

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

THE BIBLE,
SCIENCE, AND
AGE OF THE
EARTH

PAUL A GORDON

The Bible, Science, and Age of the Earth

Ellen G. White

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Overview

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About the Author

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) is considered the most widely translated American author, her works having been published in more than 160 languages. She wrote more than 100,000 pages on a wide variety of spiritual and practical topics. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she exalted Jesus and pointed to the Scriptures as the basis of one's faith.

Further Links

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The Testimony of Ellen G. White

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Those profound words of [Genesis 1:1](#)—‘In the beginning, God’—tell us in as simple language as possible that the heavens and the earth, and all that are in them—including man—originated with the Divine Creator. The last two verses of the Bible, [Revelation 22:20, 21](#), declare in equally clear words that He will return to save us, providing the Divine solution to sin. If the Bible is not authoritative in the Genesis creation account, can it be any more reliable in Revelation when it talks of re-creation after fire has purified the earth from sin? Ellen White believed the Bible *could* be trusted, and she accepted its people as real:

The lives recorded in the Bible are authentic histories of actual individuals. From Adam down through successive generations to the times of the apostles we have a plain, unvarnished account of what actually occurred and the genuine experience of real characters ([Testimonies for the Church 4:9](#))¹

Ellen White accepts the genealogical records as well. Note her ringing words:

How often the supposed deductions of science are revised or cast aside; with what readiness the assumed period of the earth’s development is from time to time increased or diminished by millions of years; and how the theories advanced by different scientists conflict with one another—considering all this, shall we, for the privilege of tracing our descent from germs and

¹Full titles for all sources used in this study are listed at the close

mollusks and apes, consent to cast away that statement of Holy Writ, so grand in its simplicity, ‘God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him’ ([Genesis 1:27](#))? Shall we reject that genealogical record,—prouder than any treasured in the court of kings,—‘which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God’ ([Luke 3:38](#)) ([Education, 130](#))?

Her obvious answer to her own question is No!

Old and New Testament writers also wrote with assurance about the reality of their ancestors back to Adam. Christ as well spoke of Adam, Moses, Jonah, and Lot’s wife as real persons. Ellen White notes that Christ ‘in His assertions and representations recognizes Genesis as the words of inspiration.’ ‘He refers to Noah as a literal person who lived; He refers to the flood as a fact in history’ ([The Signs of the Times, December 20, 1877](#)).

I—The Relation of the Bible to Other Sources

In preparation for this study, Spirit of Prophecy counsels especially relating to education have been read and analyzed. Another important source of study has been Ellen White's first statement on science and the Bible titled, 'Disguised Infidelity.' It is especially significant because of its reference to vision. Penned just five years after the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, it can be traced through four dates of publication: *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 3 (1864), *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume 1 (1870), [The Signs of the Times, March 20, 1879](#), and *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890). The first three are virtually identical, while the last represents a revision and expansion.

Four major streams of thought regarding the Bible and science emerge as points of emphasis by Ellen White. These are: (1) The Bible is reliable history; (2) The Bible is greater than science; (3) Cautions regarding theory and speculation, and (4) True higher education. We begin by considering these four areas.

1. The Bible is Reliable History

Ellen White supports Bible history strongly. She points out that 'the weekly cycle of seven literal days ... has been preserved and brought down through Bible history,' and 'originated in the great facts of the first seven days.' Speaking plainly about geology and the Bible she says: 'Without Bible history, geology can prove nothing' ([Spiritual Gifts 3:90, 93](#)). Then she says:

It may be innocent to conjecture beyond Bible history, if our suppositions do not contradict the facts found in the sacred Scriptures. But when men leave the Word of God in regard to the history of creation, and seek to account for God's creative works upon natural principles, they are upon a boundless ocean of uncertainty (*Ibid*).

She tells us that ‘inspiration, in giving us the history of the flood has explained wonderful mysteries, that geology, independent of inspiration, never could.’ We are warned that ‘in the last days,’ ‘upon the merest pretense, the Word of God will be considered unreliable, while human reasoning will be received, though it be in opposition to plain Scripture facts.’ She reminds us that God designed that the discovery of bones of men, beasts, and trees in the earth ‘should establish the faith of men in inspired history’ ([Spiritual Gifts 3:94, 95](#)).

