

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

CHARISMATIC  
EXPERIENCES  
IN EARLY  
SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST  
HISTORY

ARTHUR L. WHITE



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**Charismatic Experiences  
In Early Seventh-day  
Adventist History**

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**Ellen G. White**

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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.

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by Arthur L. White

A Reprint of Twelve Articles Published in [The Review and Herald](#),  
[August 10, 17, 24, 1972](#); [March 15, 22, 29](#), [April 5, 12, 19, 26](#), and  
[August 2, 9, 1973](#)

*“I saw that we should strive at all times to be free from unhealthy and unnecessary excitement. I saw that there was great danger of leaving the Word of God and resting down and trusting in exercises....*

*“I saw that the burden of the message now was the truth. The Word of God should be strictly followed and held up to the people of God. And it would be beautiful and lovely if God’s people should be brought into a straight [place], to see the workings of God through exercises of visions.”—Ellen G. White [Manuscript 11, 1850](#).*

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## Why This Reprint

In her message to General Conference leaders, read at the session of 1893, Ellen G. White pointed up the importance of sacred history. “We have nothing to fear for the future,” she said, “except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”—*Life Sketches*, p. 196.

The 12 articles that appear in this reprint were written as the result of a deep conviction on the part of church leaders and the author that current events in the religious world—particularly the neopentecostal or charismatic movement—can be evaluated properly only in the light of God’s Word and the lessons of ancient and modern sacred history. The articles were written originally for the *Review and Herald*, the general church paper of Seventh-day Adventists, and were published in three groupings during 1972 and 1973.

First to appear was a series of three articles entitled “The Ralph Mackin Story.” These articles provide interesting and helpful guidelines by which to evaluate the glossolalia feature of the contemporary charismatic movement, for speaking in tongues was a feature of the 1908 Mackin experience. Much may be learned from observing the way in which Ellen White related to this situation. She listened carefully as the Mackins told their story, then analyzed the various phases of their experience. The vision given to her a few days after her conversations with the Mackins and the counsel she wrote to this couple and sent out to the churches are included in these articles.

Next was a seven-article series on ecstatic experiences in early Seventh-day Adventist history. Four tongues experiences were reviewed, and careful attention was given to the warnings and guiding counsels of 1850 that set the course in relationship to what Ellen

White referred to as “spiritual exercises.” The series concluded with counsels that clearly establish the criteria by which to judge all such experiences.

The third group was a two-article series presenting two notable experiences in which there were deep movings of the Spirit of the Lord, but not altogether fully understood or accepted, and labeled by some as fanaticism. This series included cautions against turning away lightly from sound evidence of the work of the Spirit of God.

Church leaders felt that all Seventh-day Adventists should have the 12 articles readily available, so that in the light of denominational history they could judge the validity of various types of contemporary religious exercises. This reprint offers these materials in convenient and inexpensive form for wide distribution.

*Kenneth H. Wood*

*Editor, Review And Herald*

*Washington, D.C.*

## **Ecstatic Experiences in Early SDA History**

# **Tongues in Early SDA History**

By Arthur L. White

## Introduction

Ecstatic experiences were not uncommon among sincere Christians in the 1830's and the 1840's. Some who later became our spiritual forefathers were involved in them. These experiences may be noted as: (1) Physical prostration; (2) shouting the praises of God; (3) speaking in unknown tongues; (4) divine healing. As we look back from our position today there appears to be convincing evidence that some of these experiences were genuine. There is also evidence that some were counterfeit or were self-induced in periods of excitement. In a series of articles we will explore these experiences in their historical setting and trace Ellen White's relationship to them. As Ellen White recounts her early experience in the Advent Awakening before the visions were given to her, she reports a number of occasions when she was left prostrate by the overwhelming presence of the Spirit of God. One such experience is believed to have taken place in 1843:

“I bowed trembling during the prayers that were offered. After a few had prayed, I lifted up my voice in prayer before I was aware of it ... I praised God from the depths of my heart. Everything seemed shut out from me but Jesus and His glory, and I lost consciousness of what was passing around me. The Spirit of God rested upon me with such power that I was unable to go home that night.

[4]

“When I did return, on the following day, a great change had taken place in my mind. It seemed to me that I could hardly be the same person that left my father's house the previous evening. This passage was continually in my thoughts: ‘The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.’ My heart was full of happiness as I softly repeated these words.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:31](#).

## Chapter 1—Overpowered by Spirit

In relating another incident during her early Christian experience as a young Millerite, she tells of how she, with others, was involved in a meeting about six months after the one described above. The chapter presenting this information is entitled “Opposition of Formal Brethren.” She recounts:

“At times the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me with such power that my strength was taken from me. This was a trial to some who had come out from the formal churches.... Many could not believe that one could be so overpowered by the Spirit of God as to lose all strength....

“We had appointed evening prayer meetings in different localities of the city to accommodate all who wished to attend them. The family that had been most forward in opposing me attended one of these. Upon this occasion, while those assembled were engaged in prayer, the Spirit of the Lord came upon the meeting, and one of the members of this family was prostrated as one dead. His relatives stood weeping around him, rubbing his hands and applying restoratives. At length he gained sufficient strength to praise God, and quieted their fears by shouting with triumph over the marked evidence he had received of the power of the Lord upon him. The young man was unable to return home that night.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:44, 45](#).

## Chapter 2—Unwillingness to Believe

While the family involved accepted this as a manifestation of the power of the Spirit of God, there was still unwillingness to believe that it was divine power that at times had rested upon Ellen, robbing her of her natural strength and filling her soul with the peace and love of Jesus. They considered her as self-deceived and influenced by overwrought feelings. This left Ellen in great perplexity, and she earnestly sought the Lord. She reports that some days after this:

“While we were bowed before the Lord, my heart was drawn out in prayer and filled with a peace that only Christ can give. My soul rejoiced in the love of the Saviour, and physical strength left me. With childlike faith I could only say: ‘Heaven is my home, and Christ my Redeemer.’”

“One of the family before mentioned as being opposed to the manifestations of the power of God upon me, on this occasion stated his belief that I was under an excitement which he thought it my duty to resist, but instead of doing so, he thought I encouraged it as a mark of God’s favor. His doubts and opposition did not affect me at this time, for I seemed shut in with the Lord, and lifted above all outward influence; but he had scarcely stopped speaking when a strong man, a devoted and humble Christian, was struck down before his eyes by the power of God, and the room was filled with the Holy Spirit.

“Upon recovering, I was very happy in bearing my testimony for Jesus and in telling of His love for me....

“The brother who had opposed me then rose, and with tears confessed that his feelings in regard to me had been all wrong. He humbly asked my forgiveness, and said: ‘Sister Ellen, I will never again lay a straw in your way. God has shown me the coldness and stubbornness of my heart, which He has broken by the evidence of His power. I have been very wrong.’ ... ‘My heart is convinced that I have been warring against the Holy Spirit.’”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:45-47](#).

When presenting, in 1860, the story of her life in *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 2, she looked back to 1843 and wrote:

“The Spirit of the Lord often rested upon me in great measure. My frail body could not endure the weight of glory which the mind grasped and feasted upon, and my strength was frequently gone.” Page 29.

### Chapter 3—An Experience Soon After the First Vision

In a vision given to her, probably very early in 1845, and soon after her first vision, which was given in December, 1844, she states:

“My strength was taken away, and I fell to the floor. I seemed to be in the presence of the angels.”—*Life Sketches*, p. 71.

Such experiences were repeated again and again. And there were times when others under the influence of the Spirit of God were prostrated. Writing of an experience shortly after her marriage in 1846 when she was very ill and the neighbors had given her up to die, she said,

“Many prayers had been offered to God in my behalf, yet it pleased the Lord to try our faith. After others had prayed, Brother Henry [Nichols] commenced praying, and seemed much burdened, and with the power of God resting upon him, rose from his knees, came across the room, and laid his hands upon my head, saying, ‘Sister Ellen, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole,’ and fell back prostrated by the power of God. I believed that the work was of God, and the pain left me.”—[Spiritual Gifts 2:84](#).

Shortly after this Mr. and Mrs. Ralph were prostrated:

“Last Sunday we were at Brother Ralph’s and we engaged in prayer for the special teachings of God how to move, whether to go to New York or stay in Connecticut. The spirit came and we had a powerful season. Brother and Sister Ralph were both laid prostrate and remained helpless for some time.”—[Letter 1, 1848](#).

### Chapter 4—Shouting the Praises of God

In early 1850, six-month-old James Edson, the second son of James and Ellen White, was very ill. Here is the account as given by James White:



“The babe was sick and Ellen anointed and prayed for him. The power came down more and more, and we all shouted and praised the Lord as much as we were a mind to. In this state of feelings among us Ellen was taken off in vision.”—James White Letter to Leonard Hastings, Jan. 10, 1850.

Later in the year, at a conference held in Paris, Maine, the believers manifested their rejoicing in loud praises to God. Ellen White recounts the experience in a letter written November 7:

“Our conference at Topsham was one of deep interest. Twenty-eight were present; all took part in the meeting.

“Sunday the power of God came upon us like a mighty rushing wind. All arose upon their feet and praised God with a loud voice; it was something as it was when the foundation of the house of God was laid. The voice of weeping could not be told from the voice of shouting. It was a triumphant time; all were strengthened and refreshed. I never witnessed such a powerful time before.”—[Letter 28, 1850](#).

The records, published and unpublished, in subsequent years indicate that on certain occasions of the special outpouring of the Spirit of God the saints united in shouts of praise to God. [5]

There are in our early history four recorded experiences of speaking in tongues. The first took place in 1847 apparently to guide a young man to the ministry. The second, in 1848, involves a doctrinal point. The third, in 1849, gave guidance to missionary endeavor, and the fourth, in 1851, is a report describing the witness of the Holy Spirit as He manifested “the presence and power of God.”

Significantly, the second experience confirmed what was later discovered to be an unbiblical position, an error, which in time was corrected by Bible study. In this case the experience, involving persons of unquestioned integrity, proved unreliable and gave false guidance. But this is a story in itself.

Two names figure prominently in the early tongues experiences—Ralph and Chamberlain. The earliest tongues experience of which

we have record is reported in an affidavit signed by early believers of unquestioned integrity who were well known as dependable, burden-bearing church members.

“We also, can testify to the manifestation of the gift of tongues. While at a meeting in North Paris, Maine, we think in the year of 1847 or 1848. It was a general meeting. Brother and Sister White were present, also Brother Ralph and Chamberlain, from Connecticut, and others. While the meeting was in progress, the Spirit of God was manifest in a special manner. Brother Ralph spoke in an unknown tongue. His message was directed to Brother J. N. Andrews;—that the Lord had called him to the work of the gospel ministry, and he must prepare himself for it. Brother E. L. H. Chamberlain immediately arose to his feet and interpreted what he had said.”—Mrs. S. Howland, Mrs. Frances Howland Lunt, Mrs. Rebeckah Howland Winslow, N. N. Lunt, Battle Creek, Michigan. (In E.G. White Estate document file, #311.)

The third tongues experience, in 1849, involved personal missionary endeavor. Hiram Edson related his experience with S. W. Rhodes in the *Present Truth* ([December, 1849](#)) a few days after the incidence.

S. W. Rhodes had worked diligently in the great Advent Awakening under William Miller’s leadership. He was a man of means, but had dedicated his material resources to the spreading of the message. When the time of the expected advent of Christ passed by, Rhodes was humiliated. He withdrew from public contact, secluding himself in the forests of upper New York State. He sustained himself by hunting and fishing, augmented by a little garden. Hiram Edson was aware of his whereabouts and on two different occasions journeyed by foot to the hideout and attempted to persuade Rhodes to join his brethren. Both attempts were unsuccessful.

On November 7, 1849, Edson began a third time to rescue Brother Rhodes. After walking 14 miles he felt constrained to turn back as he was impressed that the time had not come. With this

matter uppermost in Elder Edson's mind, he attended a conference held at Centerport, New York, on Sabbath and Sunday, November 17 and 18, 1849. There he met Brethren Ralph and Belden from Connecticut and James and Ellen White from Maine. The report is that the meeting was "a refreshing season."

At the close of the conference Edson introduced Rhodes's case to Ralph, and he discovered that both he and Ralph were individually impressed that they had work to do together. That evening about six persons joined in a season of prayer over Rhodes's case. Elder Edson reported:

"Brother Ralph asked the Lord, in secret, to pour out His Spirit upon us if it was His will that we should go after Brother Rhodes.

"The Spirit was poured out, and it settled upon us, so that the place was awful, and glorious. While I was inquiring of the Lord if He had sent His servant so far to go with me to hunt up Brother Rhodes, at that moment Brother Ralph broke out in a new tongue, unknown to us all. Then came the interpretation—"Yes to go with thee."—[The Present Truth, December, 1849, 35](#).

Now, it was well known to the group that neither James nor Ellen White had faith in the interest that was felt for Rhodes; furthermore Ellen White had been explicit with her caution to Ralph "to be sure to get a clear duty from the Lord." She told him that she thought Edson's feelings for Rhodes were mere sympathy. Edson continues:

"The next morning we had a season of prayer, and the Spirit was richly poured out, and the Lord gave Sister White the following vision, which was contrary to her former opinion and feeling relating to our going after Brother Rhodes, up to the time that the Spirit took her off in vision."—*Ibid.*

In the account almost an entire column is taken to present the vision. We quote a few lines:

“While in vision the angel pointed to the earth, where I saw Brother Rhodes in thick darkness; but he still bore the image of Jesus. I saw that it was the will of God that Brethren Edson and Ralph should go after him.... I saw that Brethren Edson and Ralph should make him believe there was hope, and mercy for him, and tear him away, then he would come among the flock; and that angels would attend them on their journey.”—Ellen G. White, in [The Present Truth, December, 1849](#).

Shortly after the vision Brethren Edson and Ralph started on their journey to find Rhodes. They found him at work in a field by the Black River. They told him that they had come in the name of the Lord, seeking his fellowship with them once more, that together they would go into the kingdom.

### Chapter 5—Ralph Speaks in a Tongue

Again there was a speaking in a new tongue. Hiram Edson, an eye-witness, reports:

“God displayed His convincing power, and Brother Ralph spoke in a new tongue, and gave the interpretation in power, and in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost.”—*Ibid.*, p. 36.

Triumphantly Hiram Edson reported:

“Brother Rhodes finally consented to come with us, and went about arranging his business in order to leave.... Friday, November 23, we returned as far as Brother Arnold’s, of Volney.... They were all rejoiced to see Brother Rhodes.”

And the interesting account closes with these words:

“He stands firm in all the present truth; and we heartily bid him godspeed, as he goes to search out and feed the precious, scattered flock of Jesus.”—*Ibid.*

With this eyewitness account of this experience published in the *Present Truth*, a journal that has been read widely, there is general knowledge within and without the Seventh-day Adventist Church of this tongues experience. Its authenticity is not questioned. Whether the “new tongue” spoken by Brother Ralph was a known language is not disclosed to us.

One point in connection with this experience is of particular interest, and that is the coolness of Ellen White toward the experience. Even after the demonstration of the unknown tongue, Mrs. White was unconvinced that the venture to attempt to rescue Brother Rhodes was in God’s providence and was justified. Not until a vision was given to her directly by God did she place her endorsement on the efforts to recover Brother Rhodes. Brother Rhodes became a strong worker in God’s cause, and the next year his name appeared on the masthead of the *Review and Herald* as a member of the publishing committee. [6]

A fourth tongues experience took place in Vermont in the summer of 1851 and is reported in the *Review and Herald* through a letter written to James White by (Sister) F. M. Shimper. She speaks of the deep experience of the church at East Bethel, Vermont, and reports that the Lord had recently sent “and abundantly blessed the labors of His servant, Brother Holt, among us. After baptizing six of our number, our dear Brother Morse was set apart by the laying on of hands, to the administration of the ordinances of God’s house. The Holy Ghost witnessed by the gift of tongues, and solemn manifestations of the presence and power of God. The place was awful, yet glorious. We truly felt that ‘we never saw it on this fashion.’”—[The Review and Herald, August 19, 1851.](#)

## **Bible Study Versus Ecstatic Experiences**

Of the four recorded experiences of speaking in tongues in the early Seventh-day Adventist history referred to in last week's article, the second touched on the development of doctrine. The whole account of the way in which the Lord led His people in a doctrinal matter is worthy of detailed study. As we proceed, we must remember that the Lord leads His truth-loving people only as fast as they can follow without undermining their confidence in what seems to be important in their experience. He will never lead His people in a way that would minimize the importance of Bible study.

