

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

# THERE SHINES A LIGHT

A landscape photograph of a sunset over a field. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow across the sky and the field. A wooden fence runs along the right side of the field, leading the eye towards the horizon. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

ARTHUR W. SPALDING



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# **There Shines A Light**

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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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## Contents

Information about this Book .....	i
Chapter 1—Light of the Ages .....	iv
Chapter 2—But a Child .....	xi
Chapter 3—His Hand upon Her .....	xviii
Chapter 4—“Like Streams of Light” .....	xxv
Chapter 5—“Bound in the Bundle of Life” .....	xxxiii
Chapter 6—“As thy Soul Prospereth” .....	xl
Chapter 7—“Taught of God” .....	xliv
Chapter 8—“The Pen of a Ready Writer” .....	li
Chapter 9—“Into All the World” .....	lvii
Chapter 10—Her Works Follow Her .....	lxv
And Israel Mourned .....	lxx

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*The Life and Work of Ellen G. White*  
By Arthur W. Spalding

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Light of the Ages	5
But a Child	14
His Hand Upon Her	23
“Like Streams of Light”	32
“Bound in the Bundle of Life”	43
“As Thy Soul Prospereth”	52
“Taught of God”	59
“The Pen of a Ready Writer”	67
“Into All the World”	75
Her Works Follow Her	85
And Israel Mourned	91

[5]

## Chapter 1—Light of the Ages

I saw,” declared a young prince of Jerusalem, beginning his description of the most stupendous spectacle ever afforded man. “In the year that King Uzziah died” [715 B.C.], “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.” That young man was a seer.

Born to the purple, as Jewish tradition affirms, he yet looked not upon earthly rank and pomp as his mark. He reached for a higher prize—through faith and loyalty, through suffering and contumely, to know his God and to do His will. And there was granted him the honor and the glory to see, in vision, the ineffable God upon His throne. Covering it were the six-winged seraphim, crying:

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts:  
The whole earth is full of his glory!”

And at the music and thunder of their voices, the temple shook, and smoke of incense filled the air. Awed and overwhelmed, the young man cried:

“Woe is me! for I am undone;  
Because I am a man of unclean lips,

[6]

And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips:  
For mine eyes have seen the King,  
The Lord of hosts.”

Then from the throne there flew to him a seraph, having in his hand a live coal from the altar, which he laid upon the young man’s lips, and declared:



“Lo, this hath touched thy lips,  
And thine iniquity is taken away,  
And thy sin purged.”

Immediately he heard the voice of God, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

Then he cried: “Here am I! Send me!” His offer accepted, the seer at once became the prophet, the speaker, the herald—a prophet standing midway in time between Moses and Christ, at the apex of the prophetic line, foreseeing and foretelling the Messiah; in vision, in grandeur of concept, in eloquence, in power, one of the greatest of the prophets: Isaiah! <sup>1</sup>

In its primary sense, “seer” means “one who sees.” But long ago, in the childhood of the race, men applied the term to one who sees God, or who sees things which God reveals, and who then gives to men what he has seen. The Hebrew people, to whom “were committed the oracles of God,” <sup>2</sup> were advantaged through nearly all their history by having among them seers or prophets, who spoke to them the messages of God.

A prophet is one who “speaks forth,” proclaims, declares. This term was, in early usage, restricted to one who spoke for God, or for a God. Other peoples than the Israelites, other religions than the Jewish and the Christian, and other gods than Jehovah God, had prophets. <sup>3</sup> But because Israel had the most notable prophets, who taught the ways of the true God; and because those prophets foretold the history of the world and of the Christian church, and the advent of the Messiah, the Christ, around whom and upon whom Christianity is built; the term “prophet,” though used occasionally in a secular sense, in chief part holds for us the concept of a spokesman for God. [7]

The terms “seer” and “prophet” were for a period in Israel used interchangeably, though perhaps with some distinction, “prophet” becoming the broader and more notable term, and finally absorbing

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<sup>1</sup>Isaiah 6:1-8.

<sup>2</sup>Romans 3:1, 2.

<sup>3</sup>1 Kings 18:19; Numbers 22.

“seer.”<sup>4</sup> Other terms than these two were occasionally used for God’s spokesmen, such as “man of God,” “sons of the prophets,” “son of man,” “my messenger.”<sup>5</sup> But prophet (and prophetess) are the most prominent.

Why do men need seers and prophets? In the beginning there was no such need; for man could come face to face with God, could see Him, and hear Him, and speak with Him. Adam and Eve in their innocence had free access to their Creator, who was also their Teacher.<sup>6</sup> But after they had sinned, they and their descendants were increasingly unable to see God face to face, or to hear His voice speaking to them. Sin cannot live in the full glory of the presence of God, and for sinful man to see Him, unveiled, would mean death. Even Moses, greatest of Adam’s descendants, though he saw God, was not permitted to see His face.<sup>7</sup>

[8] To maintain contact, God chose holy men, men who were nearest to perfect obedience, and who also possessed traits and abilities peculiarly fitted to channel His word; and in visions and dreams He communicated through them His will and teaching. As their lives were controlled by the Holy Spirit and were lived in harmony with God, they received divine instruction which formed the basis of their messages, spoken and written.<sup>8</sup> These men were the seers, the prophets.

Time has rolled on nigh six thousand years since that sad day when our first parents, sinning, were driven from their Garden home, and in His mercy and love God set up the office of the seer and prophet. During all this long stretch of time, the seers and prophets have not failed to connect heaven with earth, and to serve as the links between God and man. Sometimes the line stretched thin over long periods; sometimes the chain thickened; but either the living messenger or his written testimony bridged the centuries, and there remained “the more sure word of prophecy.”<sup>9</sup> Some of these messages have been preserved in sacred Scripture, and constitute

<sup>4</sup>1 Samuel 9:9; 2 Samuel 24:11; 2 Kings 17:13; Amos 7:12-15.

<sup>5</sup>1 Samuel 2:27; 2 Kings 2:3; Daniel 8:17; Malachi 3:1; Judges 4:4.

<sup>6</sup>Genesis 2, 3.

<sup>7</sup>Exodus 33:18-23.

<sup>8</sup>Numbers 12:6; 2 Peter 1:21.

<sup>9</sup>2 Peter 1:19.

our Bible. This holy Book, though containing but a fraction of the instruction given by God through the ages, is sufficient to acquaint us with Him and to guide us to salvation and in right living. <sup>10</sup>

But it is evident that the men who speak through the Bible have not been the only spokesmen for God. Their careers and missions cover only about a third of the history of the race. Before them, and among them, and since them, God has had other seers and prophets who have represented Him to their generations. Doubtless Adam might be called the first seer; for, though he lost his high estate, since claimed by no man save Jesus Christ, yet through repentance and faith Adam was received back into favor, and served as the teacher of his children. But the first prophet so designated in Scripture is Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who prophesied of the coming of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Noah was a prophet; Abraham is called a prophet; so is Aaron. Indeed, all three children of Amram and Jochebed—Miriam, Aaron, and Moses—exercised the prophetic gift. <sup>12</sup>

[9]

Miriam was not the only woman among the prophets. We note, besides, such personages as the unnamed wife of Isaiah, and Deborah, Huldah, and Anna. <sup>13</sup> In the beginning of the Christian era, moreover, mention is made of the four daughters of Philip the evangelist, “which did prophesy”: and Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, mentions women who prophesied. <sup>14</sup>

We commonly think of prophecy, and prophesying, and the prophet as all relating to prediction of future events. This was indeed a part of the work of the most prominent prophets, from Moses to Daniel in the old dispensation, and from Christ to John in the new. But prophets also had other functions, and some of the prophets are not known to have made any predictions. Most of them are presented to us as being engaged in other work, predictions being incidental or supplementary. The primitive meaning of prophecy is, to speak forth; and this was manifested not alone in foretelling the future, but also in counseling in the present.

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<sup>10</sup> Timothy 3:15-17.

<sup>11</sup> Jude 14.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Peter 3:19, 20; Genesis 20:7; Exodus 7:1; Deuteronomy 34:10; Exodus 15:20.

<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 8:3; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; Luke 2:36.

<sup>14</sup> Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5.

[10] Take the four major prophets. Isaiah was a counselor of kings at the court of Judah, for the most part honored and heeded, though at last perhaps he died a martyr. Jeremiah, a priest, in the next century likewise gave his testimony to kings, as well as to priests and people and to other nations; but the morals of court and people had deteriorated, and he met strong opposition, imprisonment, and finally exile. Ezekiel, likewise a priest, began his prophetic duties while an exile in Chaldea, in the second captivity under Nebuchadnezzar; his messages were chiefly to the skeptical elders of his people. Daniel, among the captives in the second transplantation, was successively a student, head of the body of Babylon's wise men, and, after a season of neglect, prime minister in the court of Persia. These prophets all uttered predictions, both of doom and of glory in the kingdom of the Messiah. Daniel's prophecies were the most comprehensive and systematic, extending to the end of the world. But all four of these prophets were also counselors, men of business, historians, statesmen.