The prophetic messenger also emphasizes the quality of Bible history. It is referred to as a ‘record of creation in its purity’ and ‘an authentic account of the creation of the world.’ The Bible is characterized as ‘the most ancient’ and ‘comprehensive history that men possess,’ and ‘an authentic account of our race.’ It is called ‘sacred history’ and ‘wonderful.’ ‘Without it,’ she says, ‘we should have been left to conjecture and fable in regard to the occurrences of the remote past.’ Also, ‘The lessons of Bible history should be kept before the youth in our schools’ ([Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 13, 52, 427, 428, 421, 453](#)).

[3] Ellen White says that the Bible is a more important study than ‘the sciences and histories of the world.’ She warns against ‘false educators’ who make it easy for students to ‘choose false paths, and to doubt the reliability of both the Old and New Testament records and history.’ She characterizes the Bible as ‘the most wonderful of all histories’ because it is the ‘production of God’ and not man. She speaks of ‘the grand truths of sacred history’ as possessing ‘amazing strength and beauty ... as far-reaching as eternity.’ Speaking to students she asks the question: ‘What other book presents to students more ennobling science, more wonderful history?’ Bible history is presented as ‘superior’ to uninspired history ([Fundamentals of Christian Education, 130, 329, 377, 393, 395](#)).

Ellen White often pictures geology as in contradiction with a ‘literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation’ with its insistence that ‘millions of years’ were needed to bring the earth from chaos to its present condition. To ‘accommodate the Bible to this supposed revelation of science’ the days of creation are said to be thousands or millions of years in length. She flatly states: ‘Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for.’ With the deductions and theories

of science in conflict and changing, only ‘Bible history,’ she says, ‘furnishes ample explanation’ ([Education, 125, 129](#)).

One of her most basic statements on Bible history follows:

The Bible is the most ancient and the most comprehensive history men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and throughout the ages a divine hand has preserved its purity. It lights up the far-distant past where human research in vain seeks to penetrate. In God’s Word alone do we behold the power that laid the foundations of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only do we find an authentic account of the origin of nations. Here only is given a history of our race unsullied by human pride or prejudice ([Education, 173](#)).

Ellen White says that ‘the Bible reveals the true philosophy of history.’ She says that from ‘the vantage ground of God’s word’ students are given a view of history, but also ‘the principles that govern the course of human events’ ([Education, 193, 304](#)). The Bible is pictured as drawing aside the curtain on a stage where we can ‘behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passion, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will’ ([Prophets and Kings, 499, 500](#)). Her writing of the controversy between Christ and Satan was considered to serve the same purpose. Note her comments from the introduction to *The Great Controversy*:

It is not so much the object of this book to present new truths concerning the struggles of former times, as to bring out facts and principles which have a bearing on coming events... To unfold the scenes of the great controversy between truth and error, to reveal the wiles of Satan, and the means by which he may be successfully resisted; to present a satisfactory solution of the great problem of evil, shedding such a light upon the origin and final disposition of sin as to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with

His creatures; and to show the holy, unchanging nature of His law, is the object of this book (*GC* xii).

Note two final statements on the reliability of the Bible:

The greatest minds, if not guided by the word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to trace the relations of science and revelation. Because the Creator and His words are so far beyond their comprehension that they are unable to explain them by natural laws, they regard Bible history as unreliable. Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testament, will be led to go a step further, and doubt the existence of God; and then, having lost their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 113](#)).

We are dependent on the Bible for a knowledge of the early history of our world, of the creation of man, and of his fall. Remove the Word of God, and what can we expect than to be left to fables and conjectures, and to that enfeebling of the intellect which is the sure result of entertaining error. We need the authentic history of the origin of the earth, of the fall of the covering cherub, and of the introduction of sin into our world. Without the Bible, we should be bewildered by false theories. The mind would be subjected to the tyranny of superstition and falsehood. But having in our possession an authentic history of the beginning of our world, we need not hamper ourselves with human conjecture and unreliable theories ([Medical Ministry, 89](#)).

Bible history is clearly characterized as superior and trustworthy.