Among the early Adventists Joseph Bates was the apostle of the Sabbath truth. In August, 1846, he published a 48-page pamphlet on the binding claims of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Through the careful study of the irrefutable scriptural evidence presented in this pamphlet, James and Ellen White accepted the seventh-day Sabbath, joining a group of about 50 Sabbathkeeping Adventists. They began Sabbath observance on Friday evening. Not until six or seven months after they began to keep the Sabbath was a vision given to Ellen White confirming the Sabbath truth and bringing forcibly to her attention its very great importance. (See [Early Writings, 32-35](#).)

However, though the scriptural evidence clearly indicates that the Sabbath begins on Friday evening, the time of evening was not clear to our pioneers. Joseph Bates, the old sea captain, knowing the problems of timekeeping in different parts of the world, concluded that in the matter of the observance of the Sabbath "equatorial time" should be followed. He therefore advocated that the Sabbath should begin at six o'clock on Friday afternoon and close at six o'clock on Saturday afternoon. (This was in marked contrast to the normal way of figuring the beginning and ending of the day at midnight.) While there were some differences of opinion among the believers as to just when the Sabbath should begin, the six o'clock time prevailed.

In 1848 a few of the Sabbathkeeping Adventists in Maine, from their reading of [Matthew 28:1](#), “in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week,” took the position that the Sabbath began and ended at sunrise. Ellen White was given a vision in which she heard the angel repeating [Leviticus 23:32](#), “From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.” This settled the point as far as the fallacy of the sunrise time was concerned.

About this time at a meeting in Connecticut, while the Adventists were discussing the problem of when to begin the Sabbath, a tongues experience occurred. James White wrote:

“There has been some division as to the time of beginning the Sabbath. Some commenced at sundown. Most, however, at 6 P.M. A week ago Sabbath we made this a subject of prayer. The Holy Ghost came down, Brother Chamberlain was filled with the power. In this state he cried out in an unknown tongue. The interpretation followed which was this: ‘Give me the chalk, Give me the chalk.’

“Well, thought I, if there is none in the house then I shall doubt this, but in a moment a brother took down a good piece of chalk. Brother Chamberlain took it and in the power he drew a figure on the floor.

“This represents Jesus’ words, ‘Are there not twelve hours in the day?’ This figure represents the day or the last half of the day. Daylight is half gone when the sun is south or halfway from each horizon, at 12 o’clock. Now go each way six hours and you will get the twelve-hour day. At any time of year the day ends at 6 P.M. Here is where the Sabbath begins at 6 P.M. Satan would get us from this time. But let us stand fast in the Sabbath as God has given it to us and Brother Bates.”—James White Letter to “My Dear Brother,” July 2, 1848, written from Berlin, Connecticut.

[7]

This experience carried weight with the believers. They continued to observe the beginning of the Sabbath at six o’clock. It was in

this general setting that God provided some far-reaching guidance to His people.

## **Chapter 6—Vision Concerning Dependence Upon Ecstatic Experiences**

In December, 1850, while at Paris, Maine, attending a conference where all present sensed the deep need of the outpouring of the Spirit of God, Ellen White was given a vision:

“We were united in praying last evening for the Spirit of the Lord to fall upon us. God heard our earnest cries. I was taken off in vision. I saw how great and holy God was. Said the angel, ‘Walk carefully before Him, for He is high and lifted up and the train of His glory fills the temple.’ I saw that everything in heaven was in perfect order... [The matter deleted is unrelated to the present topic.]

“Said the angel, ‘Behold ye, and know how perfect, how beautiful the order in heaven; follow it.’ ...

“I saw that the exercises were in great danger of being adulterated, and their former opinion and knowledge governing in a measure their exercise, therefore implicit confidence could not be placed in these exercises. But if anyone was lost to everything around him, and he should be in the state that Paul was in, whether in the body or out of the body, he could not tell, and God communicate to him through His angels, there would be then no danger of mistake.

“I saw that we should strive at all times to be free from unhealthy and unnecessary excitement. I saw that there was great danger of leaving the word of God and resting down and trusting in exercises. I saw that God had moved by His Spirit upon your company in some of their exercises and their promptings; but I saw danger ahead...

“I saw that the burden of the message now was the truth. The Word of God should be strictly followed and



held up to the people of God. And it would be beautiful and lovely if God's people should be brought into a strait [place], to see the workings of God through exercises of visions."—[Manuscript 11, 1850](#).

The paragraph that follows reiterated the baleful effect of depending upon ecstatic experiences or exercises, especially when searching out sound doctrine:

"I saw in our conference meeting, some laid out the work that God was to give exercises, and rebels were to be purged out in the meeting. Then the honest, conscientious ones began to tremble. 'I am afraid [that] I shall be purged out,' and they take their minds from Jesus, and fix them upon themselves and others, and the meeting leaves them lower than it found them. I saw that we must try to lift our minds above self and have them dwell upon God, the high and lofty One."—*Ibid.*

The significance of this vision given on December 24, 1850, cannot be overrated. It is a key document. The believers were praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, possibly hoping for some physically observed demonstration. The records of the time show an acceleration in ecstatic experiences.

Coming to the point, she was shown that in the ecstatic experiences (or exercises) there was grave danger of adulteration, the former opinion of the individual involved "governing in a measure their exercise." This being the case, implicit confidence could not be placed in such experiences.

But there was one means of communication upon which dependence could be firmly grounded, and that was the visions that God gave to the prophets—here "there would be ... no danger or mistake."

She was shown the possible negative effects of "unnecessary" excitement and that there was a grave danger of disregarding the Word of God and "trusting in exercises." She was shown that there were genuine experiences in which there were charismatic exercises, but that there was danger ahead.

In this vision the Word of God was magnified. When God's people found themselves in a difficult place He would give guidance and instruction through the visions.

### Chapter 7—Further Bible Study Urged

Probably the restlessness on the part of some members concerning the time to begin the Sabbath, and the repeated instruction through the prophetic gift directing them to the Bible, led James White<sup>1</sup> in 1855, to urge J. N. Andrews, a young minister residing in Paris, Maine, to undertake a careful investigation of the Scriptures to gain evidence from God's Word as to when the Sabbath should begin. In the summer, after several weeks in a careful investigation of the Scriptures, he demonstrated from nine texts in the Old Testament and two texts in the New that the Sabbath began at sundown.

Andrews' conclusions were read at the conference in Battle Creek, November, 1855, and, from the scriptural evidence set forth, those present accepted the responsibility of shifting from six o'clock to sundown as the time to begin the Sabbath. But the decision was not entirely unanimous. Joseph Bates, the older member of the pioneer group and the apostle of the Sabbath truth, held out. He was unwilling to surrender his well-established views. And Ellen White reasoned that, since they had kept the Sabbath this way for ten years, why should they change now? A rift developed.

However, at the close of the conference Ellen White was given a vision in which she was shown that the Sabbath began at sundown. Her conversation with the angel in this vision is enlightening:

“I saw that it is even so: ‘From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.’ Said the angel: ‘Take the word of God, read it, understand, and ye cannot err. Read carefully, and ye shall there find *what* even is, and *when* it is.’ I asked the angel if the frown of God had been upon His people for commencing the Sabbath as they had. I was directed back to the first rise of the

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<sup>1</sup>James White in the REVIEW of December 4, 1855, declared that “We have never been fully satisfied with the testimony presented in favor of six o'clock.... The subject has troubled us, yet we have never found time to thoroughly investigate it.”

Sabbath, and followed the people of God up to this time, but did not see that the Lord was displeased, or frowned upon them. I inquired why it had been thus, that at this late day we must change the time of commencing the Sabbath. Said the angel: ‘Ye shall understand, but not yet, not yet.’ Said the angel: ‘If light comes, and that light is set aside or rejected, then comes condemnation and the frown of God; but before the light comes, there is no sin, for there is no light for them to reject.’ I saw that it was in the minds of some that the Lord had shown that the Sabbath commenced at six o’clock, when I had only seen that it commenced at ‘even,’ and it was inferred that even was at six. I saw that the servants of God must draw together, press together.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:116](#).

Two points are paramount. First, the believers were to go to the Word of God for their guidance in doctrinal matters. Second, they were to press together in unity. In subsequent years James White [8] used this experience to illustrate the place of the gift of prophecy in the church. The gift was not to run ahead of Bible study, but had its place in guarding the church and in confirming truth. The Bible was ever to be held paramount, its authority never subordinated to feelings or ecstatic exercises.

There is no record of Ellen White’s giving explicit support to, or placing her endorsement upon, these ecstatic experiences with unknown tongues, although she was an eyewitness to three of the four. She probably was silent as she watched with interest the developments in the instance of Brother Rhodes. Even the speaking in tongues by Brother Ralph failed to convince her. She was later shown that a person’s thinking and his feelings have a large influence on such experiences.

In tracing the events that led to the Bible-based position on the time to begin the Sabbath, we jumped five years beyond the 1850 vision that warned of dangers to come when ecstatic manifestations were relied on inordinately. Other visions followed that forcibly revealed that a spirit other than that of the Holy Ghost could in a large measure affect the feelings. In an 1851 vision she depicted the

experience of certain persons who, unknown to them, were under the influence of “an unholy spirit,” and she declares that “the spirit moved strongly on the feelings, and these feelings, many of them, are yet cherished as sacred, as [indited by] the Holy Ghost.”—[Letter 2, 1851](#).

## Chapter 8—Satan Works in Many Way

“I saw that Satan was working through agents in a number of ways. He was at work through ministers who have rejected the truth and are given over to strong delusions to believe a lie that they might be damned. While they were preaching or praying, some would fall prostrate and helpless, not by the power of the Holy Ghost, but by the power of Satan breathed upon these agents, and through them to the people.”—[Early Writings, 43, 44](#) (1849).

In later years Ellen White warned about counterfeit ecstatic experiences:

“Whenever and wherever the Lord works in giving a genuine blessing, a counterfeit is also revealed, in order to make of none effect the true work of God. Therefore we need to be exceedingly careful, and walk humbly before God, that we may have spiritual eyesalve that we may distinguish the working of the Holy Spirit of God from the working of that spirit that would bring in wild license and fanaticism. ‘By their fruits ye shall know them’ ([Matthew 7:20](#)). Those who are really beholding Christ will be changed into His image, even by the Spirit of the Lord, and will grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit of God will inspire men with love and purity; and refinement will be manifest in their characters.”—[Selected Messages 1:142](#).

## Face to Face With the Spurious

Face to face encounters with spurious ecstatic experiences had a strong molding influence on our forefathers. Elder Loughborough recorded an incident that occurred during the Whites' first visit to Michigan in 1853.

With Elder Loughborough they were to hold meetings in four or five places such as Tyrone, Jackson, Bedford, Battle Creek, and Vergennes, where there were groups of believers. In a vision soon after arriving in Michigan, Ellen White was shown certain persons and certain companies that they would meet in connection with their itinerary. When she had written this out she asked Elder Loughborough to make a copy for her.

The copying of the material made a deep impression on Elder Loughborough's mind. He read of a woman who exerted considerable influence among the Sabbathkeeping Adventists in her community, but who was an impostor, and who, when reproved, would stand and say, "God—knows—my—heart."

Arriving at Vergennes some days later, Ellen White recognized the place as the one where she would meet the impostor. She also recognized the believers as they arrived in their wagons for the Sabbath morning services. She pointed out to those who were close to her that those in the first wagon were not in sympathy with the woman, while another group was, and another group was divided, and so forth. While James White was speaking, a woman of impressive bearing entered with two men. The two men walked up to the front, and the woman took a seat near the door. Ellen White soon followed her husband in speaking.

She introduced her remarks by exhorting ministers to be careful lest they mar the work of God. She said God would not call a woman to travel about the country with a man other than her husband. Finally she said (as reported by Elder Loughborough):

“That woman who just sat down near the door claims that God has called her to preach. She is traveling with this young man who just sat down in front of the desk, while this old man, her husband—

[9] God pity him!—is toiling at home to earn means which they are using to carry on their iniquity. She professes to be very holy—to be sanctified. With all her pretensions and talk about holiness, God has shown me that she and this young man have violated the seventh commandment.”—[The Review and Herald, May 6, 1884.](#)

Everyone turned toward the woman, wondering what her response would be. After about a minute she arose, and with a very sanctimonious look, said, “God—knows—my—heart.” These were the precise words the vision two weeks before had predicted her response would be.

During the noon intermission at the home where the Whites and Elder Loughborough were entertained, Mrs. White was given another vision. Coming out of the vision, she related still further what the Lord had shown her regarding the woman on whom attention had been focused:

“This woman professes to talk with tongues, [Ellen White said,] but she is deceived. She does not talk the language she claims to speak. In fact, she does not talk any language. If all the nations of the earth were together, and should hear her talk, no one of them would know what she says; for she merely goes over a lot of meaningless gibberish.”—[The Review and Herald, June 10, 1884.](#)

Imagine Elder Loughborough’s surprise, on returning to the place of meeting to find this woman speaking in what she claimed was the language of the nearby Garlic Indian tribe. She said the Lord was sending her to them as a missionary.

Here is what Loughborough heard: “Kene keni, kene keno, kene kene,” et cetera.—*Ibid.*

At a meeting she held the next day, this woman spoke on the subject of holiness, and during her talk broke out again in the unknown tongue. An Indian who had been invited to come in to hear her speak his language jumped to his feet, declaring: “Very bad Indian that! Very bad Indian that!” When asked what the woman said, he declared: “Nothing; she talk no Indian.”

A few days later in the presence of an Indian interpreter who knew 17 of the languages, she spoke and prayed in her gibberish, and he declared that she had not uttered a single Indian word. Her influence was short lived, not only because of this experience, but because of the disclosure that the man with whom she traveled and lived was not her husband. This in time was confessed.

### Chapter 9—The Wisconsin Experience

The second experience involving spurious ecstatic exercises took place in central Wisconsin in 1860 and 1861. Involved were T. M. Steward and his wife, early believers in that State, who had come to some position of leadership, and a certain Solomon Wellcome family.

The Wellcome family, first-day Adventists from Maine, had settled in Wisconsin in the late 1840's. In the mid-1850's two sons accepted the Sabbath truth and began preaching their new convictions. Solomon Wellcome soon made the acquaintance of T. M. Steward. From the beginning it was clear that Wellcome entertained spurious views in regard to sanctification:

“I was shown that Elder K [Solomon Wellcome] was upon dangerous ground. He is not in union with the third angel.... He has brought along with him a theory of Methodist sanctification, and presents that in front, making it of the highest importance. And the sacred truths applicable to this time are by him made of little consequence.... Satan has controlled his mind, and he has done great injury to the cause of truth in northern Wisconsin.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:335](#).

Precisely what was involved in this false sanctification Ellen White did not disclose. There is an interesting historical record

describing exercises taking place in a Methodist church in that area at about that time:

“Someone begins to sigh here, now there—an ‘AH!’—an ‘Oh, oh!’ escaped many a breast. Ever more numerous and louder became these ‘Ah’s!’ and ‘Oh’s!’ till finally all quiet and order seemed to be broken up. I must have had least 30 eyes and ears in order to see all these gestures and to hear all these pious groans.... A woman tore her hat from her head, threw it away, and rumbled her hair.... Here a woman gazed heavenward, clutched her bosom as if nothing less than spiritual emotion would be found in it and uttered the words: ‘Come, my Jesus, come my dear Jesus, my dear lover,’ etc. Here and there again one uttered merely the syllable ‘Ji! Ji!’ springing up from his seat each time as if a wasp had stung him.... One ran forward and fell on the floor and several danced about him as if they were possessed and cried out: ‘The Spirit has overcome him! He has received the Holy Spirit,’ etc.”—*Wisconsin Magazine of History*, June, 1942, pp. 463-465. <sup>2</sup>

After learning of the growing fanatical spirit in Wisconsin, James White left his wife with a newborn son, John Herbert, in Battle Creek to visit Mauston and other church groups. He was not well received; his report of his misgivings for the future of the church in Wisconsin is significant:

“We think it our duty to state something of the appearance of this work here, which is called by some ‘The Reformation,’ but to us it looks more like a deformation....

“While we were preaching, a sister broke out in an opposition shout, so we waited some time for her to

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<sup>2</sup>This historical item was furnished by one of our ministers in Wisconsin, Adriel Chilson. While we do not positively identify this particular experience with Solomon Wellcome’s work, there is strong evidence that many similarities existed. Adriel Chilson’s article, “False Sanctification a Century Ago in Wisconsin,” will be published in a future issue of the Review



get through. It was with difficulty that we finished the discourse....