The prophet, therefore, is not alone a foreteller of events to come; he is, or he may be, a man of affairs, giving wise counsel upon many matters. Some prophets, like Nathan and Gad in the courts of David and Solomon, were counselors who transmitted the testimonies of God, but of whom there is no record that they ever uttered predictions.

The prophets of God were marked by humility, simplicity, austerity, divine learning, and devotion. Their dress was simple, even coarse: of Isaiah, Elijah, and John the Baptist we read that their garments were of sackcloth or of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle; and it is intimated that the dress of the other prophets was in keeping.<sup>15</sup> The food of Elijah was meager, bread and flesh, and at the last bread alone; that of John the Baptist was locusts and wild honey. It is presumable that other prophets were equally abstemious.<sup>16</sup>

They were not boastful or ambitious. Some of them, like Amos and John the Baptist, even disclaimed the status of prophet; and Jeremiah voiced his own creed when he advised his secretary, Baruch, not to seek great things for himself.<sup>17</sup> While the prophets

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<sup>15</sup>Isaiah 20:2; 2 Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4; Zechariah 13:4.

<sup>16</sup>1 Kings 17:6; 9:5-8; Mark 1:6.

<sup>17</sup>Amos 7:14; John 1:19-23; Jeremiah 45:5.

differed in endowment, estate, and training from the simple herdsman to the counselor at court, in the essential learning they were at one, and their aim was expressed by Paul in his counsel to Timothy: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”<sup>18</sup> [11]

The spirit and gift of prophecy belong also to the Christian church, and are necessary for its health, activity, and growth.<sup>19</sup> Jesus Christ, the Founder and Head of the church, was not only the supreme Prophet, in His work as teacher, healer, and revealer of God, as Moses foretold,<sup>20</sup> but He filled the predictive office as well, foretelling many events, including His death and resurrection, and finally the history of His people to the time and event of His second coming.<sup>21</sup>

His apostles followed in His steps, as ministers to men; and notable predictive prophecies were given by Paul, Peter, and John.<sup>22</sup> After the apostolic age, while there continued to be men in the true church who, by the nature and power of their teachings, warnings, and reforms, may be recognized as prophets, the prediction of future events was chiefly confined to the study and interpretation of the prophecies already contained in the Bible, particularly Daniel in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New. A great array of expositors of these prophecies confronts us through all the Medieval Age and the Reformation.<sup>23</sup>

But in God’s foreknowledge and providence, the last generation of men, in the closing act of the great drama of the ages, was to have a new manifestation of the prophetic gift. The twelfth chapter of Revelation contains a condensed prophetic history of the Christian church, under the figure of a woman “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,” who, “being with child cried, travailing in birth,” and who “brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.” Before her appeared “a great red dragon,” waiting “to devour her” [12]

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<sup>18</sup>2 Timothy 2:15.

<sup>19</sup>1 Corinthians 12:27, 28; Ephesians 4:8-15.

<sup>20</sup>Deuteronomy 18:15-19.

<sup>21</sup>Matthew 20:18; 24; Mark 13; Luke 21.

<sup>22</sup>1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 2 Thessalonians 2; 2 Peter 3; Revelation.

<sup>23</sup>See Leroy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vols. I and II.

child as soon as it was born.” But “her child was caught up unto God,” while “the woman fled into the wilderness,” where she was protected and fed for “a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”

To the student of prophecy this narrative in figurative language is readily interpreted. The woman is the church; her child is the Saviour, Jesus. The dragon is the devil, mortal enemy of Christ; but Jesus is caught away from him, ascending into heaven. The church then endures a sentence of persecution for 1260 years, filling the Dark Ages.

The revelation then goes on to tell of the continuing war between the dragon and Michael, until we are carried into the last stage, when, with an excess of fury, “the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed,” the last-day church, “which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” This last church is represented as keeping all the commandments of God and as possessing the testimony of Jesus. “What is that?” wondered the prophet who received the revelation. And the angel answered his unspoken question: “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”<sup>24</sup>

[13] While in the broad meaning of “prophet,” as inspired teacher and leader and spokesman, there may in our age have been, may now be, and may in the future be, prophets in the church. “Seventh-day Adventists believe that in special measure, not only in foreknowledge and revelation but in counsel and guidance, this gift of prophecy was bestowed upon one of the founders of their church, Ellen Gould Harmon-White. And in brief compass, to acquaint the inquiring public, the following pages are devoted to an account of her life and work.”

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Revelation 19:10.

<sup>25</sup>2 Peter 1:19.

## Chapter 2—But a Child

[14]

The ancient town of Gorham, fourteen miles west and north of Portland, Maine, grew up around a fort built in 1744 for protection against the Indians. After the fashion of New England towns, it lengthened itself along the road leading to the older settlements, until it came to anchor four miles nearer Portland, at the site of the modern little city of Gorham; and in time the linking street withered away, leaving the remnants of the original town a small country community.

There, on November 26, 1827, were born the twin baby girls, Ellen and Elizabeth, youngest of the eight children of Robert and Eunice Harmon. The main part of the house in which they were born, a story-and-a-half structure, still stands, as the rear portion of a more modern and larger dwelling. It looks out over a far stretch of rolling countryside, dotted with lakes, and away to the White Mountains in New Hampshire, a beautiful and inspiring setting for the childhood of a messenger for God.

The twins, while sharing many admirable traits, were different in temperament. Elizabeth was a confiding child, placid but given to tears; Ellen was self-reliant, buoyant, sociable, courageous, and persevering. She was regarded by her parents with peculiar interest, and they entertained high hopes of a brilliant career for her. She herself, from her first school days, entertained the ambition to become a teacher. The family were deeply religious, members of the Methodist communion, in which Robert and Eunice Harmon led their children in spiritual service, as one after the other they entered the church.

[15]

Father Harmon was a hatter, in the days when industries had not yet besieged the gates of the factory, but were housed and conducted largely in the homes of the artisans; and all the Harmon family, even to the smallest children, were early inducted into phases of the business. Doubtless influenced both by the greater commercial opportunities and by the better schools for his children, Robert

Harmon, in the early 1830's, moved his family to the city of Portland, there continuing and expanding his home industry.

At the Brackett Street School, next to the city common (for Portland was still in the tradition of the New England village), Ellen and Elizabeth spent several happy, successful years in getting the rudiments of education.

[16] They were approaching their tenth birthday, in the fall of 1837, when there occurred a crushing catastrophe which seemed to all concerned to put an end to the hopes and aspirations if not to the life of Ellen. Leaving school at the close of the day, with a schoolmate, the twins were hastening across the common toward home, when an older girl, thirteen years of age, who had become incensed over some trifle, followed them with name-calling and threats. Answering to their home training, they said no word in reply, but ran on. Ellen, however, turned to see how near their adversary was; and a heavy stone which the girl had thrown struck Ellen in the face, and she fell unconscious.

Soon reviving, but covered with blood which flowed freely from her wound, she was carried home, and there sank into a coma which lasted for three weeks. Almost no one thought she would live; but her calm and devout mother felt a conviction that she was to be spared for some purpose of God's.

When she at last awoke, Ellen had no memory of her accident, and was puzzled as to the cause of her illness. As she gained a little strength, her curiosity was aroused by hearing callers murmur, "What a pity!" and, "I should never have known her." Calling for a mirror, she gazed in astonishment and dismay at a countenance wholly strange to her. The bones of her nose had been smashed, completely altering her looks. Indeed, so different was her appearance that her father, absent on a business trip to the South, upon his return quite ignored her in the family circle, and inquired, "Where is my little Ellen?"

The crude surgery of the time could afford no remedy, and the child soon recognized that she must go through life with this disfigurement. Indeed, if modern skill in plastic surgery had then been available, it is a question whether she could have endured the necessary operations; for her nervous system was shattered, a state



reinforced, doubtless, by the helpless fatalism of her elders and the aversion of many of her child acquaintances.

She was slow in recovering; but as soon as she seemed strong enough, her determination to continue her education induced her parents to enter her again in school. To no avail! Words swam before her eyes, and her trembling hand could form only an infant's crude scrawl. Her teachers soon advised her to quit school until her health should have improved. But that desirable state seemed to retreat as she advanced. [17]

Her hopes crushed, the ten-year-old girl entered upon an experience of six years which, though she knew it not, was to mature her and prepare her for her mission in life as the normal experience of her age could not have done. At first, in agony of mind, at times rebellious but quickly repentant, yet without assurance of hope, perplexed and dismayed by such tenets of the creed as everlasting torment for the damned, she fought in her child mind a dogged but despairing battle for righteousness, sure that she could never reach the state of perfection demanded of the Christian. Nor could she conceive of such a philosophy as Tennyson in her day expressed:

“Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.”