2. The Bible is Greater than Science.

A second area of strong emphasis in the Spirit of Prophecy is the relative authority of the Bible and science. She says ‘the Bible is not to be tested by men’s ideas of science, but science is to be brought to the test of the unerring standard.’ It is clear, however, that science is an important partner to the Bible in our search for truth.

‘True science contributes fresh evidences of the wisdom and power of God. Rightly understood, science and the written word agree, and each sheds light on the other.’ Or put another way: ‘Nature is now marred and defiled by sin,’ but ‘even now, rightly studied and interpreted, she speaks of her Creator.’ Or as follows: ‘Nature is full of lessons of the love of God. Rightly understood, these lessons lead to the Creator’ ([Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students](#), 475, 426, 186, 188). Note those words ‘rightly understood.’

We are warned against ‘burying the truth’ of Scripture beneath ‘the supposed knowledge of science.’ The Bible is called a ‘greater and certain wisdom.’ Again, ‘Heavenly things are superior to the things of earth.’ There is a warning ‘not to take your ideas to the Bible, and make your opinions a center around which truth is to revolve.’ We are told not to ‘rein up the Word of God before a finite tribunal’ and pronounce sentence upon the inspiration of God making it appear ‘as a thing uncertain before the records of science.’ Students are cautioned *not* to ‘exalt the sciences above the God of science’ ([Fundamentals of Christian Education](#), 130, 181, 182, 308, 328, 329).

[5]

The prophetic voice tells us that even though ‘science is ever discovering new wonders’ that ‘she brings from her research nothing that rightly understood conflicts with divine revelation.’ Further, ‘The Bible record is in harmony with itself and with the teachings of nature.’ Also, ‘To man’s unaided reason, nature’s teaching cannot but be contradictory and disappointing. Only in the light of revelation can it be read aright’ ([Education](#), 129, 134).

It is stated that ‘God is the foundation of everything. All true science is in harmony with His works.’ Also, ‘those who take the written word as their counselor will find in science an aid to understand God’ ([Patriarchs and Prophets](#), 115, 116). We are reminded that ‘in true science there can be nothing contrary to the teaching of the Word of God, for both have the same Author’ ([Testimonies for the Church](#) 8:258).

Ellen White issues the following challenge to all Adventists:

If all would make the Bible their study, we would see a people who were better developed, who were capable of thinking more deeply, who would manifest greater

intelligence than those who have earnestly studied apart from the Bible the sciences and histories of the world ([The Signs of the Times, June 30, 1893](#)).

Human reasoning, science, and learning must always be placed second to the revealed word of God. Even to put the human on the *same level of importance* with the divine tends to make the human of *greater* importance. Note the following clear statements:

Science, so-called, human reasoning and poetry, cannot be passed on as of equal authority with revelation; but it is Satan's studied purpose to exalt the maxims, traditions, and inventions of men to an equal authority with the Word of God; and, having accomplished this, to exalt the words of man to the place of supremacy ([The Review and Herald, November 20, 1894](#)).

Men who imagine themselves endowed with mental powers of so high an order that they can find an explanation of all the ways and works of God, are seeking to exalt human wisdom to an equality with the divine and to glorify man as God. They are only repeating that which Satan declared to Eve in Eden: 'Ye shall be as gods.' Satan fell because of his ambition to be equal with God. He desired to enter into the divine counsels and purposes, from which he was excluded by his own inability, as a created being, to comprehend the wisdom of the infinite One. It was this ambitious pride that led to his rebellion, and by the same means he seeks to cause the ruin of man ([Testimonies for the Church 5:702](#)).

[6] It was implicit faith in God that made Moses what he was. According to all that the Lord commanded him, so he did. All the learning of the wise men could not make Moses a channel through which the Lord could work until he lost his self-confidence, realized his own helplessness, and put his trust in God; until he was willing to obey God's commands, whether they seemed

to his human reason to be right or not ([Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 408](#)).

It is clear that Ellen White saw the Scriptures as always taking precedence over science. But also, that science ‘rightly understood’ is an important ally to the Bible.