“This reformation, as it is called, has passed some very important decrees. It is said that one or more have the spirit of prophecy, and that they have seen things of the deepest interest. For instance, the body of Sabbathkeepers sustaining the REVIEW have been seen branded as follows—‘Advent,’ ‘Babylon,’ ‘Fallen,’ ‘Organization.’ This is too significant to need comment. Also that Sister White’s writings, excepting the first tract, were all wrong.... We leave these dear, mistaken friends with our pity and our prayers.”—[The Review and Herald, November 13, 1860.](#)

At first Steward and his close associates responded only partially to James White’s reasoning and appeals. But before long it became clear that what had been attributed to God originated with the great adversary. [The Review and Herald, January 22, 1861, \(Page #?\)](#) carried a statement entitled “A Delusion Confessed” written by T. M. Steward:

“To all the dear saints scattered abroad:

“As the question has often been asked by my correspondents, ‘What is the nature of the work at Maustom?’

I would now like to give you my views in regard to it. Further, I feel it my duty to do so; I feel I am fully prepared to do it; and my prayer is that the Lord will save us from all the delusions of Satan in these last days.

“You are well aware that the work had just begun when Brother White was here, and of course I was not decided. I begged of them to let me alone until we had investigated the subject to our satisfaction. I had reasons for doubting, but I wanted to give it a thorough testing.

“The reason I advocated it, was not because I was established in it, but because I could not see anything trampled under foot regardless of feelings. So I watched it with intense anxiety. At times I detected faults, but

[10]

then I was answered with, ‘It shall all be made plain by and by,’ which made me look for plainer demonstrations.”

### Chapter 10—Struggles With Doubt

“At times I would express doubts and the answer would come, ‘Doubt not.’ So I would have to give it up for the time. Then I would try to reason with, and advise them to let judgment decide. But then it would be shown that I was in a dreadful trial or under a temptation. So I finally thought that I would let it develop itself.”

Then Steward discussed some of those who were involved in these experiences, the visions they alleged to have had, and how these visions seemed to be in harmony with the message:

“We had as we supposed many of the gifts. But I was not satisfied with the development of these gifts. But on the night of January 2, while at Portage, it did begin to develop a new feature, and all that were together and under its influence completely lost control of themselves (or gave up to be controlled by the unseen power), and the scenes that followed I cannot describe. I was away at Cascade holding meetings, having left the day before.

“These scenes commenced at Brother Billings’, where there were present my wife, Sister Kelley, and Brother and Sister Billings. These scenes continued until the evening after the Sabbath, when they became convinced that it was a delusion. And now we are unanimous in pronouncing it the work of the enemy. We fully and freely denounce it. I love the truths of the third angel’s message as ever, and I intend to advocate it to the world.

“Brethren, beware of the strong delusions of these last days! This sketch will give you our views in regard to the nature of it.”—*Ibid.*

When James White received this report he was pleased that the fanaticism had been broken, or at least seemingly so, and he followed the confession with his own observations:

“Remarks: It is no small thing to fall under the strong delusions of Satan, especially when persons have exercises controlling body and mind, which they regard as the power of the Holy Spirit. Such lose their balance. They lose their judgment in spiritual things, which they seldom ever recover. For the past fifteen years we have watched the course of such, and in no instance have we seen them pursue an even course so as to exert a good influence, unless they have chosen a humble place in the church, relying more upon the judgment of those who have had a good experience than upon their own.

“God does not leave His people to the deceptive power of Satan for nothing. There is a cause. That cause should be sought for with the deepest feelings of humiliation, lest a second delusion follow worse than the first. Satan’s great object in this delusion in northern Wisconsin has doubtless been to bring the subject of the perpetuity of spiritual gifts into disgrace and doubt. One extreme is usually followed by another. And we shall be greatly disappointed [surprised] if we do not find those who have been under the spirit of error and fanaticism, giving up the subject of spiritual gifts altogether, which error would be more fatal than the first.”—*Ibid.*

Although the fanaticism was broken, the church suffered for a number of years. The Stewards, who required some time to make a full recovery, eventually became again trusted workers. Their daughter Mary served many years as a proofreader in the Review and Herald and for several years as one of Mrs. White’s secretaries.

## The Gift of Tongues at Portland, Maine

The third experience of the early years and one that Ellen White comments on at considerable length took place in Portland, Maine, in the years 1864 and 1865. It seems that Portland, the place where the first vision was given to Ellen White, became a special target of the enemy. For years the work was weakened by the fanatical elements. One of these in the middle 1860's was carried on by an S.C. Hancock, who was a Sabbathkeeper but deeply immersed in ecstatic experiences, particularly that of tongues. The [The Review and Herald, March 14, 1865](#), carries a short item from a Mrs. D. A. Parker of Portland, Maine, in which she describes her experience. She goes back to 1854 and a time-setting movement. It was at that time that she heard the doctrine of the Advent, and, as she said, "gladly embraced the view that Jesus would come in the fall of 1854." But this time movement proved to be unreliable and false. Mrs. Parker tells the story:

[11]

"Just at this time a class arose who claimed that they had the true light on 'rising and trimming their lamps,' 'the latter rain,' and 'the gifts being restored in the church.' I searched the Scriptures and found that the gifts were for the church, and believing that we were the people of God, I went fully with that movement and received in a short time what I then really believed to be the 'gift of tongues,' and sincerely followed in this way until about six months ago, when my mind became unsettled in regard to their genuineness, as there were some things which seemed very strange to me at times. I heard things in the 'tongues' which I had no confidence in, and after seeing results, was still more shaken in my position.

"At our conference in Portland, about three months ago, I became completely disgusted with our position....

“I will specify a few exercises: Talking with tongues, dancing in the Spirit, and swimming in the Spirit. With the tongues I was in full sympathy, but not with the dancing and swimming, which were exercises peculiar to Eld. Hancock.

“More I might speak of, but let this suffice. I can say now that I am thankful that my eyes have been opened to see these delusions which I have sympathized with in part since ‘54; for I partook of the same views and spirit with those with whom I was united.”—Pages 116, 117.

Now with this background we will turn to *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, and hear from Ellen White as she comments on this experience in Portland, Maine:

“Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. *They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver.* Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the church. Some have been deceived here. The fruits of all this have not been good. ‘Ye shall know them by their fruits.’

“Fanaticism and noise have been considered special evidences of faith. *Some are not satisfied with a meeting unless they have a powerful and happy time. They work for this and get up an excitement of feeling. But the influence of such meetings is not beneficial.* When the happy flight of feeling is gone, they sink lower than before the meeting because their happiness did not come from the right source. *The most profitable meetings for spiritual advancement are those which are characterized with solemnity and deep searching of heart; each seeking to know himself, and earnestly, and in deep humility, seeking to learn of Christ....*

“According to the light which God has given me, there will yet be a large company raised up in the East to consistently obey the truth. *Those who follow in the distracted course* they have chosen will be left to embrace errors which will finally cause their overthrow; but they will for a time be stumbling blocks to those who would receive the truth. Ministers who labor in word and doctrine should be thorough workmen, and should present the truth in its purity, yet with simplicity. They should feed the flock with clean provender, thoroughly winnowed.

“*There are wandering stars professing to be ministers* sent of God who are preaching the Sabbath from place to place, but *who have truth mixed up with error* and are throwing out their mass of discordant views to the people. Satan has pushed them in to disgust intelligent and sensible unbelievers. Some of these have much to say upon the gifts and are often especially exercised. *They give themselves up to wild, excitable feelings and make unintelligible sounds which they call the gift of tongues, and a certain class seem to be charmed with these strange manifestations.* A strange spirit rules with this class, which would bear down and run over anyone who would reprove them.

“*God’s Spirit is not in the work and does not attend such workmen. They have another spirit.* Still, such preachers have success among a certain class. But this will greatly increase the labor of those servants whom God shall send, who are qualified to present before the people the Sabbath and the gifts in their proper light, and whose influence and example are worthy of imitation.”—Pages 412-414. (Emphasis supplied.)

And then Ellen White comments:

“Some rejoice and exult that they have the gifts, which others have not. May God deliver His people

from such gifts.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:418, 419](#).

And she asks whether the people involved who exercise these gifts are “brought into the unity of the faith? And do they convince the unbeliever that God is with them of a truth?”

And her further observation is significant:

“When these discordant ones, holding their different views, come together and there is considerable excitement and the unknown tongue, they let their light so shine that unbelievers would say: These people are not sane; they are carried away with a false excitement, and we know that they do not have the truth. Such stand directly in the way of sinners; their influence is effectual to keep others from accepting the Sabbath. Such will be rewarded according to their works. Would to God they would be reformed or give up the Sabbath! They would not then stand in the way of unbelievers.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:419](#).

With this firm counsel given by Ellen White, based on the visions God gave her, the fanatical element among the Sabbathkeepers in Portland, Maine, was soon quenched. It is little wonder that as she came face to face with ecstatic experiences in the years to follow that she should approach them guardedly, cautiously, probing to discern the true elements involved.

### **Chapter 11—The Ralph Mackin Case**

This she did in the experience in 1908 as Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Mackin called on her to learn whether their experience of talking in tongues and singing in the spirit was of divine leading. It was in this connection that Ralph Mackin pressed Ellen White for an answer to the question of the propriety of looking for and expecting some physical demonstration in connection with the work of the outpouring of the Spirit of God. We quote his question and statement and Ellen White’s reply:

“*R. Mackin*: In connection with the receiving of power from on high there is a question, it seems to me, just as pertinent now as in the days of the apostles—What is the evidence? If we receive it, will it not have the same physiological effect on us as it did back there? It can be expected that we shall speak as the Spirit gives us utterance.

[12]

“*Ellen G. White*: In the future we shall have special tokens of the influence of the Spirit of God—especially at times when our enemies are the strongest against us. The time will come when we shall see some strange things; but just in what way—whether similar to some of the experiences of the disciples after they received the Holy Spirit following the ascension of Christ—I cannot say.”—[Manuscript 115, 1908](#), published in [The Review and Herald, August 17, 1972](#).

Shortly after this she was shown in vision that the Mackin experience was spurious.

It is interesting to observe that Ellen White, with the many, many visions given her down through the years, and facing many, many experiences, felt unable to declare unequivocally that there would be an ecstatic experience, such as speaking in unknown tongues, in connection with the outpouring of the Spirit of God. In fact, at no time did she link the evidences of the outpouring of the Spirit—sometimes spoken of as the baptism of the Holy Spirit—with ecstatic experiences. She taught that the experience of Pentecost enabled the disciples to speak fluently in known languages. This was true also of the experience at Ephesus recorded in [Acts 19:6](#).



## Miraculous Healing

When Christ sent forth His disciples “to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick” ([Luke 9:2](#)), He assured them that in His name they would cast out devils, speak with new tongues, lay hands on the sick, and they would recover (see [Mark 16:17, 18](#)).

Early Adventist sources frequently referred to healing miracles. Incidents in the church today indicate that the gift of healing is still with us.

When we review the early records we must keep in mind that during the mid-nineteenth century there was great ignorance in regard to the cause and cure of disease. The concept of germs was unknown. Night air was thought to be poisonous. Poisonous drugs were prescribed freely, inflicting a large death toll. If one had a fever, the physician probably would drain a pint or a quart of blood from the patient’s veins and pour it down the drain, for the fever supposedly indicated that he had too much blood. Anesthetics were unknown. Surgery was of the crudest type and when major was usually fatal. When an epidemic swept through the land it decimated the population. Almost any kind of sickness was an occasion for terror. As the disease progressed it was often said that the sufferer was “marked for the grave.”

How precious, then, seemed the promise of [James 5](#), which called for the anointing with oil and the prayer for healing that “the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up” ([verse 15](#)).

Records of the late 1840’s abound in narratives of how God answered prayer during the desperation, sufferings, and illnesses of that period.

For example, there was that spring day when a number of believers were assembled in Topsham, Maine, at the home of Stockbridge Howland. His daughter, Frances, in an upstairs bedroom suffering from rheumatic fever, was under the care of a physician. Her hands

were so badly swollen that the joints could not be distinguished. Ellen White reported:

“As we sat together speaking of her case, Brother Howland was asked if he had faith that his daughter could be healed in answer to prayer. He answered that he would try to believe that she might, and presently declared that he did believe it possible. We all knelt in earnest prayer to God in her behalf.... One of the brethren present cried out, ‘Is there a sister here who has the faith to go and take her by the hand, and bid her arise in the name of the Lord?’ ... Before he ceased speaking Sister Curtis was on her way to the stairs. She entered the sickroom with the Spirit of God upon her, and taking the invalid by the hand, said, ‘Sister Frances, in the name of the Lord arise, and be whole.’ New life shot through the veins of the sick girl, a holy faith took possession of her, and obeying its impulse, she rose from her bed, stood upon her feet, and walked the room, praising God for her recovery.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 74.](#)

“Frances dressed and came down to where the group was, ‘her countenance lighted up with unspeakable joy and gratitude.’ The next day she rode three miles in rainy weather, sustained no injury, and continued to improve.”

In the same report, Ellen White spoke of William Hyde, who was gravely ill with dysentery. She wrote:

“His symptoms were alarming, and the physician pronounced

[13] his case almost hopeless.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 75.](#)

Shortly thereafter those of faith united around his bedside pleading with God for his healing. Ellen White continued:

“I have seldom known such a reaching out to claim the promises of God. The salvation of the Holy Spirit

was revealed, and power from on high rested upon our sick brother and upon all present. Brother Hyde immediately dressed and walked out of the room, praising God, and with the light of heaven shining upon his countenance.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 76](#).

He joined the family at the dinner table, ate heartily, and Ellen White reported that “his recovery was complete and permanent.”

In 1848 Ellen White recounted the healing of Sister Penfield, right after the first of the Sabbath conferences in Rocky Hill, Connecticut:

“Last Wednesday about six o’clock P.M., a brother came from Portland, 11 miles from here and wanted we should go and pray for his wife for she was just alive, and that was all. She was taken so violent that they called in a physician. He tried to help her, but could do her no good, and said she must die. Another physician was consulted who said he could do nothing. The last was the most celebrated physician in Middletown, Ct.

“Sister Penfield told her husband to go for God’s people, she sent for us. It was rather of a trial for me to start, it was rainy and I had been very weak all day, but I concluded to go. James felt he must go too. Brother and Sister Ralph also went according to her request. We prayed for her at ten o’clock that night and the spirit began to settle. She had been in very great agony but we anointed her with oil in the name of the Lord and then our earnest cries went up to God for healing power.

“God began to work, the pain ceased, but we did not get the full victory we wanted that night. She rested well that night, was free from pain. In the morn we united in prayer for her again. The power came down like a mighty, rushing wind, the room was filled with the glory of God, and I was swallowed up in the glory and was taken off in vision. I saw the willingness of God to heal the afflicted and distressed....

“The work of healing was done up well. She grew stronger in body and mind.... Sister Penfield is strong. Praise the Lord.”—[Letter 1, 1848](#).

## Chapter 12—Prayer for the Miracle of Healing

These particular examples (of which there are many more) illustrate the close link that early believers saw between physical healing and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The propriety of asking God to work a miracle in healing the sick has been kept before us in many messages from Ellen G. White. In 1890 she counseled:

“As to praying for the sick, it is too important a matter to be handled carelessly. I believe we should take everything to the Lord, and make known to God all our weaknesses, and specify all our perplexities.... If we are under infirmities of body, it is certainly consistent to trust in the Lord, making supplications to our God in our own case, and if we feel inclined to ask others in whom we have confidence to unite with us in prayer to Jesus who is the Mighty Healer, help will surely come if we ask in faith. I think we are altogether too faithless, too cold and lukewarm.

“I understand the text in James is to be carried out when a person is sick upon his bed, if he calls for the elders of the church, and they carry out the directions in James, anointing the sick with oil in the name of the Lord, praying over him the prayer of faith. We read, ‘The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.’ ...

“Oh, how grateful we should be that Jesus is willing and able to bear all our infirmities and strengthen and heal all our diseases if it will be for our good and for His glory.

“Some died in the days of Christ and in the days of the apostles because the Lord knew just what was best for them.”—[Medical Ministry, 16, 17](#).

And in her popular book *The Ministry of Healing*, Ellen White devotes an entire chapter to “Prayer for the Sick,” in which she encouragingly wrote:

“And he saveth them out of their distresses. He sendeth his word, and healeth them, and delivereth them from their destructions” ([Psalm 107:19, 20](#), R.V.).

“God is just as willing to restore the sick to health now as when the Holy Spirit spoke these words through the psalmist. And Christ is the same compassionate physician now that He was during His earthly ministry. In Him there is healing balm for every disease, restoring power for every infirmity.”—Page 226.

Broad counsel included the preparation required by the sick person and those who are to pray, the importance of praying in harmony with God’s will, and the wisdom of using the best remedial agencies at hand. To do so would be no denial of our faith.