In her simplicity she knew only, as the preachers told, that “there is a heaven to win and a hell to shun.” But how to attain to the one and avoid the other—“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!”<sup>26</sup>

Convinced that no one could understand her mental conflict, she locked her thoughts within herself, refusing even to unburden her mind to her sympathetic mother, who might have greatly relieved her. But, good little Methodist that she was, she dutifully accompanied her parents and brothers and sisters to class meeting and church, vainly seeking amid ecstatic testimony on the one hand and the threat of hell-fire on the other, to discover the way of the Christian. [18]

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<sup>26</sup>Romans 7:21.

In the summer of 1840 she accompanied her parents to the Methodist camp meeting at Buxton, Maine. Here, snatching relief and hope from scattered passages in preachers' sermons, she at last caught from the recital of Esther's resolution the determination: "I will go in unto the king, ... and if I perish, I perish." Pressing forward, and bowing with others at the "mourners' bench," she prayed in her heart: "Help, Jesus! Save me, or I perish! I will never cease to entreat until my prayer is heard and my sins are forgiven."

Suddenly the burden she had so long borne left her, and her heart was light. Alarmed at this unexpected relief, which she felt could not of right be hers, she tried to resume the load; but Jesus seemed so near and dear to her that she could only believe that He at last had become her Saviour. Precious Jesus!

Soon after the camp meeting, she with several others was taken into the Methodist church on probation. The question of the mode of baptism came up. Sprinkling was the usual ceremony, but immersion was granted to those who desired it. With eleven others, she chose this Scriptural baptism; and on a windy day, on the beach of the bay in front of the poet Longfellow's home, while the waves dashed high, they were buried with their Lord in baptism. Complete happiness filled her heart as on that afternoon she was received into full church fellowship.

[19] Still anxious to continue her education, in her thirteenth year she tried again to resume, entering a young ladies' seminary in Portland. But her health rapidly failed, and the careless worldliness of the girls jarred upon her sensitive soul. Shortly she found it necessary to break off the attempt, and with great sadness she returned to her home. Nevermore was she to enter man's schools; her education was taken in charge by the greatest Teacher of all time.

Her brief attendance at the seminary, however, seemed to have choked the channel of communication with heaven. Again she fell a prey to doubts and discouragement. Especially was she repelled by the vision of an angry God consigning His erring children to the flames of an eternal hell. Was this "Our Father"? A wall of darkness seemed to separate her from Him.

She found in her brother Robert, two years her senior, comfort and assurance, as one evening, while they were returning from a meeting, upon impulse she unburdened her heart to him. And Sarah,

a sister four years older, a very earnest and practical Christian girl, gave her that sturdy support which was the beginning of a lifelong service. She took the twins into a missionary partnership with her, earning money at piecework for the purchase of religious literature, to be distributed gratuitously through appropriate channels. Ellen in her weakness could earn but twenty-five cents a day; but this she gladly added to the fund; and the sisters had great satisfaction in seeing their earnings go into service. Thus early and significantly did Ellen enter upon that literature service which in her later life she so greatly forwarded, both as author and as promoter of the publishing work. This occupation helped to take her mind away from herself and to stabilize her experience. She had never prayed in public, and had spoken only a few timid words at the prayer meetings. The duty to pray in the prayer meeting now pressed upon her; but with her doubts she could not overcome her fear. Her private prayers now seemed to rise no higher than her head. Her mental suffering became intense. Sometimes for a whole night she did not sleep, but waiting until her sister Elizabeth was deep in slumber, she would creep from her bed and, bowing with her face to the floor, remain groaning and trembling with anguish which could not be assuaged. She grew emaciated and weak, yet kept her mental suffering to herself.

[20]

Upon His troubled child the Saviour looked with pitying eye. Why must this mere girl endure such an ordeal? It was a part of her purification and of her preparation to understand and assuage the despair of men, women, and children to whom she was yet to minister.

God gave to her two dreams, as steps out of her bewilderment and fear. In the first she seemed to be before a noble temple, wherein was a Lamb appearing as though it had been slain. She stood amid a mixed multitude, a few of whom were seeking to enter, while the others were ridiculing and threatening them. She succeeded in entering; but, still hesitant to press forward, she waited until a trumpet blew. The throng shouted in triumph; then all was intense darkness, and she awoke to silent horror in the night. She felt her doom was fixed, that the Spirit of God had left her.

But soon came the second dream. In this an angel came to her and asked, "Do you wish to see Jesus?" "Yes, oh, yes!" she cried. He led her to a steep and frail stairway which they ascended, and a

[21] door was opened before them. Going in, suddenly she stood before Jesus. She shrank from His gaze, but He drew near with a smile, and laying His hand upon her head, He said, "Fear not." It was the Hand which through three fourths of a century yet to come was to guide and uphold her. Too joyful to utter a word, she sank in ecstasy at His feet, while scenes of beauty and glory passed before her. At last, with the loving eyes of Jesus still upon her, she was taken by her guide outside, and she awoke.

This dream gave her hope, and at last she opened her heart to her mother. That wise and understanding woman comforted and reassured her. She likewise, having herself only recently come to an understanding of Bible truth as to the nature of the soul, relieved the mind of her daughter of the un-Biblical doctrine of everlasting torment. She advised her to seek the counsel of their pastor, L. F. Stockman. A saintly man, he listened sympathetically to the story that Ellen poured out to him. And then, placing his hand on her head, he said: "Ellen, you are only a child. Yours is a most singular experience for one of your tender age. Jesus must be preparing you for some special work." He explained, counseled, and prayed with her, and in that short interview she found a greater understanding of the plan of salvation and the love of God.

[22] Faith now took possession of her heart. As Elder Stockman had pointed out to her, even the misfortune which had blighted her hopes and ambitions was in the order of God, for His wise purpose, and she could leave herself in His hands with perfect trust. Without that sad happening, she, in her natural buoyancy, pride, and ambition, might never have yielded herself to her Saviour; now she was His forevermore. That evening, full of hope and faith, she attended a meeting at her uncle's house. As she knelt with the company in prayer, her tongue was loosed, and she prayed aloud fervently. The next night she attended another meeting; and when opportunity was given for testimonies, she arose and, filled with the simple story of the love of Jesus, related how she had been liberated from the bondage of fear. Elder Stockman, who was present, witnessing this great change in her, wept aloud for joy, and all the people praised God.

Thereafter Ellen was invited to many a religious gathering to tell her story; for her testimony was found most effective in the

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conviction and conversion of sinners. She also labored personally for the salvation of her friends, praying for them and exhorting them. Some were at first careless and indifferent, being attracted only through curiosity as to what this child might say; but in the end every one of the circle was soundly converted.

Though yet but a child, like Samuel and like Jeremiah, Ellen too had received a call to be a spokesman for God; and well might it have been said to her, as to that shrinking but indomitable child of Anathoth: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I set you apart, I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Jeremiah 1:4-10, The Complete Bible, an American Translation.

[23]

### Chapter 3—His Hand upon Her

From the age of twelve to the age of sixteen, 1840 to 1844, Ellen Harmon, with her parents' family and a great company of devoted believers, passed through that remarkable religious experience, the proclamation of the second advent of Christ, commonly known as the Millerite Movement. William Miller, a Baptist layman, a farmer and local civic leader in his home community of Low Hampton, in eastern New York, but also a deep student of history and Bible prophecy, began in 1831 to preach the imminent second advent. His study of the time prophecies of Daniel led him to the conclusion that the final event of earth's history, the coming of Christ and the great judgment day, was to take place in 1844. His computations were incontrovertible; but he erred as to the nature of the event, which, as later study was to reveal, was the entry of Christ, our High Priest, upon His final work in the sanctuary in heaven, preliminary to His coming as King in glory.

[24]

This second advent interest, called in America the Millerite Movement, was not a solitary or sudden uprising of adventual anticipation. It was the culmination of centuries of exposition by learned and devoted students of prophecy, including some of the most famous of Christian theologians, as well as men who became noted solely for their advocacy of the doctrine of the second advent. In the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries this interest in prophecy and its fulfillment swelled into a great spiritual crusade which, in the time of William Miller, had become worldwide, with leaders in various countries. <sup>28</sup>

The American movement, however, proved the most dynamic, gathering in thousands of devoted Christians and reaching out, chiefly through the medium of its literature, to distant parts of the world. It was to prove the most lasting in its effects, eventuating, through an ecclesiastical evolution, in a people and a church, the Seventh-day Adventist, which today embraces the world with its

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<sup>28</sup>See Leroy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vols. III, IV.

message of a soon-coming Saviour and King, Jesus Christ. William Miller was not the founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, their sole distinctive connection being the doctrine of the imminent advent of Christ; but out from the ranks of his followers came its pioneers and founders, who by further study and by correction of untenable beliefs, led a return to the primitive faith of the Christian church. Of this select circle Ellen Harmon was to become a unique member.