3. Cautions Regarding Theory and Speculation

A third emphasis made often by Ellen White is that human theory is always to be subject to Scripture authority. Human theory is not always treated in flattering terms in the Spirit of Prophecy. Some terms used: ‘suppositions’ ([Spiritual Gifts 3:95](#)); ‘vain reasoning’ ([Spiritual Gifts 3:96](#)); ‘abstract theories’ ([Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 34](#)); ‘philosophical speculation’ ([Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 377](#)); ‘sophistry’ ([Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 390](#)); ‘opinions’ ([Fundamentals of Christian Education, 182](#)); ‘supposed deductions’ ([Education, 130](#)); ‘men’s ideas’ ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 114](#)); ‘superstitious inventions, unscriptural theories’ ([The Signs of the Times, February 6, 1893](#)); and ‘human conjecture and unreliable theories’ ([The Review and Herald, November 10, 1904](#)). All of these are to be in subjection to the written word.

There are a few difficulties that demand a closer look.

When in difficulty, philosophers and men of science try to satisfy their minds without appealing to God. They ventilate their philosophy in regard to the heavens and the earth, accounting for plagues, pestilences, epidemics, earthquakes and famines by their supposed science. Questions relating to creation and providence they attempt to solve by saying, This is a law of nature ([Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 44](#)).

Still another danger:

In the schools of today the conclusions that learned men have reached as the result of their scientific investigations are carefully taught and fully explained; while the impression is distinctly given that if these learned

men are correct, the Bible cannot be ([Testimonies for the Church 8:305](#)).

Another problem that faces the believer of the Bible record of creation is ‘a constant effort made to explain the work of creation as the result of natural causes.’ We are warned that ‘it may be innocent to speculate beyond what God’s word has revealed, if our theories do not contradict facts found in the Scriptures’ ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 113](#)).

In this area, too, the Scriptures come out first.

4. *True Higher Education*

[7] The fourth major point Ellen White makes in her study of revelation and science is to define true higher education. She says ‘true higher education’ is ‘that which is received by sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning of Him’ ([Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 252](#)). ‘Only as the higher life is brought to view, as shown in the teachings of Christ, can learning and instruction rightly be called higher education’ ([Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 375](#)). ‘Spiritual eyesight is required to understand what the true higher education is. It is the education gained by searching the Scriptures... There can be no higher education than that which comes from the Author of truth. The Word of God is to be our study’ ([The Review and Herald, July 3, 1900](#)).

The Scriptures also speak of the relative value of secular knowledge and spiritual understanding. Paul, one of the most skilled and educated writers of the Bible, commented on this point frequently:

If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God ([1 Corinthians 3:18, 19](#)).

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God ([Hebrews 3:12](#)).

Now we see only puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we shall see face to face. My knowledge now is partial; then it will be whole, like God’s knowledge of me ([1 Corinthians 13:12](#) NEB).

This is the Spirit that we have received from God, and not the spirit of the world, so that we may know all that God of His own grace gives us; and, because we are interpreting spiritual truths to those who have the Spirit, we speak of these gifts of God in words found for us not by our human wisdom but by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:12, 13 NEB).

Like the Bible writers, Ellen White supports the training of our minds to their highest capacities. Some comments:

It is right for the youth to feel that they must reach the highest development of their mental powers (*Testimonies for the Church* 8:311).

Cultivated intellect is now needed in the cause of God, for novices cannot do the work acceptably (*Testimonies for the Church* 4:426).

Reach to the highest point of intellectual greatness (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 48).

God would have us avail ourselves of every means of cultivating and strengthening our intellectual powers (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 165).

The intellect is to be kept thoroughly awake with new, earnest, whole hearted work (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 227).

Truth is best appreciated by an intellectual Christian (*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 361).

Concerning the teaching of science in our first college she wrote in 1880:

God designs that the college at Battle Creek shall reach a higher standard of intellectual and moral culture than any other institution of the kind in our land. The youth should be taught the importance of cultivating their physical, mental, and moral powers, that they may not only reach the highest attainments in science, but, through a knowledge of God, may be educated to glorify Him (*Testimonies for the Church* 4:425).

Speaking directly again to the study of science she said:

A knowledge of all kinds is power, and it is the purpose of God that advanced science shall be taught in our schools as a preparation for the work that is to precede the closing scenes of earth's history ([Fundamentals of Christian Education, 186](#)).

