet.

Twentieth-century Adventism has been C. C. Crisler singing softly, "All the Way My Saviour Leads Me," as he lay dying of pneumonia at Chona in China's interior--and dying. And W. H. Anderson on safari rousing from unconsciousness during a vicious attack of dysentery to hear his converted Matebele carriers sing, "No, Never Alone"--and recovering. And G. McLaren, his craft

surrounded by hostile Solomon Islanders, singing, "Anywhere With Jesus I Can Safely Go"--and landing safely.

It/has been Beni Tavondi, a native Fijian, after ten arduous years on Papua making his first Adventist convert as he lay dying from snakebite. And Mrs. Fika Mitieli, another Fijian missionary to Papua, teaching women and children in villages, snatching spears from warriors on jungle trails, successfully sharing the truth about Jesus in the sanctuary.

And Billiat Sapa, native African, pioneering in a swampy valley in Nyasaland, living with his wife and two children on a platform in a tree because the villagers refused to take them in; watching both little children die, he and his wife refusing to turn back; watching his wife die, and refusing to turn back; finally convincing the villagers that he loved them and that God loved them, and founding several schools.

Today, of course, children watch TV in Africa

and Fiji as well as in Europe and North America, so Adventist missions in the twentieth century have had to measure with modern technology in ancient lands. But even in modern times ancient disasters still strike, and twentieth-century Adventism has been men like L. H. Christian in the great Russian famine of 1920, knowing that spotted typhus infected half the population, going anyway into the U.S.S.R. for three long weeks to encourage believers while the home folk prayed and fasted. And an indomitable college president, wracked with stabbing pain and responsible for 1000 students, finding rice enough in a famine of the 1970s.

It has been thousands of youth in the worst wars known to history, brave enough to follow conscience and face bullets at the same time, like the fourteen men confined separately in a military prison, each informed that all his buddies had renounced the Sabbath, timidly whistling a vesper hymn as the sun went down and hearing all the others, alone in their thirteen cells, join in. And Desmond Doss, noncombatant on Okinawa,

earning a Congressional Medal of Honor for rescuing seventy-five wounded men while an enemy battalion regaled him with shot, shell, and hand grenade for several hours.

Seventh-day Adventism in the twentieth century has been General Conference presidents like W. A. Spicer (1922-1930), widely beloved, traveling everywhere, knowing every worker (it seemed) by name, toting little presents for missionary children, and always purchasing the cheapest ticket. Once when his hosts protested that a man so important had arrived third class, he meekly apologized, "I'm sorry; I didn't know there was a fourth." And J. Lamar McElhany (1936-1950), also beloved, weeping after his second reelection, overwhelmed with the magnitude of his task.

Numerically much more than ordained leadership, Adventism in the twentieth century has been dedicated laity--like the gallant soldiers just mentioned, like the thousands in Inter-America and the Philippines who have prodded their growth rate

to world records, and like the countless members who teach and superintend Sabbath schools, mend clothes for the poor, teach school, or run Seventh-day Adventist institutions generally. Many lay people have made outstanding contributions, such as Jasper Wayne, Iowa nurseryman, who once discussed with his wife what more they could do for the Lord, she suggesting that they order 100 copies of a special issue of Signs of the Times, he thinking twenty-five copies more reasonable, the two compromising at fifty. The sequel is celebrated every year at Ingathering time.

Some Adventist laymen in the twentieth century have enjoyed remarkable guidance from the Lord. Charles Ashcroft of Carmel, Australia, wondered in 1906 whether he should donate his large apple orchard for a secondary school. He asked Heaven for a sign: a thunderstorm out of a clear blue sky, within a week. Within a week a black cloud appeared out of a clear blue sky, rode over the hill into his valley, emitted vivid flash and thunderous roar right above his home, and then glided away down the valley. His brother ran up

from a nearby farm shouting, "Did you see that!"

"Yes I did," replied Charles; "it's the sign for me to donate my land to the Lord." Carmel College stands on that site today.

Statistics attest encouraging progress. Contributions have increased from half a million dollars in 1895 to some 300 million in 1975. Enrollment in Seventh-day Adventist schools has increased from about 1300 in 1890 to something like 400,000. In 1853 the little Washington handpress in Rochester produced one copy per minute, sixty sheets an hour, at such strenuous effort that the young men who ran it after a few months spat blood. In the twentieth century These Times has reached 200,000 monthly, Signs of the Times 350,000, Liberty 500,000. Radio broadcasts and telecasts have multiplied around the world. "The Quiet Hour" alone uses over 300 stations, "The Voice of Prophecy," more than 800. Sixty million books by "Uncle Arthur" S. Maxwell have carried Christian ideals and the whole Bible message to families speaking thirty-two different

languages. Steps to Christ has been printed a million at a time and translated into over 100 languages.