Her religious experience for the four years beginning in 1840, though initially within the Methodist Church, was inspired and motivated by this Advent hope. In March, 1840, William Miller first visited and preached in Portland, Maine; and the Harmon family, with many others from various churches, became his followers. Ellen was greatly attracted, not alone by the logic but particularly by the Christian spirit and benevolence of "Father Miller." The uplift and force of his message was at first welcomed by most of the churches, but particularly by the Baptist, Methodist, and Christian bodies, large numbers of their clergy becoming proclaimers of the advent. The churches profited greatly by the message, in the conversion of sinners and the harvest of souls. These second advent lectures just preceded and greatly influenced Ellen's conversion at the Buxton camp meeting. [25]

In 1842 Miller again visited Portland and gave a second series of lectures. In the interim, the interest had continued and grown, until a large company professed faith in the message. These believers were contained within the various churches of their choice, and in Maine were led by such pastors as Stockman and Cox of the Methodist, Fleming and Brown of the Christian, and Rollins and Spaulding of the Baptist churches. There was growing up, however, intense opposition to Miller's preaching, and on this second visit to Portland he found the doors of many churches closed against him. Pressure was being brought upon the ministers to abandon the cause, and under the threat of loss of credentials and of support, some deserted; but others held firm.

The lay members who rejoiced in the Advent hope came under increasing pressure. Father Harmon was a main pillar in the local Methodist church, being an exhorter and class leader; but because of their ardent hope and expression of faith in the soon-coming

[26] Saviour, he and his family were disfellowshipped, along with many others. Thus the Adventist believers, cast out of the various churches, were thrown together in fellowship, meeting in Beethoven Hall. All through the land this process was going on, resulting in the forced segregation of the Advent believers, who, though differing among themselves on minor points of doctrine, were united in the Christian faith of the early return of their Lord.

But dreadful disappointment was to be their lot. The Lord Jesus Christ did not come in glory at the expected time, October 22, 1844. In this crushing disappointment they entered into fellowship with the believers in the first advent of Christ. In common with all the Jews, the apostles and disciples of Jesus expected the Messiah to take the throne of His father David, and rule over the world. When instead He was put to death on Calvary, it seemed that their whole cause had collapsed. In utter dejection, in bitter disappointment, they mourned, “But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.” <sup>29</sup>

[27] As in that first advent the disciples had been mistaken, not as to the time or the person, but as to the office and the event; so now in this time of the second advent they were mistaken, not as to the time or the person, but as to the work He was to do, and consequently as to the event they anticipated. Overwhelmed by their disappointment, dismayed by the failure of their prediction, ridiculed and taunted by their enemies of church and world, the Christians alike of the first century and of the nineteenth endured a trial of their faith unexampled in the history of the church. Martyrs had died for the faith they held; reformers had stood like rock upon the foundation of their faith; apostles had penetrated to the far bounds of earth to carry their faith; but the supreme trial of the disciples of the first advent and of the second advent was as to whether there was any faith to herald, to defend, to die for. They faced this challenge: Are the prophecies false? Have we believed fables? Is there no divine King? Is there no Saviour, no God? Confusion and dismay covered them.

But they were not long left to suffer disappointment. On the morning of the third day after the crucifixion, Mary Magdalene and

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<sup>29</sup>Luke 24:13-24.



other women, visiting the tomb of the Crucified One to anoint His body, found the sepulcher open and the Lord risen. And Mary herself saw the Lord Jesus, who said to her, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.”<sup>30</sup>

The great popular following of Jesus had, upon their disappointment, fallen away, some entirely abjuring their faith, others feebly hoping but despairing. The apostles themselves at first could not credit the news of their Lord’s resurrection. Only the women—four are named<sup>31</sup>—gave unquestioning credence to the evidence of His resurrection. But the circle grew as the evidence increased, until they numbered 120, and on the fiftieth day, the day of Pentecost, three thousand converts were added to their number. So, in a faith piercing the veil of the incredible, began the great crusade of Christianity.

Similar was the resurrection of hope and understanding of the disciples of the second advent. In a little more than a month after their disappointment the Lord Jesus made Himself known to a little circle of women, and to one of them He revealed the mystery of the disappointment and the glory of the truth. There was need of a seer, a prophet; and God moved in accordance with His declaration to Aaron and Miriam in the wilderness: “If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream.”<sup>32</sup>

On a day in December, 1844, Ellen Harmon, just turned seventeen, was visiting a dear friend, Elizabeth Haines, in South Portland. There were three other young women there also, making a group of five. Visiting, to those serious and sorely tried Adventist girls, did not mean gossip, idle chatter. Like the two disciples who were walking to Emmaus, “they talked together of all these things which had happened,” and they prayed together, earnestly, pleadingly, seeking for light. [28]

As they were praying, the power of God came upon Ellen in greater measure than she had ever felt before. She seemed to herself to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher above the earth. As in the experience of the prophet Ezekiel, the Spirit

<sup>30</sup>Mark 16:1; John 20:17.

<sup>31</sup>Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10.

<sup>32</sup>Numbers 12:6.

lifted her up between the earth and the heaven,<sup>33</sup> and brought her in the visions of God to the laboring columns of pilgrims heavenward bound. She saw a straight and narrow path, lifted up above the world, on which the Advent people were traveling to the New Jerusalem. Behind them, at the start of the way, there shone a bright light which illumined their path. What did that light signify? An angel spoke to her, saying, “That light is the midnight cry”—the message of Christ’s coming, which in the imagery of Jesus’ parable of the ten virgins and its midnight alarm, went forth with greatest power in the summer of 1844.<sup>34</sup> In Ellen’s vision some of the pilgrims, weary and discouraged, shut their eyes against the light, and they stumbled and fell off the path into the dark world below. But the tried and faithful ones, welcoming the light, kept their eyes ahead on Jesus, who was walking just before them. When they grew faint with the toilsome journey and, like the children of Israel in the wilderness, moaned:

[29]

“We are weary, oh, so weary,  
We are weary, sad, and worn.  
Is it far? Is it far  
To Canaan’s land?”

then Jesus would raise His right arm, and from that arm beamed a light that like an electric current re-invigorated them, and they shouted, “Alleluia!”

Ellen now felt herself identified with this Jerusalem-bound company. In relating the vision she said: “Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus’ coming.” On flowed her narrative, telling of the coming of Jesus in glory in the clouds of heaven, of the journey of the saints with Him to heaven and the entry into the New Jerusalem, of the open gates of pearl and the pavements of gold, of the river of life and the tree of life bearing a different fruit every month.

And—naïve note of comfort to young hearts sorrowing for the loss of loved and honored leaders who had died before the disap-

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<sup>33</sup>Ezekiel 8:3.

<sup>34</sup>Matthew 25:1-13. See F. D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*.

pointment—she related to the company of believers in Portland: “We ... sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman [leading ministers], who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping. We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, ‘Alleluia, heaven is cheap enough!’ and we touched our glorious harps and made heaven’s arches ring.”<sup>35</sup> Thus in words as simple and artless as those of the child prophet Samuel was told the message of the first vision of Ellen Harmon. [30]

About a week after receiving this first vision, Ellen was given a second, very different in nature; for, instead of scenes of glory, it was the call of God for her to go and speak to the Adventist people what God had revealed and would reveal to her—messages of rebuke, of encouragement, of correction, of guidance. She was shown the trials through which she must pass, that her labors would meet with great opposition, and her heart would be rent with anguish; but she was assured that the grace of God would sustain her through it all.

How heavy a burden! How impossible it seemed for her to obey! The Adventist body, smitten with disappointment, was breaking up into many factions; and, despite the efforts of its foremost leaders, was rent and plagued with extremists and fanatics, while the bewildered flock knew not which way to turn. How could she, a seventeen-year-old girl, timid, frail, ill, go down and do battle in that arena of wild spirits?

One deterrent was her fear that if she should go out proclaiming herself a messenger of God, she would become self-exalted, as she had seen in the cases of others. The Lord answered this by telling her that if she should come into such danger, He would correct her by laying the hand of affliction upon her. There is no evidence that she was ever in such danger, for she was and ever remained most humble in her ministry; but she started out in ragged health, and it is no surprise that through her life seasons of illness brief or more protracted overcame her. Now for days she struggled, through whole

<sup>35</sup>Ellen G. White, [Early Writings](#), 13-20.