She says further:

It is right that you should feel that you must climb the highest round of the educational ladder ([Fundamentals of Christian Education, 192](#)).

To prospective teachers she writes:

Each student should feel that, under God, he is to have special training, individual culture; and he should realize that the Lord requires of him to make all of himself that he possibly can, that he may teach others also ([Fundamentals of Christian Education, 373](#)).

But some cautions in the pursuit of knowledge are issued:

Unless the knowledge of science is a stepping stone to the attainment of the highest purposes, it is worthless ([Fundamentals of Christian Education, 192](#)).

All who engage in the acquisition of knowledge should aim to reach the highest round of progress. Let them advance as fast and as far as they can; let their field of study be as broad as their powers can compass, making God their wisdom, clinging to Him, who is infinite in knowledge ([Fundamentals of Christian Education, 375](#)).

Priorities are clearly spelled out:

True education does not ignore the value of scientific knowledge or literary acquirements; but above information it values power; above power, goodness; above intellectual acquirements, character ([Education, 225](#)).

But there is another consideration that should alarm us. It is the pursuit of forbidden knowledge. There is no question that God has opened up great opportunities for us to learn, but there are certain limitations as well. Some knowledge is related to the fall of man in Eden. Satan's temptation at the tree of knowledge is still going on. There is a curiosity about that which God has not revealed. Satan is 'seeking to excite a spirit of irreverent curiosity, a restless, inquisitive desire' for 'the secrets of divine wisdom and power.' In such pursuits many overlook 'the truths which He [God] has revealed, and which are essential to salvation' ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 54, 55](#)).

Speaking of when Christ was on the earth in person, Ellen White [9] uses the tree of knowledge and the tree of life in Eden to make an important point:

He [Christ] could have presented to men a tree of knowledge from which they might have plucked from age to age; but this work was not essential to their soul's salvation, and the knowledge of the character of God was necessary to their eternal interests... Jesus, the Lord of life and glory, came to plant the tree of life for the human family, and to invite the members of a fallen race to eat and be satisfied ([The Signs of the Times, May 1, 1893](#)).

In the four areas of emphasis just considered there is a common conclusion. When comparing history, science, theory, or education with the Scriptures, the Bible always takes first place.

II—Questions on Creation, the Age of the Earth, and the Flood

The Days of Creation

Ellen White clearly states that the days of creation week were literal twenty-four hour days, just as we know them today. There is an important reason for accepting the creation story of the first week in its most obvious meaning. That record of the origin of the seven-day week, also is the basis for observing the Sabbath. When the law was written on stone at Sinai, Sabbathkeeping was enjoined as a memorial of the creative act of God. (See [Exodus 20:11](#).) Ellen White says that each day of creation week ‘was accounted of Him [God] a generation, because every day He generated or produced some new portion of His work.’ The weekly cycle of ‘seven literal days’ has ‘originated in the great facts of the first seven days’ ([Spiritual Gifts 3:90](#)).

The implication of a theory calling for uncertain days at creation is large in regard to Sabbathkeeping. The supposition ‘that the events of the first week required seven vast, indefinite periods for their accomplishment, strikes directly at the foundation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment,’ Ellen White says. When we adopt the view that the days of creation were indefinite periods, she says, we make ‘senseless the fourth commandment of God’s law’ ([Spiritual Gifts 3:91, 92](#)).

We are reminded of the inconsistency of such a position:

When the Lord declares that He made the world in six days and rested on the seventh day, He means the day of twenty-four hours, which He has marked off by the rising and setting of the sun. God would not present the death sentence for a disregard of the Sabbath unless He had presented before men a clear understanding of the Sabbath ([Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 136](#)).

The Bible and the modern prophet are in agreement—the days of creation were seven literal days and the seven-day week originated at the creation of this world.

The Age of the Earth

We next turn our attention to Ellen White's statements on the age of the earth. We note that throughout her many years of writing she never wavered from the concept of a short chronology for the earth of around 6000 years. At least twenty-five such statements can be found. Another sixteen times she refers to the time lapse between creation and Christ as about 4000 years.