We have been warned that we are not to depend entirely upon miraculous healing when there is sickness. We must do everything that we can for ourselves. We are to study the nature of the disease, find its cause, and deal with it intelligently, using all the facilities at hand. If God were to heal all sickness when requests are made of Him, this would lead to presumption. Very few would change their way of life that had brought on the sickness. For this reason health institutions were to be established among us where people might not only regain their health through proper treatment but also could be taught how to prevent sickness.

### **Chapter 13—Counterfeit Healings**

However, just as other special blessings made possible through the Holy Spirit have been counterfeited, so have miraculous healings been counterfeited. Ellen White warned:

“Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate....

“Satan will work in a most subtle manner to introduce human inventions clothed with angel garments. But the light from the Word is shining amid the moral darkness; and the Bible will never be superseded by miraculous manifestations. The truth must be studied, it must be searched for as hidden treasure. Wonderful illuminations will not be given aside from the Word, or to take the place of it. Cling to the Word, receive the ingrafted Word, which will make men wise unto salvation....

“The wonderful, the marvelous, will be represented and presented. Through satanic delusions, wonderful miracles, the claims of human agents will be urged. Beware of all this.

“Christ has given warning, so that none need accept falsehood for truth. The only channel through which the Spirit operates is that of the truth.... Our faith and hope are founded, not in feeling, but in God.”—[Selected Messages 2:48, 49](#).

She explained why we cannot depend on miracles today, though Christ often worked through miracles:

“The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. *But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God’s servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.*

[14]

“For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical healing, combined with the teaching of the Word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work. Thus a guarding influence is thrown around those who come to the

sanitariums for treatment.”—[Selected Messages 2:54](#). (Emphasis supplied.)

Many warnings are sounded such as these:

*“The man who makes the working of miracles the test of his faith will find that Satan can, through a species of deceptions, perform wonders that will appear to be genuine miracles....*

“Let not the days pass by and precious opportunities be lost of seeking the Lord with all the heart and mind and soul. If we accept not the truth in the love of it, we may be among the number who will see the miracles wrought by Satan in these last days, and believe them. Many strange things will appear as wonderful miracles, which should be regarded as deceptions manufactured by the father of lies.... Men under the influence of evil spirits will work miracles. They will make people sick by casting their spell upon them, and will then remove the spell, leading others to say that those who were sick have been miraculously healed. This Satan has done again and again.”—[Selected Messages 2:52, 53](#). (Emphasis supplied.)

### **Chapter 14—None Need Be Deceived**

But none need be deceived. We have these assuring words that, while the deceptions and temptations will be strong, those who cling to God’s Word will be safe:

“‘The voice of a stranger’ is the voice of one who neither respects nor obeys God’s holy, just, and good law. Many make great pretensions to holiness, and boast of the wonders they perform in healing the sick, when they do not regard this great standard of righteousness. But through whose power are these cures wrought? Are the eyes of either party opened to their transgressions of the law? and do they take their stand as humble, obedient children, ready to obey all of God’s requirements?

John testifies of the professed children of God: ‘He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him’ (1 John 2:4).

“None need be deceived. The law of God is as sacred as His throne, and by it every man who cometh into the world is to be judged....

“If those through whom cures are performed, are disposed, on account of these manifestations, to excuse their neglect of the law of God, and continue in disobedience, though they have power to any and every extent, it does not follow that they have the great power of God. On the contrary, it is the miracle-working power of the great deceiver. He is a transgressor of the moral law, and employs every device that he can muster to blind men to its true character. We are warned that in the last days he will work with signs and lying wonders. And he will continue these wonders until the close of probation, that he may point to them as evidence that he is an angel of light and not of darkness.

“Brethren, we must beware of the pretended holiness that permits transgression of the law of God. Those cannot be sanctified who trample that law under their feet, and judge themselves by a standard of their own devising.”—[Selected Messages 2:50, 51](#).

How could this matter be placed before us more plainly? How up to date is this counsel! What security it gives God’s people!



## Ellen G. White and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Through the 70 years of her ministry to the Adventist Church and the world, Ellen White closely tied in to the work of the Holy Spirit—so closely that the Spirit gave her 2,000 visions. She could declare, for example:

“While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me.”—[Early Writings, 14](#); and, half a century later, “The Holy Ghost is the author of the Scriptures and of the Spirit of Prophecy.”—[Letter 92, 1900](#) (Notes and Papers, p. 94a).

She repeatedly spoke of being abundantly imbued by the Spirit, but there is no record of her ever speaking in an unknown tongue, or in any tongue but English. In a previous article, in which we examined four recorded experiences in the early history of the church in which speaking in tongues occurred, we found no word of commendation from Ellen White, but neither do we have any knowledge of her repudiating the demonstrations.

In connection with the experience of certain Sabbathkeepers in Portland, Maine, who were exercising what they called the “gift of tongues,” Ellen White characterized the utterances as “unmeaning gibberish ... unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven,” and as being a false talking in tongues (see [Testimonies for the Church 1:412](#)). She wrote of certain Sabbathkeepers who seemed to be charmed as they gave “themselves up to wild, excitable feelings and make unintelligible sounds which they call the gift of tongues.” In this connection she wrote:

“Impressions and feelings are no sure evidence that a person is led by the Lord. Satan will, if he is unsuspected, give feelings and impressions.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:413](#).

[15]

At the same time through the years Ellen White made scores of references to the need of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and experiences in which the Spirit was poured out. *The Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* carries 31 specific references to baptism of the Holy Spirit. In not one instance does she link the ecstatic speaking in tongues with the baptism of the Spirit, either historically or prophetically. In the statements referred to in the 29 pages of the *Index* devoted exclusively to the Holy Spirit she does not make one reference to ecstatic experiences as a sign that God has favored His people with His Spirit.

Evidence of the true baptism of the Spirit, she said often, would manifest itself in increased unity among believers and in new motivation and empowerment to spread the gospel message.

### **Chapter 15—Battle Creek Outpouring**

Referring to an incident in 1893 at Battle Creek College, in which there occurred a special outpouring of the Spirit of God, she wrote from Australia,

“I rejoiced when I heard that the Holy Ghost had been poured out upon our people in America, and I have been anxiously waiting new developments in America as was seen after the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost. I thought similar fruits would be seen, that the missionary spirit of God would burn in the hearts of all upon whom the Spirit of God was manifestly moving.”—Letter B-9a, 1893.

Ellen White clearly indicates the results of the Holy Spirit’s baptism. Note this, written in 1887:

“Baptized with the Spirit of Jesus, there will be a love, a harmony, a meekness, a hiding of the self in Jesus that the wisdom of Christ will be given, the understanding enlightened; that which seems dark will be made clear. The faculties will be enlarged and sanctified. He can lead those He is fitting for translation

to heaven to loftier heights of knowledge and broader views of truth.

“The reason that the Lord can do so little for those who are handling weighty truths is that so many hold these truths apart from their life. They hold them in unrighteousness. Their hands are not clean, their hearts are defiled with sin, and should the Lord work for them in the power of His Spirit corresponding with the magnitude of the truth which He has opened to the understanding, it would be as though the Lord sanctioned sin.”—[Counsels to Writers and Editors](#), 81.

Beautiful statements appear in the *Testimonies*:

“Impress upon all the necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the sanctification of the members of the church, so that they will be living, growing, fruit-bearing trees of the Lord’s planting.”—Volume 6, p. 86.

“God desires to refresh His people by the gift of the Holy Spirit, baptizing them anew in His love. There is no need for a dearth of the Spirit in the church. After Christ’s ascension the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting, praying, believing disciples with a fullness and power that reached every heart. In the future the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God. A holy influence is to go forth to the world from those who are sanctified through the truth. The earth is to be encircled with an atmosphere of grace. The Holy Spirit is to work on human hearts, taking the things of God and showing them to men.”—Volume 9, p. 40.

Ellen White describes what the baptism of the Spirit accomplishes:

“The baptism of the Holy Spirit will dispel human imaginings, will break down self-erected barriers, and will cause to cease the feeling that ‘I am holier than

thou.’ There will be a humble spirit with all, more faith and love; self will not be exalted.... Christ’s spirit, Christ’s example, will be exemplified in His people. We shall follow more closely the ways and works of Jesus.... The love of Jesus will pervade our hearts.”—[That I May Know Him, 114](#).

### **Chapter 16—Evidences of the Baptism Easily Seen**

In reporting on an 1875 camp meeting Ellen White said:

“Our camp meeting from its commencement to the present time has been most solemn and the Spirit of the Lord in a most signal manner has been manifested in the social and preaching meetings....

“I made a practical application of these words [[Luke 19:41, 42](#)] to the people of God. The solemn power of God was upon me and upon the hearers. The tearful eye and earnest looks revealed the true state of feelings.”—[Letter B-16, 1875](#).

Describing a meeting in 1889 she wrote:

“Friday was a precious day.... Everything has been without excitement or extravagance. The leaven of Christ’s righteousness has been introduced into the experience and has energized the soul. Oh, that it may continue to work in its mysterious power until its diffusive influence quickens the lukewarm souls with whom it is brought in contact.

“Softly and silently the power of the divine Spirit does its work, wakening the dulled senses, quickening the soul and arousing its sensibilities, until each member of the church shall indeed be the light of the world.”—[Letter 85, 1889](#).

While in Australia, Ellen White referred to an earlier special outpouring of the Spirit of God at South Lancaster Academy. Why not :

“One place we were laboring in America [South Lancaster, Massachusetts], and there was every youth in our college, ... converted as we were telling them the simple story of the cross, to come to Jesus just as they were. Such an experience....

“It seemed at times at the commencement of the meeting that the glory of God was about to drop upon us, but it did not come only to a few, but at this time like a tidal wave it swept through that congregation, and what a time of rejoicing.

“There were no wild demonstrations, for the praise of God does not lead to that. We never hear of any such things as that in the life of Christ, as jumping up and down and around, and screaming and hollering. No; God’s work appeals to the senses and reason of men and women.

[16]

“There are no such outward demonstrations. But the Spirit of God has an influence upon the human heart that shows itself in the countenance, and the shining of the very face reveals Jesus within. Now it was a miracle of God’s mercy that took every student in that school and transformed them in character, and sent them out as missionaries. Two of the teachers are now in Tahiti as missionaries that were in that meeting. The light of the glory of God was there.”—Ms. 49, 1894.

### **Chapter 17—A Temporary Feeling of Enthusiasm**

In 1900 Ellen White compared the spurious with the genuine experience, pointing out that spurious experiences generate feelings of enthusiasm that soon give out:

“Every influence will be set in operation by satanic agencies, to divert minds from the genuine work that will place men as laborers together with God. All who do not aggressively labor in the warfare where Christ, the mighty general of armies, leads, will be in the opposite party, composing the armies of the prince of dark-

ness. They will lead the people away from the living issues that should occupy their minds and hearts and prepare them to distinguish between the voice of the world and the voice of Jesus Christ. We must ourselves be very watchful and prayerful, that we may be able to understand the voice of the deceiver from the voice of Him who always speaks the truth. Those who are worked by the Holy Spirit are not led by a feeling of enthusiasm, which soon goes out in darkness. The spell of Christ's influence is abiding. 'Be still and know that I am God.' This is a solemn, abiding quietude in God.

“There is danger that all of us will have too much zeal, and too little of Christ's sound wisdom and unquestionable prudence. Every one must stand individually as an active, working agency for the Master, beholding His work as it is given in His word for our practice. Individually, they must think for themselves. With an open Bible before them, they must study under the influence and presence of Jesus Christ, inquiring and knowing for their individual selves what is the way of the Lord.”—[Letter 77, 1900](#).

### **Chapter 18—To Avoid a Sentimental Religion**

In the records of the 1901 General Conference session at Battle Creek we find an interesting statement from Ellen White made at a time when serious, far-reaching decisions had to be made. Having been in Australia for nine years, she was in Battle Creek for her first General Conference session in ten years. Just before the conference opened she spoke of the important decisions that must be made and how the Lord wanted everyone to stand in right relation to Him. She spoke of how there should be more praying and less talking. And she gave the assurance “that God would let His light shine into the heart of everyone who at this meeting will stand in right relation to Him.”

Then she declared:

“Some have said that they thought that at this meeting several days ought to be spent in prayer to God for the Holy Spirit, as at the day of Pentecost. I wish to say to you that the business which may be carried on at this meeting is just as much a part of the service of God as is prayer. The business meeting is to be just as much under the dictation of the Spirit as the prayer meeting. There is danger of us getting a sentimental, impulsive religion.

“Let the business transacted at this meeting stand forth in such sacredness that the heavenly host can approve of it. We are to guard most sacredly the business lines of our work. Every line of business carried on here is to be in accordance with the principles of heaven.

“God wants you to stand in a position where He can breathe upon you the Holy Spirit, where Christ can abide in the heart. He wants you at the beginning of this meeting to lay off whatever of controversy, of strife, of dissension, of murmuring, you have been carrying. What we need is a great deal more of Christ and none of self. The Saviour says, ‘Without me ye can do nothing.’

...

“We have come to a point where God is going to work for His people. He wishes them to be a representative people, distinct from all other peoples in our world. He wants them to stand on vantage ground, because He gave His life that they might stand there. Do not disappoint the Lord.”—Ms. 29, 1901, March 28, 1901.

This incident should be pondered often. The occasion urgently called for the guidance and blessing of the Spirit of God. But Ellen White gave no encouragement to turn away from the work at hand to spend a period in just seeking the Spirit of God. She makes it clear that this experience of seeking the Spirit was one that should permeate our dedicated activities in God’s service.

We may be led to ask, Was there in the hearts of some the feeling that they should be seeking for a demonstration? Ellen White’s counsel directed them to a better way.

## Chapter 19—Other Tongues

Ellen White has made several statements concerning the Holy Spirit's work in preparing men and women to spread the message among those who speak other tongues:

“God dispenses His gifts as it pleases Him. He bestows one gift upon one, and another gift upon another, but all for the good of the whole body. It is in God's order that some shall be of service in one line of work, and others in other lines,—all working under the self-same spirit....

“If in the opening providence of God, it becomes necessary to erect a meeting house in some locality, the Lord ... has given wisdom and skill to perform the necessary work.

“He sends men to carry His truth to people of a strange tongue, and He has sometimes opened the minds of His missionaries, enabling them quickly to learn the language. The very ones whom they have come to help spiritually, will be a help to them in learning the language. By this relation the natives are prepared to hear the gospel message when it is given in their own tongue.”—[The Madison School, 26](#).

On another occasion, while on her two-year sojourn to Europe, during which she was often among the churches, speaking through translators, she reported to the *Review and Herald* one of her itineraries and then declared:

“It is with an earnest longing that I look forward to the time when the events of the day of Pentecost shall be repeated with even greater power than on that occasion. John says, ‘I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.’ Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue. God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve Him, and



can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar, and cause them to become eloquent with his praise.

“Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God’s Word. The stammering tongue will be unloosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on [Acts 2:1-4](#), p. 1055.

## God-given Criteria

How can we distinguish between the genuine and the counterfeit? We may rest assured that God has not left us to flounder in a time when the issues are so acute that if it were possible the very elect would be deceived.

Again and again Ellen White has directed us to God's Word as our security. In God's Word we find the criteria by which we are to judge between the true and the counterfeit, the genuine and the spurious. If there is one point above another on which God has sounded the most solemn and repeated warnings, it is on this point. None need be deceived, although many will be.

Referring to the time of the latter rain in her chapter "Modern Revivals" in *The Great Controversy*, Ellen White said:

"The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming."—Page 464.

Then, in prophetic words she describes how the enemy will intrude himself:

"The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that

God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit.”—*Ibid.*

Elsewhere she emphasized the subtlety of the conflict:

“Satan has come down in these last days, to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. His satanic majesty works miracles in the sight of false prophets, in the sight of men, claiming that he is indeed Christ Himself. Satan gives his power to those who are aiding him in his deceptions; therefore those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the great detector, the law of Jehovah.

“The Lord tells us if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. The sheep’s clothing seems so real, so genuine, that the wolf cannot be discerned only as we go to God’s great moral standard and there find that they are transgressors of the law of Jehovah.”—[The Review and Herald, August 25, 1885.](#)

## Chapter 20—Where Security Is Found

In this statement we find the key to the criteria that will give security to Seventh-day Adventists and others seeking the truth—the law of God. Those who claim salvation and the gifts of the Spirit while disregarding the claims of God’s law are not in harmony with the Bible. There is an important balance between faith and works that the Bible maintains. We hear the cry “Only believe in Jesus and be saved.” But salvation is not that simple. Warns Ellen White:

“The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. ‘Believe, believe,’ is their cry; ‘only believe in Christ and you will be saved. It is all you have to do.’

“While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works. And the apostle John declares, ‘He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.’