[31] nights she prayed that this burden might be removed from her and be put upon someone more capable of bearing it. Therein lay the proof of her fitness. Like Moses, she felt incapable. Like Jeremiah, young as she, she cried: “Ah, Lord God! ... I cannot speak; for I am a child.”<sup>36</sup>

But as God had called Moses and Samuel and Isaiah and Jeremiah and all His spokesmen of old, so now He called the child Ellen Harmon. And as to Ezekiel, so to her He said: “I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead. Fear them not.”<sup>37</sup>

The hand of the Lord was upon His young and humble servant, and in obedience she went upon His mission.

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<sup>36</sup>Jeremiah 1:6.

<sup>37</sup>Ezekiel 3:8, 9.

## Chapter 4—“Like Streams of Light”

[32]

The body that came in time to be known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church had in the beginning three leading persons, the founders. First of these was Joseph Bates. In early life a follower of the sea, he rose to be captain, supercargo, and part owner of merchant ships plying chiefly the South American trade; and he retired in his early thirties with what he regarded as a competent fortune, settling in his native town of New Bedford, Massachusetts. A few years later, caught up in the fervor of the Second Advent movement, he became one of its leaders, and in it he spent his entire fortune by 1844. Passing through the bitter disappointment, he kept his faith, and very soon added to it this tenet, that according to the fourth commandment the seventh day, not the first, is the Sabbath of the Lord. This faith he diligently and sacrificially spread over a wide range of evangelistic travels, and soon gained a following. At this period he was twice the age of his two companions in labor, and was to them as a father.

Second was James White, native of Maine, a young and fervent minister in the 1844 movement, whose faith survived the disappointment, and launched him like another Paul upon a new and noted career. Strong, resourceful, tenacious, full of faith and spiritual urge, he became not only the exemplar of evangelistic zeal but the creator and molder of church enterprises—publishing, educational, and medical, and the great organizer of church polity.

[33]

Third was Ellen Harmon, who, uniting in marriage with James White in 1846, took the name, Mrs. Ellen G. White. Hers was a unique position. She never held elective office in the church, yet she was its guide. Her ordination was of God, not man, and in fulfillment of her mission she was the exemplar of the minister of Christ to her people and to the world. Beginning her public labors while still in her teens, this timid, self-effacing, and seemingly handicapped girl developed under the hand of God into a woman poised, penetrating, eloquent, persuasive, maternal, the mother of the church. Seventy

years of service lay before her ere she should put her distaff down and lay aside the weaving of the fine linen of the saints. Despite the revelation made to her in her early vision, she could not know all that lay before; but humbly she put her hand in the hand of her Lord and took her first firm steps forward.

[34] There was need, sore need, of authoritative leadership in that time of confusion which followed the disappointment. Factions and fractions of factions appeared in almost every place and company. There was no organization: the Advent believers, having been cast out of their churches, in general had decided, naturally if illogically, that human organization was of the devil; they would be amenable only to divine impulses. Lamentably, many of their impulses bore no mark of the divine. Some preached that they were in the millennium, some maintained that they should do no work, some loudly proclaimed that the door of mercy was shut and sinners could no more be converted. There were self-appointed lords many, and none was there to stay their course.

William Miller did not long survive; he died in 1849. The second most influential leader, Joshua V. Himes, with some loyal-hearted helpers, strove against the current to draw together the disintegrating body, but in vain. Parties formed, and he was spun around in the whirlpool, with less and less authority and influence.

What could a frail girl do in this maelstrom? We marvel as we see her dauntless head rising above the seething mass, speaking the word of the Lord as it was committed to her, facing disaffection, malice, falsehood, and duplicity with calm assurance that God was with her and would prevail. Her heart went out to the little ones, the children and the youth, and to the inconspicuous lay members who held tenaciously to their uncertain faith; these lambs she would protect from the wolves that sought to devour them. Others she welcomed who were stronger in faith, more independent in their thinking, and who gradually rallied to her support.

But besides the burden of her strenuous labors, she endured the infirmities that had come from her childhood accident. Emaciated and weakened, she was, many of her friends feared, marked for an early grave. But again and again she was strengthened, physically, mentally, and spiritually, by the grace of God; and in that blessed baptism of the Holy Spirit she lived and worked.

Not one of the three leaders had any wealth, and there was no organization to support their public labors or supply their daily needs. Joseph Bates had spent his all in the cause; for the daily bread of his family he depended upon the providence of God, which again and again in marked intervention supplied his needs. James White and his wife Ellen were penniless, except as he worked at common labor for a livelihood. A child was born to them in the late summer of 1847, their firstborn, named Henry Nichols White, in honor of a friend whose family had helped them spiritually and materially. Living in poverty, they were tempted to feel that their duty as well as necessity pointed to their maintaining a frugal and industrious life, slowly to build their fortunes. But the hand of God in affliction tore them away from this mundane plan and sent them together on faith into the field of Christian service. [35]

Leaving their child in the tender care of devoted friends, they traveled into New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, as well as Maine, carrying a message of healing, comfort, enlightenment, inspiration. They were forwarded from place to place with little gifts—\$5.00 here, \$10 there, a helping hand now, a horse-and-buggy transportation there, occasional shelter and food.

Meanwhile, through all this they studied. Their hands reached out to brethren and sisters discovered by the way, some strong, some seeking support, but all being drawn into fellowship and Christian love. They found congenial helpers in laymen—Stockbridge Howland in Maine, Otis Nichols in Massachusetts, Albert Belden in Connecticut, Cyrus Farnsworth in New Hampshire, Ezra Butler in Vermont, Hiram Edson in New York. They joined forces with Joseph Bates as their doctrinal views came to coincide; they encouraged young and promising workers like John N. Andrews of Maine, George Holt of Connecticut, and John N. Loughborough of New York to enter the ministry. [36]

A body of distinctive doctrines was being evolved through Bible study. The Sabbath, championed by Joseph Bates, was accepted by the Whites in the fall of 1846, shortly after their marriage. Sparked by an early message from Hiram Edson, to whom a shaft of heavenly light had come, the truth of the service of Christ, our High Priest, in the sanctuary in heaven was studied out, explaining the reason for the disappointment and opening new vistas of faith and courage.

The application of the messages of the three angels of [Revelation 14](#) to the second advent experience, dating from the '44 period on to the end, became clear. The doctrine of immortality only through Christ—the state of the dead, and the judgment—had been their common heritage from pre-disappointment days. More and more as they studied together, the body of their common faith began to take form, and they lived and prayed and rejoiced and suffered and triumphed together in the light of God.

In all this the Spirit of prophecy manifested in Ellen G. White was a constant steadier, corrector, and guide. Again and again messages from God through her steered the little company away from false doctrine, dangerous trends, vitiating weaknesses. But always these counsels stood foursquare upon the inspired Word of God, the Bible. Doctrines were evolved, not upon the authority of Ellen G. White, but from the study of the Sacred Scriptures; the Spirit of prophecy did but illuminate them and show their truth. Yet in those troublous times, with every wind of doctrine blowing, it was to the believers a guide and compass.

[37] What gave the little band confidence in the gift bestowed upon this youthful messenger of God? A combination of things. Her blameless life, rising above calumny, spoke volumes. Her consecration, her complete absorption in her mission, reinforced their faith. The practical nature of her message was a strong argument. Her constant appeal to the Bible established her connection with the source of inspiration. But besides these evidences, for the extraordinary needs of the time, God set His seal upon her work by supernatural manifestations. The characteristic mental and physical states of the prophets in vision, a register assembled by Bible students, testified to the genuineness of her visions.<sup>38</sup> These may be summarized in a recital of the phenomena of her open visions.

As the power of God came upon her, she uttered in thrilling tones, fading away as in distance, the thrice repeated shout, “GLORY, *glory*, glory!” She initially lost all strength, and then received an access of strength, manifested in such feats as holding a heavy family Bible aloft in one hand for some time, while turning the pages with her

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<sup>38</sup>Numbers 24:3, 4; Daniel 10:8-19.



other hand to the texts she correctly quoted without seeing.<sup>39</sup> In all this manifestation, no breath was discernible, even by the closest tests, though she spoke audibly. Her eyes were always open, with fixed but pleasant gaze as upon some distant object. What in vision she was viewing was declared only in short sentences, not always connected; but when she came out of vision she told or wrote out in clear form, but in her own words, what had been revealed to her. This in brief describes her state in vision. Its consonance with described states of various Bible prophets, together with the intrinsic value of her communications, was to that early company of believers convincing evidence of the motivating power of God. Moreover, the fulfillment within brief time of her shorter predictions, and on occasion the circumvention of obstructive schemes of opponents, were further proof of divine guidance.