Her first such statement was made in *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 3, in 1864. When she expanded and revised it for *Patriarchs and Prophets*, in 1890, she did not at that point speak so exactly about 6000 years. But elsewhere in the book she spoke twice of the age of the earth as around 6000 years. (See pages 51 and 342.) Her last comment on the 6000 years is found in [The Desire of Ages, 413](#), published in 1898. Actually the number is mentioned twice on the page.

But there is still a later exhibit of Ellen White's continued reference to 6000 years. When she gave careful review to *The Great Controversy* in 1910, preparatory to some revision, she did not change seven 6000 year statements or three 4000 year statements. Other points were carefully studied and adjusted so that, as she noted, the 'truths it contained were stated in the very best manner, to convince those not of our faith that the Lord had guided and sustained me in the writing of its pages' ([Letter 56, 1911](#)). What an opportune time to eliminate or modify the ten statements so out of line with the thinking of many of 'those not of our faith.' But there was no change!

Did Ellen White ever change or expand her teaching on other subjects? All through her ministry her understanding was expanded. And also in a few instances her message was changed at the direction of the Lord. Let us illustrate:

I. The temptation of Eve.

In her earliest account of the temptation (1864), Ellen White stated:

In the midst of the garden, near the tree of life, stood the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Of this tree the Lord commanded our first parents not to eat, neither to touch it, lest they die ([Spiritual Gifts 3:35](#)).

This wording was repeated in 1870 in [The Spirit of Prophecy 1:27](#). But ten years after she had first penned the words and four years after the reprint, Ellen White elaborates on the words spoken by Eve. In so doing she reveals that further light must have been given to her sometime between 1870 and 1874. She says:

[11] Eve had overstated the words of God's command. He had said to Adam and Eve, 'But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' In Eve's controversy with the serpent she added the clause, 'Neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' Here the subtlety of the serpent was seen. This statement of Eve gave him the advantage, and he plucked the fruit, and placed it in her hand, and used her own words ([The Review and Herald, February 24, 1874](#)). (Emphasis Ellen White)

She follows this same thought later:

The serpent plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree, and placed it in the hands of the half-reluctant Eve. Then he reminded her of her own words, that God had forbidden them to touch it, lest they die. She would receive no more harm from eating the fruit, he declared, than from touching it ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 55, 56](#)).

Note how her emphasis and use of this experience changed.
2. *The use of swine's flesh.*

In 1858 Ellen White wrote to 'Brother and Sister A':

I saw that your views concerning swine's flesh would prove no injury if you have them to yourselves; but in your judgment and opinion you have made this question a test, and your actions have plainly shown

your faith in this matter. If God requires His people to abstain from swine's flesh, He will convict them on the matter... If it is the duty of the church to abstain from swine's flesh, God will discover it to more than two or three. He will teach His *church* their duty ([Testimonies for the Church 1:206, 207](#)). (Emphasis Ellen White)

James White, in a footnote introduced into the 1871 printing, states that this testimony of his wife was written October 21, 1858, nearly five years before the health vision of 1863. When the light came on the use of swine's flesh, Ellen White spoke out clearly against its use. This growing revelation of health principles could be illustrated in several other areas.

3. Counsel to close the Southern Publishing Association.

In 1902 the publishing house in Nashville, Tennessee, was in deep financial trouble. The president of the General Conference, A. G. Daniells, in an interview with Ellen White asked her assent to plans to discontinue the publishing work there because of these losses. Note his account in *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy*, page 136:

She agreed that it must be put upon a basis where there would be no such losses, and said, 'if it cannot be, it had better be closed.' ... This seeming agreement with our plans brought great relief and satisfaction to many who had been struggling with the baffling problem.

Elder Daniells hurried to Battle Creek to share the news with other committee members and they prepared to close down the Nashville printing plant. But let Daniells continue:

A few days later, a letter was received from Mrs White, stating that she had spoken according to her own judgment in agreement with the presentation we had made to her. But she was now instructed by the Lord to tell us that she had been wrong in giving this counsel, and that the printing house in the South should not be closed (*Ibid*).