[18]

“It is unsafe to trust to feeling or impressions; these are unreliable guides. God’s law is the only correct standard of holiness. It is by this law that character is to be judged. If an inquirer after salvation were to ask, ‘What must I do to inherit eternal life?’ the modern teachers of sanctification would answer, ‘Only believe that Jesus saves you.’ But when Christ was asked this question He said, ‘What is written in the law? How readest thou?’”—[The Review and Herald, October 5, 1886](#).

Ellen White is not teaching salvation by works. No one was more clear than she on this subject:

“Man can not transform himself by the exercise of his will. He possesses no power by which this change can be effected.... The renewing energy must come from God. The change can be made only by the Holy Spirit. All who would be saved, high or low, rich or poor, must submit to the working of this power.”—[Christ’s Object Lessons, 96, 97](#).

“In order to be saved, we must know by experience the meaning of true conversion. It is a fearful mistake for men and women to go on day by day professing to be Christians yet having no right to the name. In God’s sight profession is nothing, position is nothing. He asks, Is the life in harmony with My precepts? There are many who suppose that they are converted but who are not able to bear the test of character presented in the Word of God....

“Let us not forget that in his conversion and sanctification man must cooperate with God. ‘Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,’ the Word declares. ‘For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure’ ([Philippians 2:12, 13](#)).”—[In Heavenly Places, 20](#).

## Chapter 21—Two Oars

She illustrated the relationship between faith and works as follows:

“The Lord calls upon all who think they know what faith is, to be sure that they are not pulling with only one oar, that their little bark is not going round and round, making no progress at all. Faith without intelligent works is dead, being alone. Faith in the healing power of God will not save unless it is combined with good works.”—Ms. 86, 1897.

She also warned,

“If we are faithful in doing our part, in cooperating with Him, God will work through us [to do] the good pleasure of His will. But God cannot work through us if we make no effort. If we gain eternal life, we must work, and work earnestly....

“Let us not be deceived by the oft-repeated assertion, ‘All you have to do is to believe.’ Faith and works are two oars which we must use equally if we [would] press our way up the stream against the current of unbelief.... By faith and good works he [the Christian] keeps his spirituality strong and healthy, and his spiritual strength increases as he strives to work the works of God.”—[The Review and Herald, June 11, 1901](#).

Emphatically she declared that the genuine Spirit-filled experience will be marked with “a conscientious regard for all the commandments of God.”

“Every day our faith should increase. While we say, ‘I know that I am a sinner,’ we can say also, ‘I know I have a Saviour.’ Jesus died for sinners, and He will pardon my sins, if I sincerely repent. It is of no avail to claim to believe on Christ unless we acknowledge

the claims of God's law and daily strive to obey its precepts."—Ms. 25, 1886.

"True sanctification will be evidenced by a conscientious regard for all the commandments of God, by a careful improvement of every talent, by a circumspect conversation, by revealing in every act the meekness of Christ....

"While they profess to be sinless, and boast of their righteousness, the claimants of sanctification teach that men are at liberty to transgress the law of God, and that those who obey its precepts have fallen from grace. A presentation of its claims arouses their opposition, and excites anger and contempt.... It is by the law of God that the sinner is convicted."—[The Review and Herald, October 5, 1886](#).

Ellen White pointed out how hard it is to reach those who feel that they have the evidences of God's acceptance while violating His law. She tells us that even Seventh-day Adventists will be tempted on this point:

"During the meetings at Orebro, I was urged by the Spirit of the Lord to present His law as the great standard of righteousness, and to warn our people against the modern, counterfeit sanctification which has its origin in will-worship rather than in submission to the will of God. This error is fast flooding the world, and as God's witnesses we shall be called to bear a decided testimony against it. It is one of the veriest delusions of the last days, and will prove a temptation to all who believe present truth.

"Those who have not their faith firmly established upon the word of God will be misled. The saddest part of it all is that so few who are deceived by this error ever find their way to the light again."—*Ibid.*

"None who have had the light of truth will enter the city of God as commandment-breakers. His law lies at the foundation of His government in earth and

in heaven. If they have knowingly trampled upon and despised His law on the earth, they will not be taken to heaven to do the same work there; there is no change of character when Christ comes....

“There are to be but two classes upon the earth, the obedient children of God and the disobedient.”—[The Review and Herald, August 25, 1885](#).

## Chapter 22—John Our Example

How careful we must be to guard against being swept off our feet in the modern ecumenical movement that claims to bind together all men everywhere under the banner of love. John the apostle was confronted with this problem and wrote out his warning in his Epistles. His love for souls permeated his writings, yet he refused to compromise:

“The epistles of John breathe the spirit of love. It seems as if he wrote with a pen dipped in love. But when he came in contact with those who were breaking the law of God, yet claiming that they were living without sin, he did not hesitate to warn them of their fearful deception....

“We are authorized to hold in the same estimation as did the beloved disciple those who claim to abide in Christ while living in transgression of God’s law. There exist in these last days evils similar to those that threatened the prosperity of the early church; and the teachings of the apostle John on these points should be carefully heeded....

“While we are to love the souls for whom Christ died, we are to make no compromise with evil. We are not to unite with the rebellious and call this charity [love]. God requires His people in this age of the world to stand for the right as unflinchingly as did John in opposition to soul-destroying errors.

“The apostle teaches that while we should manifest Christian courtesy we are authorized to deal in plain

terms with sin and sinners; that this is not inconsistent with true charity [love].”—[The Acts of the Apostles, 554, 555](#).

How artfully and carefully the great adversary has maneuvered to embarrass those who would stand firm and true to God’s Word. What we are called upon to do will not be easy or make us popular. We must refrain from judging in the wrong sense; we must ever reach out to others with love in our hearts; but our security comes only in keeping before us the criteria that God has established.



## **The Ralph Mackin Story**

[19]

by Arthur L. White

This article is the first of a series of three that relate an interesting chapter in Adventist history. The conversation with the Mackins was taken down steno-graphically at the time of the interview by Clarence C. Crisler, Ellen G. White's leading secretary. It is published here in full for the first time.—Editors.

## Introduction

On Thursday morning, November 12, 1908, Ellen White was at her Elmshaven home busy in her writing room. Here her son, W. C. White, found her and told her there were two persons in the living room below who wished to talk with her. Joining him, she went downstairs to meet Mr. Ralph Mackin and his wife. She found a well-dressed and seemingly very sincere couple in their middle thirties. Mrs. White soon learned that her visitors were earnest students of the Bible and the Testimonies and had come to California from Ohio for the express purpose of learning whether their unusual experience of a few months past was endorsed by the Lord.

They had called on W. C. White the day before, hence he was alert to their mission, but had not disclosed it to his mother. As he left the office to go over to the home, he took Clarence Crisler, Mrs. White's leading secretary, with him to report the interview.

A newspaper story appearing in the Mansfield (Ohio) "Daily Shield" on August 22, not yet seen by Mrs. White or her son, concerning the Mackin experience at the Ohio camp meeting three months before, gives some historical background. The extended bold-face heading reads:

"Gift of tongues causes trouble. Mackin claims to be master of Chinese jargon, which he says came to him from God while his mother became an expert in Yiddish as the result of a vision. Dissension at camp meeting results in the arrest of Mackin, wife and daughter, and two lady companions—they hold services behind prison bars and seem quite proud of distinction."

But now by way of the stenographic report of the interview, let us join the group by the open fireplace in the living room of the Elmshaven home. Most is a verbatim report. In a few instances

Elder Crisler summarized, as he did the introductory remarks. One point we will soon observe is that although Mrs. White repeatedly warned concerning deception in religious matters, it will be so subtle and disguised that if possible the very elect will be deceived. In her approach to this case she listens patiently, asks meaningful questions, but is slow either to accept or to condemn. As we listen attentively we observe her carefully weighing the evidence employing certain criteria. Only as we allow the several participants in the interview to speak at length and in detail can we pick up the full impact. [20]

### Chapter 1—Report of the Interview

Brother and Sister Mackin stated that they had felt impressed by the Holy Spirit to make a special trip West in order to interview Sister White regarding some unusual experiences through which they had been passing. During the Week of Prayer nearly three years before they had united with their little church at Findlay, Ohio, in a special season of seeking God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Ralph Mackin: In the Week of Prayer reading for that year, every article was directed to the people to seek for the Holy Spirit. We set aside in our little church three days for fasting and prayer, and we fasted and prayed for three days—that is, not constantly together, but we felt the need of a deeper work and felt the necessity of coming into possession of more of the Spirit of God. We began to study from that time on the work of the Holy Spirit, from the Bible and the *Testimonies*, and especially from volume 8 and volume 7, and *Early Writings*, and also the little book made up of a collection of leaflets and entitled, *Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers*. This we found to be a most precious volume to us. It shows how in times past men who had been called of God were treated, et cetera.

The message that the Lord gave me particularly was to follow the life of the apostles. In the first place, in [Matthew 18:1-3](#), when the apostles came to the Saviour, we read:

### Chapter 2—Conversion to Jesus

“At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heavens? And Jesus called a little

child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Now, I teach that no matter what the doctrine is—that is—that a man has, that he accepts, that he believes, even though it be the truth itself—that does not necessarily convert him, only to that doctrine but not to Jesus Christ; that the thing we are to do is to seek Jesus for the power of conversion. That is, if we accept the Sabbath truth, the state of the dead, and all those things—I may accept those things, and advocate and teach them, and yet lose heaven, and am *not a converted man, unless I have sought Jesus for His converting power.*

In the next place, I turn to [John 17](#), and read the prayer that Jesus offered before His crucifixion. There He prayed for sanctification. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

Then I turn to [Luke 24](#), to show when they came into possession of that blessing termed sanctification—the apostles—and the experience of their lives; and I read from [verse 45](#) and onward to the end of the chapter:

“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.”

### **Chapter 3—Blessing of Sanctification**

Now, I teach that this blessing is the blessing of sanctification that they received, that He bestowed upon them; and when we seek God—if we are a sinner, until we are converted; if we are converted, then we put up the prayer for the power of sanctification to live clean,

wholesome lives. *Not* that it is the work of an instant: *not* “once sanctified, always sanctified”: that is not true. But we should so firmly and eagerly put up our petition that we receive the blessing. It has the same physiological effect on us—oh, we just want to praise Jesus, and it makes us so loving and gentle and kind. But we notice that the disciples were not ready yet to go out with that blessing to do work for the Master. He told them to tarry until they were endued with power from on high. Then we put up our petition and hold right on by faith, and that which encouraged us to do this was the chapter entitled “The Shaking Time” in *Early Writings*—we hung right on by faith, until great drops of sweat stood on our brow. Believing that the same power that the disciples had was for us today, we were encouraged to hold on.

When that promised blessing came on us, as we put up our petitions to God, we had the same experience as recorded here in [Acts 2](#) in regard to the apostles. When that promised power came upon us we spake in other tongues as the Spirit gave us utterance.

In Toledo, when we were bearing our message on the street, a man who was a Polish Catholic stood on the street when Mrs. Mackin was speaking; and as the Spirit of God came upon her, and spoke to them through her in another language that she could not understand, this Polish gentleman exclaimed, “I know what that lady is speaking. She is speaking in my own tongue of a calamity which is soon to be visited on this city.”

#### Chapter 4—Alleged Foreign Tongue

In other instances, when one comes into this blessing of speaking with tongues, the Lord may give me the same tongue, and we may hold a conversation in the language that the Spirit of God may have given us utterance in. Even three or four may take part in the conversation, and yet it is a foreign tongue to them, and one waits on the other until the other is through; and it is all in order. This is the experience we received, according to the promised blessing.

And then, in accordance with that, [Acts 10](#), Peter’s experience in the home of Cornelius corroborates it; and then [Acts 19](#); and from the study of the Word, in our experience, and the persecution, and everything that has come with it, we have found, so far as we are

able to discern, our experience corroborates with the experience of the early apostles as recorded in the Word.

One instance: We were shut up in the jail at Clyde, Ohio....

*Ellen G. White:* How long ago?

*R. Mackin:* Six or eight weeks ago. In Clyde there lives a very devoted family that we knew there, and that is a credit to our people. The little children—there are four of them—are all taught to pray every evening and morning; and it is very interesting to see the family at the hour of worship.

[21] Now, we went there, and they hung on for this blessing that we had received; and they put up their petition for this blessing, and came into possession of this blessing; and as the Spirit came upon them, some of them wept, and among others that wept was a little girl ten or eleven years old. Well, the grandma came into the room, and she saw the little girl weeping, and she thought I had a mesmeric influence over the child. But a few weeks later the same Spirit came upon the child when we were in the city of Toledo, and gave the message; and so they had evidence that it was not the result of any control that I might have over the child. When I came back to the town, nearly four weeks later, one of the relatives had me arrested for having this mesmeric power, as they term it.

The trial was set, and I simply produced the evidence from the Word of God that we were living in the last days, and, according to [Acts 2](#), in the last days the Lord had promised to pour out the Spirit of God upon all flesh, and the boys and girls were to prophesy.

And by the way, it was through this little girl—the Spirit of God coming upon this child—that we were directed to go to Toledo when we did. When under the influence of the Spirit, she pointed her finger directly at me, and then toward Toledo, and through the Spirit of prophecy she says, “You go to Toledo”: and since this accorded with [Acts 2](#): “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy”: and knowing the family—putting the test to the life—we dared not hesitate to go.

We were told at the same time that we would be put in prison in Toledo. That came to pass, and we had the evidence that we were directed by the Spirit because that which had been prophesied came to pass. We bore our message in the city, and they came and locked us up....

If we are in a delusion, we are honestly there. But if this is from the Spirit of God, we want to follow it....

This Spirit tells us to search the Word; tells us to be earnest; and tells us to be careful about our diet; tells us exactly what you have said.

Now, my wife, the Spirit operates through her, and we believe that this is the gift of prophecy that is to be poured out onto all flesh. This Spirit leads us into kindness and purity of life, and we can't understand it—why—only that as the Word of God has said, that these experiences come as the result of receiving the blessing of the Spirit of God.

They circulate all manner of evil reports about us, which are wholly untrue. We are surprised when we hear them; there is not a syllable of truth in them. But it accords with just what the Word says. The first people to shut us up were the Adventists, at the Ohio camp meeting.

*Ellen G. White:* What party? There are many Adventists.

*R. Mackin:* The Seventh-day Adventists. The year before that, we were not in possession of this blessing fully, but we had come into possession of sufficient of the Spirit of God that we would love to get people into our tent and pray with them—just as in volume 8, you remember, it says:—

“The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife. Those who have not been living in Christian fellowship will draw close to one another. One member working in right lines will lead other members to unite with him in making intercession for the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There will be no confusion, because all will be in harmony with the mind of the Spirit.”—Page 251.

Through this blessing, and our interest in the people, we assisted 26 people to go to the camp meeting who otherwise could not have gone—where they might get strength. This work went on until this last year.

## Chapter 5—The Camp Meeting Experience

Before we went onto the campground—we did not go until Friday—my wife and two other ladies (my mother, and another lady, Sister Edwards, a sister-in-law to the president of the conference)—before we went upon the campground this last year, they three were seeking the Lord. I had gone downtown on an errand; and the Spirit of God told her (Mrs. Mackin) to go on the campground, and there sing; and there He would tell her what to sing.

And she wept just like a child, and just seemed like she could not stand it because that the Lord showed her the condition of our people—soon the plagues would fall, and they were unready. There was no meeting in progress, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon her as she went onto the campground, and (turning to Mrs. Mackin) you may tell her what words you sang.

*Mrs. Mackin:* The Lord put this burden upon me. I could not stand it. I wanted to tell it so bad, and sing that song so bad. And I could not get rid of it till I would do it. “Oh, pray,” says I to Sister Edwards; and so I stood on the campground, and I sang just what the Lord gave me. The Lord—this is what I sang:—

“He is coming; He is coming; Get ready; Get ready.”

And then that statement in *Early Writings*—

“How many I saw coming up to the falling of the plagues without a shelter. Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

These are the words I sang. I sang them over and over again. They could hear it all over the campground, and they came together; but before that, the Lord showed me how they would wring their hands as the plagues were falling. The Lord can show anything in just a moment, better than He could tell it to us. And so He showed me how they would wring their hands, and that put on me a greater burden than ever. Well, that is when they arrested us.

I asked one of the ministers, on the witness stand—he was a man from Pennsylvania—“Would you consider that singing sufficient to disturb a camp meeting?” He said, “I never heard such singing in my life. It just thrilled me through and through.” This is what everybody says. It is in a most beautiful tone of voice, and it just seems to lift us from off the earth. It is when the singing is extemporaneous—dictated by the Spirit—that it is the most wonderful.



If you have any light for us ...