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As the years went on, these exhibitions of the open vision grew less frequent, until about 1884 they ceased. But not less really or frequently, thereafter, did she receive the commissions of God in visions and dreams. The heavenly communications came, as to many prophets before her, in private sessions in the night and in revelations to her mind while studying and writing.

Why this change? Because, in that early beginning time, there was necessity for a dramatic impression to be made upon the minds of believers and opponents alike; while with the authority established, the messages of God through her were received in full confidence. These exhibitions of her open vision were tested and tried many times by those who opposed as well as those who believed. And so, as Paul writes of the manifestation of the gift of prophecy: “If ... there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”<sup>40</sup> The initial purpose of the open vision, the purpose of confirming her authority in the minds of believers, grew less needful as their faith increased. The open vision was not for a show to the curious; it was an initial step in the confirmation of the Spirit of prophecy. Its

<sup>39</sup>Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts* 2:78, 79.

<sup>40</sup>1 Corinthians 14:24, 25.

continuance would have inclined to become merely a spectacle; but the weight and wisdom of her testimony after the open vision ceased gave dignity to her office.

[39] During the year 1848, a series of six “Sabbath conferences,” as they were called, was held by James and Ellen White and Joseph Bates, with various helpers, in New England and New York, culminating in November of that year in the meeting at Otis Nichols’ in Dorchester, Massachusetts. These conferences, gathering in the interested ones in the various sections, were effective in harmonizing and binding together the believers. The leaders also were learning methods of effective presentation.

It was apparent to them that they needed other means of visitation and ministry than their very occasional personal visits. At the fifth conference, held in Topsham, Maine, they discussed the possibility of issuing a periodical to set forth their faith and serve as a means of communication between believers. The efficacy of the press in carrying truth had been apparent since the invention of printing in the fifteenth century, and it was apparent to these earnest advocates of the Sabbath and Advent truths; but how to enlist its aid they did not know. For they were all without money, and they had no supporting organization; so in perplexity yet in hope they left the matter in the hands of God.

But at the meeting in Dorchester the next month, the subject was again under discussion, and again they knelt in united prayer that God would open the way. While they were praying, the power of God descended upon Mrs. White, and she was taken into vision. In this vision she seemed to be watching a light as of the sun, ascending in the east, like the angel in [Revelation 7](#), and she greeted it with exclamations of wonder at its increasing power, exclamations jotted down at the time by Joseph Bates. “Out of weakness it has become strong! ... It rises, commencing from the rising of the sun.... O the power of those rays! It grows in strength.... The angels are holding the four winds.... The saints are not all sealed! ... Yea, publish the things thou hast seen and heard, and the blessing of God will attend.” “Look ye! That rising is in strength, and grows brighter and brighter!”

When she came out of vision she said to her husband: “I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it

out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.”

James White believed, but still the way did not open. He looked for capital with which to begin, but it did not come. At last, seven months later, while they were residing with the Beldens at Rocky Hill, Connecticut, he determined to find again a job at manual labor to earn some money for the project. In this crisis his wife received another communication from heaven, in which he was directed not to seek money in this way, but to step out by faith, write and publish, and the money would come in.

Acting upon this counsel, he prepared copy for an eight-page paper and arranged with a printer in near-by Middletown to print it, with the promise of speedy payment. The paper contained a clear presentation of the Sabbath truth. “I hope,” he wrote in this first number, addressing the believers to whom he intended to send it, “that this little sheet will afford you comfort and strength. Love and duty have compelled me to send it out to you. I know you must be rooted and built up in the present truth, or you will not be able to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.” In consonance with this sentiment, he named the sheet *Present Truth*.

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Several times, while the work was being done, James White walked the eight miles to Middletown and back for consultation; but on the day of publication he borrowed Belden’s horse and buggy to bring home the papers. “The precious printed sheets were brought into the house and laid on the floor, and then a little group of interested ones were gathered in, and we knelt around the papers, and with humble hearts and many tears besought the Lord to let His blessing rest upon these printed messengers of truth.”<sup>41</sup>

The little company joined in folding the papers, and as many were wrapped and addressed as they had names of those who might be interested. Then James White put them in a carpetbag, and on foot carried them to the post office in Middletown. The periodical publication work of Seventh-day Adventists (as yet unnamed and unorganized) had begun. Though no subscription price was set,

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<sup>41</sup>Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White, 129.

money did come in from recipients of the paper sufficient to meet the cost of the first four numbers, published in Middletown, and to sustain the workers in their travels. Peripatetic with its sponsors, *Present Truth* was published in three successive posts, until in 1851, in Paris, Maine, it was changed into the periodical *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, which has continued to the present day as the official church paper.

[42] “Like streams of light that went clear round the world.” That prediction, made a hundred years ago to that poverty-stricken and feeble company, has been amply fulfilled. Today the candle gleam of that initial *Present Truth* has broadened and brightened and increased to an incandescent lighting of the globe. As one branch of a worldwide and comprehensive work, there are 43 denominational publishing houses, serving 197 language areas, with 342 periodicals and an annual sales intake of over \$14,000,000 for books, pamphlets, and other permanent literature.

“Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.”<sup>42</sup> “From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.”

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<sup>42</sup>Chronicles 20:20.

## Chapter 5—“Bound in the Bundle of Life”

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In 1849, the year of the gold rush to California, Joseph Bates, that roving ambassador of the advent, went West to seek treasure more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir.<sup>43</sup> Up to this time the small body of Sabbath-keeping Adventists, now numbering perhaps five or six hundred, had been contained in the New England states, New York, and lower Canada. Bates pioneered into Michigan. At Jackson in that new state he found a company which had participated in the 1844 movement. Seeking out their leader, a blacksmith named Dan Palmer, he talked to him at his forge and convinced him that he had the truth. Being invited to address the company the next Sunday, he speedily converted them all to his message and gave to Jackson the distinction of being the first Sabbath-keeping Adventist church in the West.

Bates soon made two more trips into Michigan, raising up several companies of believers. In 1852 he repeated his early success at Battle Creek, the town that was to become headquarters for the young church for half a century. The message made much faster progress in the western states than in the eastern, and within two or three years Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa presented a larger constituency than all the East.

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Mrs. White urged on the work in the West, stating that tenfold more could at that time be effected there than in the East with the same effort, and that special efforts should be made where the most good could be accomplished. While stressing the importance of the openings in the West then, she predicted that in the course of time the Spirit of God would prepare the way for more to be accomplished in the East.<sup>44</sup>

In 1855 four Michigan men—Dan Palmer, Cyrenius Smith, J. P. Kellogg, and Henry Lyon—made up together a fund of \$1,200, bought a lot, and erected the first denominationally owned printing

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<sup>43</sup>Isaiah 13:12.

<sup>44</sup>Testimonies for the Church 1:149.

plant, a two-story frame building. On the strength of this grant they induced James White, whose little publishing business had found a semipermanent home at Rochester, New York, to establish the headquarters in Battle Creek.

[45] The subject of church organization began to be debated in the ranks of the Sabbathkeepers. Against the prejudice of early years was countered the necessity of some systematic method of maintaining order, handling church funds, and protecting church property. The publishing house, which came within a short time to have the largest plant in the state, printing and distributing great quantities of religious literature, was held all this time in the name of its chief promoter and manager, James White; but he insisted that its safety demanded church ownership. This called for incorporation. Thus the publishing house provided the entering wedge for church organization, helping to make the Seventh-day Adventist Church a model of efficiency. In the fall of 1860 representatives from five states met in Battle Creek to discuss the question of organization, particularly with reference to the publishing house. Two epochal actions were taken at this conference. First, a denominational name was adopted: thereafter this ecclesiastical body would be known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Secondly, a decision was reached to incorporate the publishing business, an act which was consummated seven months later, on May 3, 1861.

The next autumn a meeting of delegates from the churches in Michigan voted to form an executive body, the Michigan Conference, which thus became the first collective church organization among Seventh-day Adventists. During the next year and a half the demonstration was so favorable that six more such conferences were formed, east and west. In May of 1863 these conferences sent delegates to the first General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, held in Battle Creek. John Byington was elected the first president, and Uriah Smith the secretary. The constituency at that time numbered 3,500.

In all this the hand of God through the ministry of Ellen G. White was manifest. There were strong men and faithful, who wrought a great work in evangelism and organization. At their head was her husband, James White, and with him Joseph Bates, also such younger men as Andrews, Loughborough, Smith, Waggoner, Cot-

trell, Cornell, and Haskell; but one and all they listened to the voice of the Spirit of prophecy in times of stress and crises of policy. Their decisions and their methods were largely formed and safeguarded by the counsel of Mrs. White.