[12]

Here is Ellen White's own account of the same experience:

During the night following our interview in my house and out on the lawn under the trees, October 19, 1902, in regard to the work in the Southern field, the Lord instructed me that I had taken a wrong position ([Letter 208, 1902](#)).

This experience reminds us of the prophet Nathan who told David to proceed with his plans to build a temple. That same night, the Lord appeared to Nathan in a dream, correcting him. The next day he had to return to the king with different counsel. (See [2 Samuel 7](#).)

Our observation is that her mention so many times of the age of the earth as about 6000 years is more than a casual one. Throughout her life Ellen White wrote about this time period consistently. The same is true for her 4000 year statements regarding the time from creation to Christ. If it was grossly in error, why did not the Lord correct her position? We believe it was because it was a right one. The age of the earth from creation week to the present is only understood correctly in light of the Bible record.

Was not the world created in a supernatural way with an appearance of age? Was it not supernaturally destroyed by a flood and supernaturally relaid during and after the year of the flood? In each of these instances, the Creator stepped in and made use of His power to create and control in nature. The Creator is always greater than that which He creates. ²

²Dr Frank Marsh offers some thought-provoking suggestions: Suppose that on Day Six of creation week, after man had been created, God told Adam that nothing in the landscape was older than about three days. ('Adam had learned from the Creator the history of Creation' [Patriarchs and Prophets](#), 83.) Suppose Adam had had the point of view of the majority of modern scientists, and believed that only open-minded study of nature would reveal natural truth. Assume he replied to the Creator, 'Lord, if it is all right with you, in view of the wonderful physical senses and this marvelous mind you have given me, I would like to check these natural phenomena and discover if you are correct in asserting that no object in the landscape is more than three days old.' Assume that Adam began an open-minded study (as defined by worldly scientists) and observed that he was a mature male of marriageable age; that mature fruitbearing trees were all about him; that giant mature whales were playing in the waters; that giant trees crowned the heights (possibly possessing what appeared to be annual rings); that the low, rounded hills and spreading plains of the landscape evidenced at least millions of years of erosion; and that some inorganic radioactive clocks apparently had ticked off at least 600 million years. If

The Flood

[13]

Ellen White in connection with the flood account refers to ‘great changes’ that then took place. There are some important implications possible. Is it possible, for example, that these things found in the earth are being dated by scientists on the basis of entirely different conditions than those when they were put there? We believe so. She says that those trying to harmonize the Bible record with things found in the earth ‘have limited ideas of the size of men, animals, and trees before the flood, and of the great changes which then took place in the earth’ ([Spiritual Gifts 3:92](#)). She also writes of certain animals that did not survive the flood. She carries through the same thought almost word for word in [Patriarchs and Prophets, 112](#).

She notes that ‘wonderful things’ are found ‘in the earth as the result of the flood,’ ‘bones of human beings,’ ‘of animals,’ ‘instruments of warfare,’ ‘petrified wood,’ and ‘relics’ ([Spiritual Gifts 3:93](#)). But observe what she says men are inclined to do with such discoveries:

God designed that the discovery of these things in the earth should establish the faith of men in inspired history. But men... fall into the same error as did the people before the flood—those things which God gave them as a benefit, they turned into a curse, by making a wrong use of them ([Spiritual Gifts 3:95, 96](#)).

Neither the Bible nor the Spirit of Prophecy allow for a limited flood. The Bible says: ‘And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and *all* the high hills, that were under the *whole* heaven, were covered... And *all* flesh died that moved upon the earth’ ([Genesis 7:19, 20](#); emphasis supplied). Ellen White agrees: ‘The waters rose to the highest points of land, and the unbelieving antediluvians perished for their great wickedness in the waters of the flood’ ([That I May Know Him, 146](#)).

Adam had had the point of view of our modern worldly scientists, he would have returned to the Creator and said, ‘Lord, I’m sorry to have to say this, but this landscape is a lot older than you think! —and he would have had the most carefully obtained, accurately checked, and valid laboratory proof to support his opinion! (‘Age of the Earth in Light of Special Revelation,’ pages 6-7.)