Membership figures are also impressive, in a way. In 1863 there were 3500 Adventists in a world population of a billion. That was a ratio of one believer to three million. By 1975, when the world had reached four billion, the ratio had improved to one believer in 1600. If the rate of growth remains only at the present 5.5 percent a year until AD 2000, when the world will have 6.5 billion people, there should be 9 million Sabbath keepers, or one for each 700 souls.

It's good progress, praise the Lord, but it's not good enough. It is really much too slow. If the church had continued to grow each year since 1880 at the 11.1 percent annual rate of the 1870s, it could today count not 2,500,000 members but 275,458,110 members! "All heaven" has been "waiting" far too long. The work simply must gather momentum and "spread like fire in the stubble" and it will do so, according to Ellen

White, "when divine power is combined with human effort." [2] "God will do the work if we will furnish Him the instruments." [3]

In 1845 young Ellen saw jets of light springing up in place after place till they filled the whole wide world. They represented the promise in Revelation 18:1, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." And of course the glory of an angel reflects the glory of God.

This angel of Revelation 18, like the three angels of Revelation 14:6-12, is symbolic of a people bearing a message. (Aggelos in Greek means "messenger.") The "glory of God" is primarily His glorious character, full of grace and truth. See Exodus 34. So the earth is to be enlightened with the glory of God when the church of God is filled with the power of God and perfectly reproduces the character of God. The glory which Ellen saw radiating from the Sabbath in the most holy place, symbolic of the loving holiness of God Himself, will one day radiate from

the faces and lives and lips of the Sabbath-keeping people of God. Keeping the Sabbath holy, men and women, boys and girls, will themselves be holy. [4]

"The earth is to be 'lightened with his glory,' " explains Ellen White. "The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously bless consecrated human instrumentalities that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and thanksgiving, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with His unsurpassed glory." [5]

Participation in this glorious climax of the advent movement will not be confined to its current members. Not at all! It is available to everyone who breathes. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. God is the Father of everyone, and just as soon as anyone hears the word he or she, too, may share the joy of experiencing its transforming power and the even greater joy of passing it on.

"The Spirit of the Almighty is moving upon men's hearts, and those who respond to its

influence become witnesses for God and His truth. In many places consecrated men and women may be seen communicating to others the light that has made plain to them the way of salvation through Christ. And as they continue to let their light shine, as did those who were baptized with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they receive more and still more of the Spirit's power. Thus the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God." [6]

"Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. ...

"... The rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. ... Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the

Lord's side." [7]

Truth is more precious than all besides. The message borne to the world in the years ahead must by all means be the truth. The real truth. The vital truth about Jesus, about what He has done in the past and what He is doing now. It must be the first angel's message: the everlasting gospel of the cross and the present truth that the hour of His judgment is come. And the second angel's message, calling people to separate from every idol that holds them back. And the third angel's message, warning against false systems of worship and pointing to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, to righteousness by faith.

Since October 22, 1844, Jesus in the most holy place has been calling attention to the Sabbath, not simply because it is the seventh day but because it represents a unique, Christlike way of life, the ultimate criterion separating good from evil in the last days. Jesus is at work blotting out sins, not only in heavenly books but also in the lives of His children, so that they can be victorious, holy,

Christlike. Through His representative, the Holy Spirit, He knocks on the hearts of His followers, seeking to help them untangle their lives at ever deeper levels and longing to fill them with Himself.

He knows they are yet "earthen vessels" still badly in need of washing; and He is washing them with "fuller's soap" until (if they will) they are sweet-smelling and clean, because He wants to fill them. But he doesn't want to fill them like pots and pans but as water under pressure fills a garden hose and flows through it to bring "joy and blessing to human hearts." As incandescence fills an electric bulb and radiates light in all directions outside it, so He wants clean people through whose eyes and lips and hands and feet He can, without let or hindrance, radiate to the world His glory.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine.

At the second coming everyone who is still in

love with sin must inevitably be destroyed. Not desirous, however, that any should perish, God earnestly invites everyone who understands the contemporary truth about Jesus Christ to live it and tell it to others. He asks them to build schools where it can be taught and young people can be trained to tell it; to establish printing presses and other communication centers from which it can be published; to maintain medical institutions where Christ's compassion can be especially demonstrated and people can learn how to "feel good so they can be good."

Seventh-day Adventists believe that they have been called to proclaim God's final message. To an impressive extent they have sacrificed and labored through the years, and God has apparently blessed with many tokens of divine providence and miracles of grace. But the great miracle for which their church was called into existence, the second advent of Christ, it still awaits.

May the present generation of believers accept Jesus all the way into their lives, and then, their

lips aflame, their lives aglow with His glory, press forward to the remotest person on earth. May they quickly "tell it to the world" so that Jesus Christ can come at last.

Notes:

1. Ellen G. White, Spirit of Prophecy, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, Mich.: The Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1870-1884), vol. 4, p. 291; cf. The Great Controversy, p. 458
2. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 118
3. Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 107
4. Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 283
5. Ellen G. White, Comments, Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 984
6. Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 54
7. Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 612