It was not under the lash of a despot that this guidance and control was exercised. The ministry of Mrs. White from first to last was personal; and it was this spirit, allied to her evident divine commission, that made her general counsels effective. Her deep understanding, her sympathetic spirit, her readiness to help in sickness, disaster, sorrow, and poverty gained for her the love and attachment of her fellow members. They were not all saints. As in every collection of mortals, there were men and women selfish, sensual, censorious, uncontrolled, and they were the objects of her ministry in correction and counsel, not always to their pleasure. There were also men ambitious of preferment, craving praise and emolument, and such at different times rose up in rebellion, and flung her counsel to the bats. Such dissident spirits, as well as outside opponents, made Mrs. White their favorite target; and so it has continued to this day. If out of negation there could be convincing proof of the salutary and remedial character of her testimony, it would be found in the attacks of these critics.

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But those who knew her sweet and generous nature, her self-sacrificing life, and her strict adherence to the counsels given to her and through her, made up the great body of the church. She spoke not only to leaders and adult members, but also to youth and children. Their interests, their welfare, their training, loomed large in her vision of the constituency and the work of the church. Her arms gathered in the little ones and the older ones, the true-hearted who in simplicity and faith sought to do the will of the Father; and in the communion of saints she bound them together in God’s family.

James and Ellen White had born to them four children, all boys, only two of whom survived. Henry, the first-born, died when sixteen years of age; Herbert, the youngest, died as a babe. The two remaining, James Edson and William Clarence, lived to manhood and to noble work in the cause of God. Their parents also took into their home, trained, and educated several other children of both sexes and thus made a balanced household. Both parents loved children and dealt understandingly with them on their successive age levels.

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Mrs. White added to her public duties the care and education of the children, being in turn their companion, nurse, and teacher, when she was with them. Her heart yearned after them unceasingly when she was called away by affairs of the church; and her letters to them remain memorials of her solicitude and wisdom. In her life as a mother may be found the roots of that insight and wisdom which she so strikingly exhibits in her directions and counsels on education.

Through those early years of the church's history, while its membership was small, she proved the genuineness and value of her commission by meticulous attention to the building of character in individual members; for if the new church was to fulfill its destiny, it must in the beginning lay a foundation of strict probity, sincere obedience to God, and consecrated talent. This objective Mrs. White retained through all her life, and the wise counsels of her later writings were the full fruition of her early personal work for souls.

[48] Not only the internal health of the church, but also its external contacts, relations, and responsibilities occupied her thought and attention. Before the organization of the church had been completed, there broke out in the political world that sanguinary struggle, the Civil War, or the War Between the States. From 1861 to 1865 this conflict, based primarily if sometimes obscurely upon the dispute over the inherent right of freedom, and drawing tremendously upon the resources of the divided nation, raged unabated.

The newly formed church of Seventh-day Adventists, being non-combatant in principle, and complicating this distinction (shared by the Quakers, the Mennonites, and lesser bodies) with their conscientious and strict observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, was placed in difficult circumstances. The wise guidance of James White, recognized leader and editor of the church paper, was supported and informed by the counsel of his wife, whose testimonies now strengthened the faithful, now counseled the rash, again warned against false positions, and ever upheld the principles of judgment and justice. By judicious representations to the Army authorities at Washington, the little church was given the status of noncombatancy, with loyal and unstinted service in medical or other relief roles, which has been its position and privilege ever since.

When the war closed, James White was much worn by the burdens and responsibilities he had borne. Elected president of the



General Conference in May, 1865, he turned with vigor to prosecution of the evangelistic work, which had practically ceased under the pressure of public excitement and national interests. The added strain proved too much for him; in August he had a stroke of paralysis which incapacitated him physically and mentally. Home treatments proving ineffective, his wife took him to the Dansville Sanitarium in New York, which employed hydrotherapy and diet in the healing art. Even here he did not improve; and Mrs. White, disapproving of some of their theories and methods, particularly their prescription of absolute inactivity of mind and body in his case, after three months removed with him, and they returned to their home in Battle Creek. [49]

Here opens a chapter of more than wifely devotion, a story of such insight, such perception of therapeutic values, such determined will, such expenditure of physical, mental, and spiritual strength for the recovery of her husband's powers, while carrying the heaviest burdens of the church, as has perhaps no parallel. Friends, the most time-honored and solicitous, the leaders in the church, and the parents of her husband themselves, begged her to leave him, an invalid, in the hands of others, while she gave attention to her public mission and her children. She would not do it. She abated little of her mission, she gave attention to her home and her children, she continued to write and to testify; but she declared that God had set her husband as the leader of the church, and she would not abandon him. “As long as life is spared to us both,” she declared, “I shall put forth every effort in my power to save him. That masterly mind must not be left to ruin. God will care for me and my children, and He will raise up my husband, and you will yet see us standing side by side in the sacred desk, speaking the words of truth unto eternal life.” Her faith and works were to be honored by fourteen more years of association with her husband in labors which bore fruit in some of the most important and far-reaching of the church's enterprises.

The burdens that woman bore that year will never be known until the books of heaven are opened. She was nurse to her husband, watching his diet, giving him treatments, taking him out to ride and to walk, leading him into exercise and ministry, cheering and upholding him while many sorrows weighed upon her. Her children she had had to leave in other hands. The sympathies of friends had been, in large part, alienated by her disregard of their advice about [50]

her husband. She heard criticism and unfounded charges from Battle Creek, which she had to keep to herself.

The people about them in mid-state (then called Northern) Michigan were eager to hear her; and she spoke to large gatherings in many towns and communities on temperance and health and Christian living. In these expeditions she took her husband with her, and sometimes he briefly addressed the people. Besides all this she had many testimonies, received in vision, to write out for men who were not always willing to accept them. She was advocating new and testing truths, in health and in evangelism. On her rested heavy responsibilities, and her pen was busy in every hour she could spare from the care of her husband—and this without the support of many who had hitherto upheld her hands. It was an ordeal comparable to that of the leaders of Israel of old and that of the apostles of Christ in their ministry.

[51] For over a year she and her husband thus labored together in the cause, he making a strong effort to use his enfeebled powers in preaching and counseling. As the winter of 1867 wore on, Mrs. White determined that a return to the land was necessary. She persuaded her husband. They put their home in Battle Creek up for sale, and bought a small farm near Greenville, Michigan. It had no buildings, but they contracted for a small house to be erected before they should move. In May they drove up from Battle Creek and took possession. Here she endeavored to interest him in the improvement of their place, in gardening and in the cultivation of small fruits. With her own hands she planted, hoed, and pruned, and he evinced increasing interest and helped her. They took their sons to the farm with them. The elder, Edson, eighteen, was an apprentice in printing and was only occasionally with them. Willie, twelve, was their constant helper.

When haying time came, their grass was cut with a mower, and James White decided to ask the help of his neighbors in getting in the hay. But his wife, intent on healing as the main object of this husbandry, visited them with a conspiracy to which they reluctantly consented; so when he went for them, they all said they were too busy to help him. He was greatly disappointed, but his wife said, "Let us get it in ourselves. Willie and I will rake the hay and pitch it on the wagon, while you load it and drive the team."

Greatest of all her pleasure, however, was the improvement in her husband’s spirit and strength. His natural love of physical activity was aroused, and soon his wife’s concern was turned to see that he should not overdo. They kept their farm for four years, when their increasing public labors, with James White’s returning health, led them to sell it and return to Battle Creek.

Thus in private life as well as in public, in physical ministry as well as in spiritual, did Ellen White labor successfully in the work of binding other lives and her own in the bundle of God’s life.

[52]

## Chapter 6—“As thy Soul Prospereth”

The apostle of Jesus who lived the longest had a great interest in health. It is not far-fetched to suppose that his philosophy, combining the physical and the spiritual, had much to do with his longevity. John the beloved was a young and vigorous man when called by Jesus to be His follower; and the glimpses we catch of him through the Gospels, the Acts, and even tradition after authentic history ceases attest to his strong physique and his buoyant spirit to the last.

In his Third Epistle, addressed to a generous and hospitable layman, Gaius, his salutation expresses this unity of body and soul: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”<sup>45</sup>

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The gospel of Jesus is a gospel of health—health of body, mind, and spirit. The state of the physical health greatly affects the mind, and the state of the mind in great degree determines the health of the body. Whatever conduces to their mutual welfare is therefore a part of the Christian religion. This truth was lost sight of in the Dark Ages of the church; and so far from the truth did men depart as to suppose that affliction of the body, through malnourishment, filth, and torture would be beneficial to their souls. While the gross ideas of the ascetics were repudiated by the Reformation, something of their influence remains to this day, even in evangelical societies; and ignorance and neglect of physical health have played their part in debasing the spiritual life. It is a part of Christian reformation to enlighten, correct, and strengthen the believers as to physical rightness and provide for them sound bodies to nourish sound souls. This gospel of health has become a part of the Seventh-day Adventist faith, and its inception was due to the messages of God through Ellen G. White.