Ellen White states several facts about the Flood that should be observed:

1. We have already noted there were ‘great changes’ ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 112](#)). These could affect dating methods and the appearance of age, to mention only two possibilities.
2. ‘The entire surface of the earth was changed at the flood’ ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 107](#)). It was a universal, cataclysmic flood, with no part of the earth spared.
3. ‘A violent wind which was caused to blow for the purpose of drying up the waters, moved them with great force; in some instances even carrying away the tops of the mountains, and heaping up trees, rocks, and earth above the bodies of the dead’ ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 108](#)). The wind also buried ‘gold and silver,’ ‘Choice wood and precious stones’ (*Ibid*). This wind with its power to pile up rock and earth surely was greater than any we know today.
4. ‘Violent action of the waters’ piled ‘earth and rocks upon these treasures, (gold and silver, etc.) and in some cases even forming mountains above them’ (*Ibid*). The water action, too, seems beyond any we experience today.
5. Some countries ‘were not inhabited’ before the Flood, and ‘in those where there had been the least crime, the curse rested more lightly’ (*Ibid*). This surely accounts for great concentrations of fossils and other artifacts in some areas, and the more desolate places of the earth that we know today.

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The Creator did several things in an unnatural or miraculous way when He: (1) created this world and all that is in it, and (2) destroyed the ancient world by a flood. In the future, He (1) will destroy the world as we know it by fire, and (2) will restore it to even greater beauty than in the beginning. These are also unnatural occurrences. They illustrate that God sometimes intervenes in the natural world and that He controls nature.

He can also: (1) speed up nature's processes as He did when He multiplied the loaves and fishes for the five thousand ([Matthew 14:19, 20](#)). He can (2) slow things down in nature also, even stopping the sun and moon, as with Joshua's long day ([Joshua 10:13](#)), and the turning of the sun dial backward ([2 Kings 20:11](#)). The exact process He used in all of these cases is not important. What *is* important is that He did it. Ellen White speaks clearly about the relation of God to nature:

In Noah's day, philosophers declared that it was impossible for the world to be destroyed by water; so now there are men of science who endeavor to show that the world cannot be destroyed by fire,—that this would be inconsistent with the laws of nature. But the God of nature, the maker and controller of her laws, can use the works of His hands to serve His own purposes ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 103](#)).

Surely, these subjects deserve some further study by those of us who believe in the creation story and short age of the earth from the Bible record.

Some Closing Observations

What an opportunity for Adventist scientists and theologians to work together in asserting absolute faith in the Bible record! The creation story gives Sabbath worship meaning. The record of the fall is basis for teaching that we need to be saved. Confidence in the Bible creation story gives assurance that we will be re-created in God's image.

Evolutionary philosophy teaches that we are moving from simple to complex, we are getting better. But this goes against all the principles of physics. Other sciences could provide the same testimony. The Bible is in direct conflict with the evolutionary hypothesis. The Bible says we were created in God's image, have fallen in sin, and need restoration through the blood of Jesus Christ. It tells us that the world and its people are getting worse, not better.

Having our beginning in God, we can trust for the future. What [15]

an opportunity we have to express our absolute confidence in the Scripture record in the face of infidelity, evolutionary thinking, and speculation!

One hundred years ago the Christian world was in general agreement that the book of Genesis was accurate history. Since that time the influence of science falsely so-called has all but destroyed confidence in the Bible record of beginnings. The three angels' messages of [Revelation 14](#) ask the remnant people to call for the world to acknowledge God as the Creator, and 'worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters' ([Revelation 14:7](#)). Jesus once asked a sober question: 'When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?' ([Luke 18:8](#)). It is obvious that He knew that it would be almost gone. Let us pray that He will find it in our hearts.

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Abbreviations used:

<i>CT</i>	Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Children
<i>Ed</i>	Education
<i>FE</i>	Fundamentals of Christian Education
<i>GC</i>	The Great Controversy
<i>MH</i>	The Ministry of Healing
<i>MM</i>	Medical Ministry
<i>PK</i>	Prophets and Kings
<i>PP</i>	Patriarchs and Prophets
<i>SG3</i>	Spiritual Gifts, Volume 3
<i>IT, etc.</i>	Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1, etc.
<i>TM</i>	Testimonies to Ministers
<i>RH</i>	The Review and Herald
<i>ST</i>	The Signs of the Times