*Ellen G. White:* I do not know that I have anything special that I could say. There will be things that will transpire at the very close of this earth's history, it has been presented to me, similar to some of the things that you have represented; but I cannot say anything on these points now.

*R. Mackin:* Is there any question, Brother White, or anything now?

*W. C. White:* I do not know as there is anything more than to pray that the Lord will give Mother some word, and then take time for matters to develop. It is better, in presenting anything to her, to present the subject briefly and clearly, and then perhaps have another interview with her later on.

*R. Mackin:* We are fasting and praying. If we are in a delusion, we want to know it, just as much as if we were in the right.

*Mrs. Mackin:* Our brethren certainly think that we are in a delusion.

## The Word-Not Feeling

In part one of this series we found ourselves in the living room at Elmshaven in November, 1908, before the open fireplace with Ralph Mackin and his wife interviewing Ellen G. White concerning their experience in which they felt the Holy Spirit had been bestowed upon them in special power leading to the speaking in tongues, prophesying, et cetera. They had come to the point in their interview where they were discussing Mrs. Mackin's singing under the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Ellen G. White:* What place was this that you speak of, where this singing was?

*R. Mackin:* Mansfield, Ohio, at the camp meeting.

*Ellen G. White:* Our people—Sabbathkeeping people?

*R. Mackin:* Yes, our own people.

*W. C. White:* Was that verse that Mrs. Mackin sang last night extemporaneous or a known hymn? [At the prayer meeting in the sanitarium chapel Brother Mackin had given his testimony in the praise service and was followed by Mrs. Mackin, who sang.]

*Mrs. R. Mackin:* Oh, that was one of our published hymns. It is in the new *Christ in Song*.

*R. Mackin:* From hearing that you could scarcely gain an idea of her singing when the words are given to her by the Holy Spirit. The most wonderful thing is when she sings "Glory!" She says when she sings it she seems to be in the presence of Jesus, with the angels. She repeats the word "Glory!" over and over again. She has been tested with the piano, and musicians say it is a freak—the lowness and the highness with which she does it. She cannot do it only as she prays in the Spirit and special power comes upon her.

*Mrs. Mackin:* We don't have this power, only as we seek Jesus.

*R. Mackin:* The Lord has given us power, Sister White, to cast out demons. Many people are possessed with demons. I remember a statement you wrote a few years ago that many were possessed with

demons as verily as they were in the days of Christ. When we are in a meeting, and these demons are in a meeting, they may cause people to do queer things. I noticed in the Bible when Jesus was in the Temple that demons at once came out. “Hold thy peace, and come out of him.” The Lord instructs us to lay the people down, lest the demons throw them when they come out. We found in the beginning that when we begin to rebuke these demons they oftentimes close the eyes of these people, and will sometimes cause them to bark like a dog, and stick out their tongue; but as we continue to rebuke them, why, the eyes open and they become calm, and the demons—

Now it is through the gift of the Spirit that the Lord tells us when the demons are gone, that they are all gone. One lady in particular had six demons, and she said she just felt them when they came out—it just seemed to pull her in every part of the body.

But our brethren say that they can’t be in the last days; but we find that it coincides with just what the Saviour said in the last chapter of Mark, in that great commission: “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;” and so on.

*Mrs. Mackin:* We did not get this all at once, either.

*R. Mackin:* Read the remaining verses of Mark: “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.” Our experience, so far as we are able to discern, corroborates with the Bible. Here is something that I would like to read [here Brother Mackin read extracts, including the following, from an article in the *Review and Herald*, by Sister White, published in the issue for April 11, 1899, and entitled, “The Newcastle Camp-Meeting”]:

“During the night of the first Sabbath of the Newcastle meeting, I seemed to be in meeting, presenting the necessity and importance of our receiving the Spirit.

This was the burden of my labor—the opening of our hearts to the Holy Spirit.”

[No record was made by the stenographer as to the exact place where Brother Mackin began reading this article, and where he ceased reading; but at least a considerable portion was read.]

## Chapter 6—What Is the Evidence?

*R. Mackin:* In connection with the receiving of power from on high there is a question, it seems to me, just as pertinent now as in the days of the apostles—What is the evidence? If we receive it, will it not have the same physiological effect on us as it did back there? It can be expected that we shall speak as the Spirit gives us utterance.

*Ellen G. White:* In the future we shall have special tokens of the influence of the Spirit of God—especially at times when our enemies are the strongest against us. The time will come when we shall see some strange things; but just in what way—whether similar to some of the experiences of the disciples after they received the Holy Spirit following the ascension of Christ—I cannot say.

*R. Mackin:* We will continually pray to the Lord about this, and ask Him to give you light in regard to it. So I leave you our address, and if you have anything for us after this, we shall be glad to receive it.

*W. C. White:* You will probably spend a few days here, will you not?

*R. Mackin:* If the Holy Spirit tells us that our work is done now, we will go; if He tells us to tarry, we will tarry. It leads us. As I have presented this message to different congregations the Spirit of God has witnessed to it, and many weep, and they say, “Oh, we need power, we need help, and this is the power promised, and let us seek God.”

*Mrs. Mackin:* The real test is love—[1 Corinthians 13](#).

[23] *R. Mackin:* Satan wants to hinder this work. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. I present it from *Early Writings* when the angels are about to loose the four winds, Jesus gazes in pity on the remnant, and with uplifted hands cries, “My blood, Father,

My blood, My blood, My blood!” He repeats it four times; for His people are still unsealed. He commissions an angel to fly swiftly to the four angels holding the four winds, with the message, “Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold! until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.” And as I bring these things before the congregation it is the most earnest and devoted ones that it seems to affect, mostly.

Sister White then began talking, and continued for about half an hour. She told incident after incident connected with her early labors shortly after the passing of the time in 1844. Her experiences with unusual forms of error in those days in later years led her to be fearful of anything savoring of a spirit of fanaticism.

As Sister White continued, she told of some who had strange exercisings of the body and of others who were governed largely by their own impressions. Some thought it wrong to work. Still others believed that the righteous dead had been raised to eternal life. A few sought to cultivate a spirit of humility by creeping on the floor, like little children. Some would dance, and sing “Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory, glory,” over and over again. Sometimes a person would jump up and down on the floor, with hands uplifted, praising God; and this would be kept up for as long as half an hour at a time.

Among those who took part in these extraordinary forms of fanaticism were some who had once been faithful, God-fearing brethren and sisters. The strange exercisings of body and mind were carried to such lengths that in a few places the officers of the law felt compelled to restrain them by casting them into prison. The cause of God was thus brought into disrepute and it took years to outlive the influence that these exhibitions of fanaticism had upon the general public.

Sister White further told of how she was called upon repeatedly to meet this fanaticism squarely and to rebuke it sternly in the name of the Lord. She emphasized the fact that we have a great work to do in the world, that our strength with the people lies in the power that accompanies a clear presentation of the Word of the living God. The law of Jehovah is to be exalted and made honorable; and the various features of the third angel’s message are to be plainly outlined before the people that all may have an opportunity to hear the truth for this time and to decide whether to obey God rather than man.

If we as a church were to give place to any form of fanaticism, the minds of unbelievers would be diverted from the living Word to the doings of mortal men, and there would appear more of the human than the divine. Besides, many would be disgusted by that which to their minds seemed unnatural and bordering on the fanatical. Thus the proclamation of the message for this time would be sadly hindered. The Holy Spirit works in a manner that commends itself to the good judgment of the people.

In the midst of Sister White's account of her early experiences with fanaticism Brother Mackin made the following proposal:

*R. Mackin:* If we would now have the spirit of prayer, and this power would come upon my wife, would you be able to discern whether this was of the Lord or not?

*Ellen G. White:* I could not tell you anything about it. But I am telling you these experiences in order that you may know what we have passed through. We tried in every way possible to rid the church of this evil. We declared in the name of the Lord God of Israel that God does not work through His children in a way that brings the truth into disrepute, and that unnecessarily creates deep-seated prejudice and bitter opposition. In our work we must take a straightforward course and seek to reach the people where they are.

### Chapter 7—Rebuking Fanaticism

*R. Mackin:* I remember reading very much of this in volume 1 of *Testimonies for the Church*—your experience in rebuking fanaticism, and of the cause in the East when they set the time, in 1855, I believe.

*Ellen G. White:* Some would dance up and down, singing, “Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory.” Sometimes I would sit still until they got through, and then I would rise and say: This is not the way the Lord works. He does not make impressions in this way. We must direct the minds of the people to the Word as the foundation of our faith.

I was but a mere child at that time; and yet I had to bear my testimony repeatedly against these strange workings. And ever since that time I have sought to be very, very careful lest something of this sort should come in again among our people. Any manifestation

of fanaticism takes the mind away from the evidence of truth—the Word itself.

You might take a consistent course, but those who would be influenced by you might take a very inconsistent course, and as a result we should very soon have our hands full of something that would make it almost impossible to give unbelievers the right impression of our message and work. We must go to the people with the solid Word of God; and when they receive that Word, the Holy Spirit may come, but it always comes, as I have stated before, in a way that commends itself to the judgment of the people. In our speaking, our singing, and in all our spiritual exercises, we are to reveal that calmness and dignity and godly fear that actuates every true child of God.

There is constant danger of allowing something to come into our midst that we may regard as the working of the Holy Spirit, but that in reality is the fruit of a spirit of fanaticism. So long as we allow the enemy of truth to lead us into a wrong way we cannot hope to reach the honest in heart with the third angel's message. We are to be sanctified through obedience to the truth.

I am afraid of anything that would have a tendency to turn the mind away from the solid evidences of the truth as revealed in God's Word. I am afraid of it; I am afraid of it. We must bring our minds within the bounds of reason, lest the enemy so come in as to set everything in a disorderly way. There are persons of an excitable temperament who are easily led into fanaticism; and should we allow anything to come into our churches that would lead such persons into error we would soon see these errors carried to extreme lengths; and then because of the course of these disorderly elements a stigma would rest upon the whole body of Seventh-day Adventists.

I have been studying how to get some of these early experiences into print again, so that more of our people may be informed; for I have long known that fanaticism will be manifest again, in different ways. We are to strengthen our position by dwelling on the Word, and by avoiding all oddities and strange exercisings that some would be very quick to catch up and practice. If we were to allow confusion to come into our ranks, we could not bind off our work as we should. We are trying to bind it off now, in every way possible.

I thought I must relate these things to you.

[24] *R. Mackin:* Well, now, that which you have stated does not correspond with our experience. We have been very cautious in this matter, and we find that the experience through which we have passed, and which we have endeavored to outline briefly to you this morning, tallies exactly with the experience of God's servants of old as given in the Word.

*Ellen G. White:* During the years of Christ's ministry on earth godly women assisted in the work that the Saviour and His disciples were carrying forward. If those who were opposing this work could have found anything out of the regular order in the conduct of these women, it would have closed the work at once. But while women were laboring with Christ and the apostles, the entire work was conducted on so high a plane as to be above the shadow of a suspicion. No occasion for any accusation could be found. The minds of all were directed to the Scriptures rather than to individuals. The truth was proclaimed intelligently, and so plainly that all could understand.

Now I am afraid to have anything of a fanatical nature brought in among our people. There are many, many who must be sanctified; but they are to be sanctified through obedience to the message of truth. I am writing on this subject today. In this message there is a beautiful consistency that appeals to the judgment. We cannot allow excitable elements among us to display themselves in a way that would destroy our influence with those whom we wish to reach with the truth. It took us years to outlive the unfavorable impression that unbelievers gained of Adventists through their knowledge of the strange and wicked workings of fanatical elements among us during the early years of our existence as a separate people.

*R. Mackin:* Well, now, this that you are giving us, would this be considered testimony under the Spirit, or is it simply counsel—of relating your experience?

*Ellen G. White:* I am giving you history.

*R. Mackin:* But you do not say that that applies to our case now, until you have further light on it?

*Ellen G. White:* I could not say; but it appears to be along that line, as I am afraid of it. It appears to be along that line that I have met again and again.



*W. C. White:* It is now twelve o'clock. Would you not like to rest before dinner?

*Ellen G. White:* Well, I could not let you go before I had said what I have said. I would say: Be guarded. Do not let anything appear that savors of fanaticism, and that others would act out. There are some who are eager to make a show, and they will act out whatever you may do—whether it be of the same tenor or not. I have been very careful not to stir up anything like strangeness among our people.

*R. Mackin:* But it is true that when the Holy Spirit does come, as is stated in your works, that many will turn against it, and declare that it is fanaticism?

*Ellen G. White:* Of course they will; and for this reason we ought to be very guarded. It is through the *Word*—not feeling, not excitement—that we want to influence the people to obey the truth. On the platform of God's Word we can stand with safety, The living Word is replete with evidence, and a wonderful power accompanies its proclamation in our world.

*R. Mackin:* Well, we must not tire you.

*Mrs. Mackin:* Praise the Lord!

*Ellen G. White* (rising, and shaking hands): I want the Spirit of the Lord to be with you, and you, and me. We are to be just like God's little children. The power of His grace must not be misunderstood. We must have it in all meekness and humility and lowliness of mind, that God may make the impression Himself upon the minds of the people. I hope the Lord will bless you and give you a solid foundation, which foundation is the Word of the living God.

And thus the interview ended. But this is not the end of the story. On Thursday night, December 11, a vision was given to Ellen White that clearly defined the Mackin experience.

## **“Calculated to Lead Astray”**

This is the third article in a series of three telling the story of Ralph Mackin and his wife, who believed that the Holy Spirit had been bestowed upon them in special power, leading them to speak in tongues and to prophesy. The first two reported an interview that the Mackins had with Ellen White, which was stenographically recorded. In this third article Ellen White tells what was shown her in vision concerning the Mackin case.

The visit of Ralph Mackin and his wife with Ellen G. White occupied the last half of Thursday morning, November 12, 1908. Plans were that Ellen White with three members of her home and office family should drive on Friday by team the 35 miles to Healdsburg for services on Sabbath and Sunday. The interview over, her mind turned to the work of the weekend. Then there was a trip the next week to Berkeley with several meetings over that weekend.

To Elder A. G. Daniells, president of the General Conference, W. C. White wrote on that Thursday afternoon after the interview:

“This forenoon Mother and I and Brother Crisler spent a couple of hours in an interview with Brother and Sister Mackin of Findlay, Ohio. They came across the continent, they say, to see Mother. I had an interview with them in my office yesterday morning and advised them to come down this morning to see Mother. They seem to be very nice-spirited people, but their experience is somewhat peculiar.

“They had been hoping and praying that Mother would have a message of encouragement for them. In this they were somewhat disappointed. She told them that their case had never been presented to her in vision, and then she talked to them for half an hour, pointing out the necessity of caution, lest they be led astray by

their feelings, believing it to be the guidance of the Lord. They have just returned to the Sanitarium, saying that they can not tell what they will do next, but that they will follow the guidance of the Lord.”—November 12, 1908.

On that Friday the Mackins went to San Jose, and seemingly quite unmindful of the counsel given and cautions sounded by Ellen White began holding meetings there. They reported to the Clyde, Ohio, church that they had had an interview with Sister White and had something good to report on their return home. [25]

Perhaps the Lord was giving the Mackins an opportunity to show their response to Ellen White’s earnest counsel and also to permit the development of circumstances that would show everyone the real fruitage of their work. Trouble soon began to brew in San Jose. Inquiries regarding the interview began to come to the staff at Elmshaven.

On November 26, two weeks after the interview, Ellen White wrote to S. N. Haskell, president of the California Conference:

“Dear Brother: Two weeks ago today, while I was writing, my son W. C. White came into my room and stated that there were two persons below who wished to speak with me. I went downstairs into our sitting room and there met a man and his wife who claim to follow the Word of God and to believe the Testimonies. They have had an unusual experience during the past two or three years. They seemed to be honest-hearted people.

“I listened while they related some of their experiences, and then I told them something of the work we had to do in meeting and opposing fanaticism soon after the passing of the time when we expected to see our Lord. During those trying days some of our most precious believers were led into fanaticism. I said further that before the end we would see strange manifestations by those who professed to be led by the Holy Spirit. There are those who will treat as something of great importance these peculiar manifestations, which are not

of God, but which are calculated to divert the minds of many away from the teachings of the Word.

“In this stage of our history we must be very careful to guard against everything that savors of fanaticism and disorder. We must guard against all peculiar exercises that would be likely to stir up the minds of unbelievers, and lead them to think that as a people we are led by impulse, and delight in noise and confusion accompanied by eccentricities of action. In the last days the enemy of present truth will bring in manifestations that are not in harmony with the workings of the Spirit, but are calculated to lead astray those who stand ready to take up with something new and strange.

“I told this brother and his wife that the experience through which I passed in my youth, shortly after the passing of the time in 1844, had led me to be very, very cautious about accepting anything similar to that which we then met and rebuked in the name of the Lord.

“No greater harm could be done to the work of God at this time than for us to allow a spirit of fanaticism to come into our churches, accompanied by strange workings which are incorrectly supposed to be operations of the Spirit of God.

“As this brother and his wife outlined their experiences, which they claim have come to them as the result of receiving the Holy Ghost with apostolic power, it seemed to be a facsimile of that which we were called to meet and correct in our early experience.

“Toward the close of our interview Brother Mackin proposed that we unite in prayer, with the thought that possibly while in prayer his wife would be exercised as they had described to me, and that then I might be able to discern whether this was of the Lord or not. To this I could not consent, because I have been instructed that when one offers to exhibit these peculiar manifestations, this is a decided evidence that it is not the work of God.

“We must not permit these experiences to lead us to feel discouraged. Such experiences will come to us from

time to time. Let us give no place to strange exercisings, which really take the mind away from the deep movings of the Holy Spirit. God’s work is ever characterized by calmness and dignity. We cannot afford to sanction anything that would bring in confusion and weaken our zeal in regard to the great work that God has given us to do in the world to prepare for the second coming of Christ.”—[Letter 338, 1908](#). (Published in [Selected Messages 2:41, 42](#).)

The next week Elder W. C. White reported to Elder Haskell concerning the Mackins’ visit. He told how they were confident that the Lord had sent them there, and that some message had been given to Sister White regarding them and their work.

When Ellen White met the Mackins on that Thursday morning, in answer to inquiry as to whether Sister White had ever seen in vision or had any message for them regarding their special work, she said she had not seen them in vision nor had she any revelation from the Lord regarding their work.

W. C. White continues:

“In this visit I could not discern anything to encourage them regarding their views that they were divinely called to a specific work. Here are the facts:

“(1) They were confident that the Lord had called them to do a very special work, and that a message would be given to Sister White vindicating and establishing that work. In this, they were wrong. No such message has been given.

“(2) They were confident that they had been shown to Sister White in vision, and that when they came into her presence she would recognize them.

“(3) They expected words of encouragement. But what they received were words of caution.

“In view of these facts, they can not with justice refer to their visit with Mrs. Ellen G. White and her son, W. C. White, as an encouragement in their claims

to a special mission and work.”—W. C. White letter, Dec. 2, 1908.

And then God spoke through vision giving specific light. Possibly there were two visions, one on the night of December 10 and the other a few days before. What was revealed to Ellen White led her to write two letters on Friday, December 11—one to the Mackins and one to “Our Brethren in California.” We present them in this order. The second letter was published in the *Pacific Union Recorder*.

### Chapter 8—A Sad Mistake

“Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Mackin:

“Dear Brother and Sister: Recently, in visions of the night, there were opened before me some matters that I must communicate to you. I have been shown that you are making some sad mistakes. In your study of the Scriptures and of the Testimonies, you have come to wrong conclusions. The Lord’s work would be greatly misunderstood if you should continue to labor as you have begun. You place a false interpretation upon the Word of God, and upon the printed Testimonies; and then you seek to carry on a strange work in accordance with your conception of their meaning. You suppose that all you do is for the glory of God, but you are deceiving yourselves and deceiving others.

[26] “Your wife, in speech, in song, and in strange exhibitions that are not in accordance with the genuine work of the Holy Spirit, is helping to bring in a phase of fanaticism that would do great injury to the cause of God, if allowed any place in our churches.

“You have even supposed that power is given you to cast out devils. Through your influence over the human mind men and women are led to believe that they are possessed of devils, and that the Lord has appointed you as His agents for casting out these evil spirits.

“I have been shown that just such phases of error as I was compelled to meet among Advent believers after the passing of the time in 1844, will be repeated in these last days. In our early experience, I had to go from place to place and bear message after message to disappointed companies of believers. The evidences accompanying

my messages were so great that the honest in heart received as truth the words that were spoken. The power of God was revealed in a marked manner, and men and women were freed from the baleful influence of fanaticism and disorder, and were brought into the unity of the faith.

“My brother and sister, I have a message for you: you are starting on a false supposition. There is much of self woven into your exhibitions. Satan will come in with bewitching power, through these exhibitions. It is high time that you call a halt. If God had given you a special message for His people, you would walk and work in all humility—not as if you were on the stage of a theater, but in the meekness of a follower of the lowly Jesus of Nazareth. You would carry an influence altogether different from that which you have been carrying. You would be anchored on the Rock, Christ Jesus.

“My dear young friends, your souls are precious in the sight of Heaven. Christ has bought you with His own precious blood, and I do not want you to be indulging a false hope, and working in false lines. You are certainly on a false track now, and I beg of you, for your souls’ sake, to imperil no longer the cause of truth for these last days. For your own souls’ sake, consider that the manner in which you are working is not the way God’s cause is to be advanced. The sincere desire to do others good will lead the Christian worker to put away all thought of bringing into the message of present truth any strange teachings leading men and women into fanaticism. At this period of the world’s history, we must exercise the greatest of care in this respect.

“Some of the phases of experience through which you are passing, not only endanger your own souls, but the souls of many others; because you appeal to the precious words of Christ as recorded in the Scriptures, and to the Testimonies, to vouch for the genuineness of your message. In supposing that the precious Word, which is verity and truth, and the Testimonies that the Lord has given for His people, are your authority, you are deceived. You are moved by wrong impulses, and are bracing up yourselves with declarations that mislead. You attempt to make the truth of God sustain false sentiments and incorrect actions that are inconsistent and fanatical. This makes tenfold, yes, twentyfold harder the work of the church

in acquainting the people with the truths of the third angel's message."—[Letter 358, 1908](#). (Published in part in [Selected Messages 2:44-46](#).)

“To Our Brethren in California:

“Last night instruction was given me for our people. I seemed to be in a meeting where representations were being made of the strange work of Brother Mackin and wife. I was instructed that it was a work similar to that which was carried on in Orrington, in the State of Maine, and in various other places after the passing of the time in 1844. I was bidden to speak decidedly against this fanatical work.

[27]

### Chapter 9—Labeled Fanaticism

“I was shown that it was not the Spirit of the Lord that was inspiring Brother and Sister Mackin, but the same spirit of fanaticism that is ever seeking entrance into the remnant church. Their application of Scripture to their peculiar exercises is Scripture misapplied. The work of declaring persons possessed of the devil, and then praying with them and pretending to cast out the evil spirits, is fanaticism which will bring into disrepute any church which sanctions such work.

“I was shown that we must give no encouragement to these demonstrations, but must guard the people with a decided testimony against that which would bring a stain upon the name of Seventh-day Adventists, and destroy the confidence of the people in the message of truth which they must bear to the world. The Lord has done a great work for His people in placing them on vantage ground. It is the duty of the church to cherish its influence. Precious are the words, ‘Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me’ ([John 5:39](#)). The words of inspiration carefully studied and prayerfully obeyed, will thoroughly furnish unto all good works.

“As a denomination we need to look more continually to God for guidance. We are living in an evil age. The perils of the last days are upon us. Because iniquity abounds, Satan presumes to bring in all kinds of delusive theories upon those who have tried to walk humbly with God, and who are distrustful of self. Shall self-



confident, fanatical men come to these humble souls assuring them that they are possessed of evil spirits, and after praying with them, affirm that the devil is cast out? Such are not the manifestations of the Spirit of God, but of another spirit.

“I called upon every church to beware of being led to think evil of those who, because distrustful of self, fear that they have not the Holy Spirit. There are those who have followed their own ways instead of the ways of God. They have not acknowledged the light that God has graciously given: and because of this they have lost the power to distinguish between darkness and light. There are many who have heard much in regard to the path they ought to follow, but who ignore the requirements God makes of them. Their light does not shine in works that reveal the principles of truth and holiness. It is this class who in time of test will accept falsehood and erroneous theories for the truth of God.

“Great light has been given to the people of God. Let our people awake, and go forward to perfection. You will be exposed to the fallacies of satanic agencies. Fearful waves of fanaticism will come. But God will deliver the people who will earnestly seek the Lord, and consecrate themselves to His service.”—[Pacific Union Recorder, December 31, 1908](#). (Republished in [Selected Messages 2:46, 47](#).)

At this point we lose sight of the Mackins. Their names disappear from our records. Any influence they may have had with our church members was undercut by Ellen White’s statement that she had been shown that it was not the Spirit of the Lord that was inspiring the Mackins.

In concluding this series of articles on the Mackin story, it may be in place to observe that Ellen White has written much concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit. She portrays the fruitage of this baptism as calm, practical adjuncts to Christian life and witnessing, and not in the field of the ecstatic.

## How The Mackins Got Into The San Jose Church

Since the publication of the three articles in the *Review & Herald* the White Estate has received information from Mrs. Irene Moon-Winn, who resided in San Jose at the time, as to how Ralph Mackin gained access to the San Jose church.

Elder D. T. Fero, the pastor, had to be away on Sabbath, November 14, and he arranged for one of the members to take the service. On Sabbath morning as our brother who was to speak entered the church he met a gentleman who had a Bible, a *Christ in Song* and a volume of the Testimonies and gave his name as Ralph Mackin.

“Are you a preacher?” he was asked.

“Oh yes,” was the reply. “I have just come from Battle Creek.” How fortunate, it seemed, that a minister from the East was in their midst and he was invited to preach.

In his sermon Mackin told the congregation that he had just visited Sister White at St. Helena and that his wife had had a vision there. He reported that Sister White was in full harmony with them, told them that theirs was a good work, and wished them God’s blessing. During the sermon he suggested that if any of the congregation would like to have a special prayer meeting after church he would be glad to join them. Some people stayed, and they had a little prayer meeting.

When members who had gone home returned at three o’clock for the young people’s meeting, they were surprised to find the meeting under Mr. Mackin’s leadership still in progress. Some of the people were singing, some were praying, some were crying. Mackin announced there would be a prayer meeting at the church that night. Quite a crowd turned out, and he continued every night until Wednesday when Elder Fero returned, discovered the situation, and terminated Mackin’s meetings in the church.

Mrs. Winn reports that the people “seemed to think that this was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.” For a period of time Mackin conducted meetings in the homes of sympathizers.

# Two Outstanding Revival Experiences

[28]

By Arthur L. White

In the March 15 to April 26, 1973, issues of the REVIEW. Elder White presented Ellen White's counsel on charismatic experiences.

Closely related to this is counsel concerning revivals. In two experiences, one in Healdsburg, California, in 1885 (dealt with in this article), and the other at Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1892 and 1893 (to be dealt with next week) there was a marked outpouring of the Holy Spirit, particularly upon the students in the two colleges.

Some branded the experience "fanaticism." In a number of communications Ellen White pointed out that the experiences were genuine, but showed that when God works, Satan intrudes with a counterfeit. EDITORS

## Introduction

Down through the years there have been times of special revival among Seventh-day Adventists as a result of which great blessings have come to the church. In connection with some of these experiences fanaticism intruded its ugly head, which led to misunderstandings, criticism, and restraints. To avoid the counterfeit some rejected the genuine.

The counsels that Ellen White gave in connection with some of these experiences are worthy of review, for she indicates that revivals similar to some of the past must come to the church if it is to be prepared to receive the latter rain. Clearly she depicts the manner in which Satan works to neutralize the work of God. Two notable experiences of revival concerning which there is ample

documentation are those that took place in Healdsburg in 1885 and at Battle Creek College in 1892 and 1893.

*The Healdsburg Experience.* The Healdsburg church was one of the early California churches. The establishment of the college there in 1882 made it a denominational center, which it remained until the college was moved to Angwin in 1909. The school at Healdsburg was our second educational institution, pioneering several important lines of educational endeavor. It was at Healdsburg that we had our first boarding house, or dormitory. It was at Healdsburg that Bible classes first became a part of the regular school curriculum. It was at Healdsburg that we launched out in certain lines of industrial training.

Ellen White purchased a home within four blocks of the school and resided there until she went to Europe, some three years later. In the summer of 1885, being deeply concerned for the welfare of the church, she made earnest appeals, calling the members to a deeper religious experience. But the response was less than what she had expected and hoped and prayed for. She earnestly longed for the church at Healdsburg—the church with which the one training center on the Pacific Coast was connected—to triumph and set an example.

In early July, 1885, Ellen White left to begin her journey to Europe. Six weeks later Elder E. P. Daniels (not to be confused with Elder Arthur G. Daniells), who because of certain indebtedness had asked to be excused from his work in the ministry and was conducting a school in stenography in Oakland, spent the weekend in Healdsburg with his family. Daniels was a man of somewhat unstable character, but a good speaker and an earnest man. Prof. W. C. Grainger, the principal of our Healdsburg school, invited him to take the Sabbath morning service in the Healdsburg church.

Reporting the meeting in a letter to Ellen White, Grainger says:

“I noticed that the people seemed greatly moved, so I invited him to speak again in the evening. He consented. We then appointed meetings for Sunday and Sunday evening. Sunday a call was made for those who desired to seek the Lord. When nearly the entire church came forward, I said to Brother Daniels, ‘It will never do to stop these meetings. What shall we do?’ He said

he would go down to Oakland and make arrangements with his classes so that he could come back and remain through the week and carry forward the interest. That was five weeks ago. The interest still continues.”—W. C. Grainger to Ellen G. White, Sept. 17, 1885.

Earlier in his letter Grainger wrote:

“We have had a glorious revival in our church. It has not been surface work, but I feel sure it is deep and lasting. Confessions were full and free. The Lord has given us another opportunity and we have not slighted His mercy. I feel sure brighter days are coming for Healdsburg church. The cloud has lifted.”—*Ibid.*

In describing the meetings, he pointed out that—

“There is no excitement or noisy demonstrations, but there has been a quiet but earnest seeking of God. I never witnessed a more earnest movement than this has been. All old troubles have been fully settled and that without any pressures other than the straight preaching of the Word of God.”—*Ibid.*

He closes his letter with the news that—

“There are better times for us at the students’ home and in the school. To God belongs the glory. I pray God we may never get under such a cloud of darkness again.... There is a good interest among outsiders. Quite a number of new converts have been made. Among those who have united with the church are my wife’s mother and cousin.”—*Ibid.*

Another, I. L. Decker, writing to Ellen White reports: “Oh, such an awakening as this church has had! The Spirit of the Lord has been with him [E. P. Daniels] with might and power until everyone in the house felt the presence until they could not resist it. Old

hardened sinners that have resisted all their lives have broken all to pieces.”—Letter to Ellen G. White, Sept. 7, 1885.

Decker further reports that there were children’s meetings, old folks’ meetings, and young people’s meetings all going on at the same time. Others gave similar reports of the revival.

## Part 1—Revivals-the Time When God and Satan Work

### Chapter 1—Something Went Wrong

But some things went wrong, and a few months later as Ellen White was able to assess the situation and as God gave her light in regard to it, she wrote to the church at Healdsburg:

“The Lord has wrought in your midst and Satan who is ever active watching for a favorable opportunity, has intruded himself to mingle fanaticism with God’s work, to sow tares with the good seed.”—[Letter 21, 1886](#) to the Healdsburg Church.

And she admonished:

“We need to live very close to Jesus in order to discern the precious from the spurious.”—*Ibid.*

While God was able to use Elder Daniels in an effective way, Satan took advantage of some of his weaknesses. Ellen White speaks of these as she writes to a conference leader dealing with the delicate situation as the revival progressed.

Describing Elder Daniels she said:

“He is hasty; he feels strongly and acts impulsively.... He is not a perfect man, but I know how God regards him,—as a man of erring, impulsive disposition, but one who loves and fears Him, and one who will reach hearts if he has those in whom he can have confidence as counselors to help him.”—[Letter 10, 1885](#), written Nov. 4, 1885.

Unfortunately, as the revival got well started Daniels was carried away with the success for which God should have had the glory. There are no evidences of excesses. No ecstatic experiences, such as the speaking in tongues, were reported. But unbalanced elements came in. Under the fervor of the new experience certain pet concepts were brought to the fore. Daniels did not favor the taking up of Sabbath school offerings. This became a point of excited emphasis, with resulting antiestablishment reactions. Meetings were held, the attendance of which was confined strictly to those who enjoyed the revival experience.

Another matter that was greatly exaggerated was the fact that Daniels allowed the members of the Healdsburg church who were so wrapped up in the revival experience to give him personal financial support. He was known by his ministering brethren as one who was rather irresponsible in money matters.

## **Chapter 2—The Meetings Stopped**

It is understandable, then, that when reports of events at Healdsburg came to conference leaders, some of them went to Healdsburg. They looked into the matter, met with Daniels, and decided that the meetings should be discontinued. This brought the whole situation to a crisis. Daniels agreed to follow the counsel of his brethren, but a large part of the church was left very unhappy.

When Ellen White, in Europe, learned of the manner in which the meetings had been cut short, she wrote to conference leaders:

“In regard to Elder [E.P.] Daniels, he is finite; he is not infallible. But there is such a disposition to judge others. They do not keep in view that God works by whom He will. Christ is to be seen as officiating through the delegated servant. The great evil is that the mind becomes narrowed and loses sight of the chief Worker; it gets on the instrument and decides the people cannot be advantaged unless the manners and the habits of the worker meet their own pattern exactly. They regard the speaker as a man, merely, not a messenger whom God may use to deliver a message or do a certain work.



“God has chosen man to do a certain work. His mental capacities may be weak, but then the evidence is more apparent that God works. His speech may not be eloquent, but that is no evidence that he has not a message from God. His knowledge may be limited, but in many cases God can work with his wisdom through such an agent, and the power be seen of God, more than through one possessing natural and acquired abilities and who knows it and has confidence in himself, in his judgment, in his knowledge, in his manner of address.”—[Letter 76, 1886](#).

Then Ellen White explained:

“But E. P. Daniels is an acceptable speaker and as I have been shown a man of not the deepest judgment, one who needed a counselor; but he is a man who could come close to the hearts of the people and one who possesses sympathy and personal efforts that would penetrate the barriers built up about the soul that resisted the influence of the truth. God works in and through frail instruments, and He is not discerned.”—*Ibid.*

At another time, writing of the revival to one of the leaders in California, Ellen White expressed the wish that many similar revivals would break out:

“Just such a work as I hope has been done in Healdsburg, will be done in every church in our land, and through ways and means that we do not look for. Let this work go forward everywhere. Let sins be confessed. Let iniquities be revealed. Let it extend far and near. This work will be done.”—[Letter 10, 1885](#).

Concerning such revivals she wrote rather surprising words—words that we may well ponder:

“Men may pronounce against it because it does not come in their exact line. *Fanaticism will also come in as*

*it always has done when God works.* The net will gather in its meshes both bad and good, but who will dare to cast the whole thing overboard, because all are not of the right kind of fish. I feel deeply over this matter. I do not doubt but that Elder Daniels has erred in some things, but has his error been of that character that it makes him unworthy of a place among God's people?"—*Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

[30] As Ellen White looked back on the experience at Healdsburg, on several occasions she wrote relative to it and the final outcome. In so doing she has given us some counsels and clues that should be helpful in the days to come. In an undated letter written to church leaders in California early in 1886, she said:

“I wish to say some things in reference to the revival at Healdsburg. I wish to say I am not in harmony with your treatment of this matter. That there were fanatical ones who pressed into that work I would not deny. *But if you move in the future as you have done in this matter, you may be assured of one thing, you will condemn the work of the latter rain when it shall come. For you will see at that time far greater evidences of fanaticism.*

“I believe the work at Healdsburg to be genuine. I believe there were the deep movings of the Spirit of God. I believe unconsecrated, unconverted ones urged themselves to the front. The enemy always works through those of unbalanced minds and imperfect characters. I do not believe that Elder [E.P.] Daniels moved wisely in all things, and it would be a new chapter in the experience of workers if there was not a mistake made in some things....

“*When an effort shall be made in the work of God, Satan will be on the ground to urge himself to notice, but shall it be the work of ministers to stretch out the hand and say, This must go no farther, for it is not the work of God? ...*

“I wish you could see what a delicate, dangerous matter it is to meddle with the work of God unless you have light from heaven to guide you in your decisions....

“I fear you have grieved the Spirit of God. *The fruits were good in the work at Healdsburg, but the spurious was brought in as well as the genuine.* Then it needed men of discernment, of calm, well-balanced minds, to come in when there was peril and indiscretion, to have a molding influence upon the work. You could have done this.”—[Letter 76, 1886](#). (Italics supplied.)

At about this same time she wrote to friends in Healdsburg and again reviewed the experience of revival that was cut short. This statement sums up much of what she wrote to various individuals concerning the matter and gives a good résumé:

“In regard to the revival meetings at Healdsburg, it surely bears fruit of being the work of God, but in every such revival Satan gains advantages by coming in through unconsecrated persons who have had little or no experience in a life of piety and godliness. These elements will press to the front and on such occasions will be the most forward, the most zealous and enthusiastic.

“The very ones who could not be trusted with any important religious interest would take any burden, shoulder any responsibility, as though they were men and women who had earned a reputation through a life of self-denial, of self-sacrifice and devotion, that they were capable of deciding important questions and leading the church.

“To put confidence in these would be like committing big vessels into the hands of children to manage on the high seas. Such persons need the transforming grace of Christ daily in order to bear fruit to the glory of God. ‘Learn of me,’ says Christ, ‘for I am meek and lowly of heart.’ Such persons have never learned this lesson. If they would wear Christ’s yoke and lift Christ’s burdens

then they would understand better how they might help and bless others.

“Now I suppose these individuals were the very ones who were the most officious in the meetings in Healdsburg. From what I have been shown I would suppose that they were of that number that composed the private meetings, where only those who were ‘wholly the Lord’s’ met. I know what I am talking about, for these matters have been laid open before me several times; and yet I would say to my brethren and sisters in Healdsburg, I believe the Spirit of God has done a work for you.

“Hold fast everything that is good. Have no spirit of Phariseeism; have no loftiness and self-confidence. The lower you lie at the foot of the cross, the more distinct and the more precious will be your views of Christ our Redeemer. The one grace that is so much wanted with everyone who professes to be a follower of Christ is meekness, humility, humbleness of mind. One view of Jesus sends self-importance to the winds....

“I have a deep interest for the church in Healdsburg. Their prosperity depends upon the right hold that they have of Jesus. The presence of personal home piety will tell upon their own character, upon the character of their children, and upon their behavior toward the animals which they use.”—[Letter 9, 1886](#).

Having reviewed this experience we might well join Ellen White in her observation that it is

“a delicate, dangerous matter ... to meddle with the work of God.” And we are reminded of Ellen White’s words: “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 196](#).

## Part 2—Revival in Battle Creek

As the 1892-1893 school year opened at Battle Creek College, the faculty seemed to sense that it would be a year of special significance. W. W. Prescott, the president of the college, reports that when they first met as faculty before the opening of the school year “we felt that the time had come that there should be a change in our work.... We therefore took up the work this year with the expectation that God would bless in a special manner and would honor our faith for unusual power and success in the work.”

The teachers in this setting approached their work with the conviction that “every opportunity must be used to the best possible advantage.” In a short time the faculty was confronted with usual disciplinary problems. It was in the midst of their concern as to how to deal with four students who had disobeyed the rules of the school that the revival began. On Tuesday evening, November 29, two students involved in the discipline at the beginning of the study hour after considerable heart struggle, under the influence of the Spirit of God gave themselves fully to God. One of the young men had been at the school for a number of years and was an avowed infidel. [31] The other young man had persistently refused every invitation to a Christian life. The two lived in different dormitories and neither knew of the experience of the other. Nor was the experience known to the other students at the college.

Prescott explains:

“There seemed to come upon the students in their private rooms during the evening study hour at which time these young men made their move, such a spirit as they could not resist. They were impelled to leave their rooms and seek help. Some were for a time in great distress of mind. Teachers who were at hand went to work at once to help those who desired help.”

The president further states that—“For several hours nothing else occupied the attention of both the teachers and the students. Without any prearranged plans, praise meetings were held in the private rooms and in the parlor and one after another yielded to the movings of the Spirit.”

Prescott was away at the time visiting Walla Walla College, of which he was also president. But under the guidance of the teachers on the grounds, the revival “work went on until toward midnight, and closed in singing in a most hearty manner, ‘Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow.’”

Interestingly enough, the mail that afternoon had brought some articles from Sister White, who was in Australia. In the absence of the president, they were delivered to Mrs. Prescott, who read them and sent them over to the college to be read at the chapel the next day. These messages were most timely, and the work of revival continued. Classes were dispensed with, and as Prescott reports, “The power of God was present in a very marked manner.”

And he continues:

“Those who had long been held in sin seemed ready to respond to the invitation to accept Christ and yield themselves to the service of God. There was no excitement, but the deep movings of the Spirit of God were plainly discerned.”

For several days the work of revival took over the school program, and as Prescott reports:

“The work was followed up with such instruction, public and private, as the situation seemed to demand, and the results in general seem permanent. Thus the work went forward until my return from Walla Walla.”

The chapel exercises sometimes stretched out to four hours and the evening worship periods would continue until ten o’clock at night.

“I have never known of any similar experience,” declared Prescott. “Everyone recognized it as the work

of the Spirit which while it convinced of sin was still a comforter. No one gave up to discouragement, but there was such a hungering and thirsting after righteousness as has not been experienced before in our midst.”

And then he declares: “The work has gone on steadily since and there has been such a taking hold of God as we have never known before.”

As the report continues it tells of regular meetings being held in Battle Creek even during the year-end holiday. Prescott reported the students’ experiences during the vacation “visiting among the churches in the State, endeavoring to carry to others the light and blessing which themselves have received.”

The president and his associate faculty members were overjoyed, and he declared:

“We feel that we can now go forward in the work as never before. Teachers are united in their work, and the teachers and students are bound together in such ties as have never held them before. I am sure that this will be the beginning of an experience which will grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.”

### **Chapter 3—What Went Wrong?**

Regrettably Prescott’s optimism was not fulfilled, and one may well ask why. Oh, yes, the effects of revival were felt on into early 1893 and through the General Conference session of that year and then faded out. In the absence of other records, we turn to Ellen White’s comments written in 1893 and 1894. God sent His angel to give her the information. It is summed up somewhat in a communication written in 1893 addressed to “The Teachers and Students of Our College in Battle Creek and in All Our Educational Institutions.”

It opens with these words:

“Many prayers have been offered for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and recently there have been demonstrations of gladness of heart in those who have looked intently and undividedly to Jesus

Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. There has been in your midst repentance and confession of sin, with true remorse of soul. There was a sense of the all-sufficient sacrifice, and the realizing of the fulfillment of the promise in the pardon, in transferring the live coal from the altar of atonement and touching the lips, which was the pledge of forgiveness. Lips defiled with sin were expressing the loftiest praise. Hosanna! Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna! in the highest! ...

“But what returns have our young people made to the Lord? Has it been as it was with the people of Israel on the most solemn occasion described in Exodus? Moses had gone up into the mount to receive instruction from the Lord, and the whole congregation should have been in humble attitude before God; but instead of that they ate and drank and rose up to play. Has there been a similar experience in Battle Creek? Have not many lost their hold on God? Did the exercise in games of football bring the participants into more close relation to God?

“In the night season messages have been given to me to give to you in Battle Creek, and to all our schools. While it is in the order of God that the physical powers shall be trained as well as the mental, yet the physical exercise should in character be in complete harmony with the lessons given by Jesus Christ to His disciples. That which is given to the world should be seen in the lives of Christians; so that in education and in self-training the heavenly intelligences should not record in the books that the students and the teachers in our schools are ‘lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.’”—[Manuscript 51, 1893](#).

The last paragraph and the counsel that follows may be found in [Fundamentals of Christian Education, 220-230](#).

#### **Chapter 4—A Time of Light and Darkness**

Another reference is made to the experience at Battle Creek, one which in some respects sounds much like what was written at the time of the Healdsburg experience. This statement opens the chapter in *Selected Messages*, book 1, beginning on [page 129](#), entitled “Safeguarding the New Experience.”

It reads:



“After the outpouring of the Spirit of God in Battle Creek it was proved in the college that a time of great spiritual light is also a time of corresponding spiritual darkness. Satan and his legions of satanic agencies are on the ground, pressing their powers upon every soul to make of none effect the showers of grace that have come from heaven to revive and quicken the dormant energies into decided action to impart that which God has imparted. Had all the many souls, then enlightened, gone to work at once to impart to others that which God had given to them for that very purpose, more light would have been given, more power bestowed. God does not give light merely for one person but that he may diffuse light, and God be glorified.

*“In every age seasons of spiritual revival and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit have been followed by spiritual darkness and prevailing corruptions. Taking into account that which God has done in opportunities and privileges and blessings in Battle Creek, the church has not made honorable progress in doing her work, and God’s blessing will not rest upon the church in advancing still more light until they use the light as God has directed in His Word. The light that would shine in clear and distinct rays will grow dim amid the moral darkness. The aggressive power of the truth of God is dependent upon the cooperation of the human agent with God in piety, in zeal, in unselfish efforts to get the light of truth before others.”—Manuscript 45, 1893. (Italics supplied.)*

[32]

In a letter written in 1893 Ellen White went into detail in opening up just what had taken place and why. Here is what she wrote:

“There have been things written to me in regard to the movings of the Spirit of God at the last conference [1893], and at the college, which clearly indicate that because these blessings were not lived up to, minds have been confused, and that which was light from heaven

has been called excitement. I have been made sad to have this matter viewed in this light. *We must be very careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in pronouncing the ministration of His Holy Spirit a species of fanaticism.* How shall we understand the working of the Spirit of God if it was not revealed in clear and unmistakable lines, not only in Battle Creek but in many places?

“I am not surprised that anyone should be confused at the after result. But in my experience of the past forty-nine years I have seen much of these things, and I have known that God has wrought in a marked manner; and let no one venture to say this is not the Spirit of God. *It is just that which we are authorized to believe and pray for, for God is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than parents are to give good gifts unto their children.*

“But the Holy Spirit is not for the human agent to work; it is to work and use the human agent. *That God did abundantly bless the students in the school and the church, I have not one doubt; but a period of great light and the outpouring of the Spirit is quite generally followed by a time of great darkness. Why? Because the enemy works with all his deceiving energies to make of none effect the deep movings of the Spirit of God on the human subject.*

“When the students at the school went into their match games and football playing, when they became absorbed in the amusement question, *Satan saw it a good time to step in and make of none effect the Holy Spirit of God in molding and using the human subject.* Had the teachers to a man done their duty, had they realized their accountability, had they stood in moral independence before God, had they used the ability which God had given them according to the sanctification of the Spirit through the love of the truth, they would have had spiritual strength and divine enlightenment to press on and on and upward on the ladder of progress reach-

ing heavenward. The fact is evident that they did not appreciate or walk in the light or follow the Light of the world.

“It is an easy matter to idle away, talk and play away, the Holy Spirit’s influence. To walk in the light is to keep moving onward in the direction of light. If the one blessed becomes negligent and inattentive and does not watch unto prayer, if he does not lift the cross and bear the yoke of Christ, if his love of amusements and strivings for the mastery absorb his power or ability, then God is not made the first and best and last in everything, and Satan comes in to act his part in playing the game of life for his soul. He can play much more earnestly than they can play, and make deep-laid plots for the ruin of the soul....

“The results after the working of the Spirit of God in Battle Creek are not because of fanaticism, but because those who were blessed did not show forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light; and when the earth is lightened with the glory of God, some will not know what it is, and from whence it came, because they misapplied and misinterpreted the Spirit shed upon them.

“God is a jealous God of His own glory. He will not honor those who dishonor Him. Some persons living in the light ought to have instructed these souls young in experience to walk in the light after they had received the light. I wish I had time to write more fully, but I fear I have not.”—[Selected Messages 1:130-132](#). (Italics supplied.)

In the days that followed, Ellen White made a number of references to the experience at Battle Creek. She did so in two articles she prepared for the *Review and Herald*, one appearing in the issue of January 30, 1894, and the other on February 6. Limited space in this article precludes our quoting further. Those interested may read the Review articles as published in [Selected Messages 1:133-143](#). She makes clear the provisions that God has made for the outpouring

of the Holy Spirit and she points out those factors that hinder the work as God would have it done. She depicts the appreciative child of God who wishes to retain the experience of special blessing as one who not only walks in the light, but works diligently for those about him.

Then she wrote:

“If there is any one thing in the world in which we may manifest enthusiasm, it may be manifested in seeking the salvation of souls for whom Christ died.”—

[Selected Messages 1:139](#).

It should be noted that in the revival experiences both at Healdsburg and Battle Creek, as reported in these articles and supported so abundantly with records of the times, there was no ecstatic experiences heralding the reception of the Holy Spirit—no speaking in unknown tongues. In each case, both in the witness of those who were present and in Ellen White’s dealing with the matter, it is indicated that there was a calm, solemn work, unmarked by special excitement. In both cases fanaticism intruded itself, and Ellen White indicates that in every genuine experience we may expect that there will be some with a fanatical nature who will join in and carry things to extremes. But even so in these two experiences it did not manifest itself in speaking in tongues. There may be lessons here for us to ponder.