In the years when the second advent was first being proclaimed, there was in America a strong movement instituted for better health. The temperance crusade against alcoholic liquors, under such early

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<sup>45</sup>3 John 2.

leaders as Dr. Benjamin Rush, William Alcott, and Lyman Beecher, and the gospel of health proclaimed by such apostles as Dr. Sylvester Graham, Horace Greeley, Dr. James C. Jackson, and Dr. R. T. Trall, began to stir the people to reform. Though in general public estimation they were faddists and fanatics, the impact of their faith and zeal was increasingly felt in American society and paved the way of reform in diet and drink, in hygiene and dress, in antisepsis and rational treatment of disease.

One of the foremost advocates of temperance and healthful living was that apostle of the advent, Joseph Bates. While still a sea captain and before he had become a Christian, he began his personal reformation by rejecting strong drink and tobacco, and after his conversion his progress in health practice increased. In turn, he threw away his tea and coffee, condiments, and flesh foods. He was one of the first to organize a total abstinence society—teetotalers—and in his personal habits he went beyond his co-workers in abstemiousness, yet lived the full life. In consequence he maintained, under strenuous labor, a state of health and a resilience that put to shame his younger but unhygienic fellow laborers. [54]

But Bates, while vigorous in his proclamation of the gospel and his advocacy of abstinence from liquor and tobacco, was not militant in the case of his more advanced principles. He was content to let his light shine without blowing the bellows. When asked why he did not eat flesh foods or highly spiced foods or greasy foods, he was wont to reply, “I have eaten my share of them,” and let it go at that. In consequence, he made no great impression upon his people in the matter of diet reform or other health principles.

James and Ellen White were equally outspoken against liquor and tobacco, and this from the first became an integral part of the forming church’s doctrine. But though they might well have envied the abounding health of their brother-in-arms, Joseph Bates, they were not deeply impressed by his means of obtaining it, and they did not adopt his principles of health maintenance. So also their other co-workers. Health, they thought, was the outright gift of God, rather than the fruit of physical righteousness. In consequence, they suffered.

But the light of the Spirit of prophecy was turned upon this important subject. In the early summer of 1863 James and Ellen

[55] White visited a company of evangelists, M. E. Cornell, R. J. Lawrence, and helpers, who were holding a tent meeting in Otsego, Michigan. The company met for prayer and counsel at the farmhouse of Aaron Hilliard, three miles out of town. James White was at this time greatly worn and depressed. The Civil War was raging; the affairs of the church were passing through the crises of organization and of recognition of noncombatancy, in which he had borne great burdens. His physical powers were depleted, and his courage sorely tried, a state which foreboded his complete breakdown two years later. On this day, June 6, at the beginning of the Sabbath, the workers and visitors assembled for worship.

Mrs. White was asked to lead in prayer. She did so with fervent spirit. Her husband was kneeling near her. While praying, she laid her hand upon his shoulder and continued in prayer for him until the power of God came upon her, and she was closeted in vision. In this state she remained about forty-five minutes, during which time she received from heaven the pattern of the health reform which became a prominent feature of the doctrine and work of the church. The immediate effect upon James White was a freeing of his spirit and a reviving of his strength. The long-range effect upon the church and the world was incalculable.

[56] The progress of hygiene and healthful living presented through Ellen G. White in this vision was basic, sound, constructive. It did indeed correct errors in diet, and it took an advanced position in this; but it did not merely forbid, it recommended. She said: "I saw that it was our sacred duty to attend to our health, and arouse others to their duty.... We have a duty to speak, to come out against intemperance of every kind—in intemperance in working, in eating, in drinking, in drugging, and then point them to God's great medicine, water, pure, soft water, for diseases, for health, for cleanliness, for luxury.... We should not be silent upon the subject of health, but should wake up minds to the subject."<sup>46</sup>

A happy, cheerful state of mind, based on trust in the Fatherhood of God, was inculcated as a preventive and cure of worry induced by heavy responsibilities and lack of co-operation from others. "We should encourage a cheerful, hopeful, peaceful frame of mind, for

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<sup>46</sup>Ellen G. White [Letter 4, 1863](#), in files of White Publications, Inc.

our health depends upon our doing this.” Also the evil of intemperate work was stressed: “When we tax our strength, overlabor, and weary ourselves much, then we take colds, and at such times are in danger of diseases taking a dangerous form.”<sup>47</sup>

This basic double physiological fact—susceptibility to infections through depletion of vitality, and immunity to initial colds through building up of bodily tone—is a cardinal therapeutic doctrine today, though still ignored and neglected by the majority of people. As a preventive of disease, it surpasses the whole pharmacopoeia of the profession in that day and our own.

Upon the subject of health Mrs. White began both to speak and to write and, most important of all, to practice. It was no transient reform with her, however it might be with others. Though much suffering yet lay in store for her, progress toward full health was steady, and the latter half of her life was a testimony not only to the blessing of God, but to her faithfulness to His laws in physical as in spiritual life. When we contemplate the meager and damaged physical capital with which she started her career as a teen-age girl, and the immense amount of labor and the great accomplishments through her long life, we must give credence to her own summing up.

Living in accordance with the principles of health— and with definite specifications—is strongly taught among Seventh-day Adventists, with its basis the Bible and the teachings of Ellen G. White; but acceptance and practice are an individual responsibility. On certain phases the church administers a law: no person who uses alcoholic liquor or tobacco in any form may be a church member; and cleanliness of life, obedience to moral law, is likewise a requisite, while simplicity of dress and adornment is inculcated; but no specific prescription of attire is demanded, and incorrect diet is not made a matter of church discipline. Nevertheless the man or woman whose mind has been informed and whose soul has been enlightened by the gospel message must be expected to align with the physical as well as with the religious tenets of the church, and failure to do so inevitably results in declension of spirituality and eventual loss.

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

To reform their own lives, however, was to those pioneers but the preliminary preparation for ministry to others. The gospel of health was to be taken to the world, not only in teaching but in demonstration. Mrs. White not merely taught, she acted. In her prime she was in sickness and misfortune the personal minister to the needs of neighbors, as nurse and helper, and even to old age she remained the benefactress of the needy, near and far. Besides, she projected her vision and wisdom into the philanthropic and curative ministry of the church, in her writings and counsel.

[58] Nearly three years after the Otsego vision, on her strong appeal and counsel, the church prepared to establish the first of those health and healing institutions for which the denomination has since become famous. In 1866 they founded the Western Health Reform Institute, which a few years later was renamed the Battle Creek Sanitarium, an institution in memory still famous, and the first of a succession of over a hundred such institutions throughout the world, with an accompanying host of treatment rooms, clinics, and rest-homes, mostly privately owned, and the services of more than a thousand physicians and several thousand trained nurses.

Lay members also, in large numbers, learn the means and methods of alleviating pain and healing minor ailments, serving individually and in such agencies as the Red Cross, welfare societies, and relief agencies. For the training of its young men to serve in war as the agents of help and healing, the church has instituted expert training under its own officers, and the members of its Medical Cadet Corps, taken into the medical corps of Army and Navy, have well represented in battle its principles of noncombatant and merciful service. One such young soldier is the only noncombatant to have received the highest award of honor, the Congressional Medal of Honor. Not less devoted in civilian life, its doctors and nurses, whether in medical institutions or in private practice, deserve the high esteem in which they are held for Christian service and devotion to their profession "beyond the call of duty." They are representatives, not merely of Aesculapius and Florence Nightingale, but of that supreme Healer and Friend, Jesus.



## Chapter 7—“Taught of God”

[59]

“Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the persual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.”<sup>48</sup>

These are the opening words in Ellen G. White’s book *Education*, a book at once comprehensive and compact, penetrating to the heart of pedagogical truth and setting forth the philosophy and the science of a system most ancient, most neglected, and most vital to complete education. The clarity and wisdom of its teachings are matched by the beauty of its diction. It is recognized as a classic in quarters far beyond the immediate circle of Mrs. White’s ministry. In a certain country of Europe a professor in a noted university was so fascinated by its teachings, and so unprincipled, as to translate it into his native tongue and publish it under his own name as author. Wherever the English language is spoken, and in several cognate languages into which the book has been translated and legitimately published, it is admitted to be not only a fresh approach to the subject but a sane and compelling presentation of the greatest values in education.

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But this book, published in 1903, though a digest of her educational ideas, is neither the most voluminous nor the first. Very early in her career she presented for the benefit of the infant church and of all who would listen a blueprint of education which is the embryonic pattern of what she later expanded and illuminated in several books and sections of books. In 1872 she published this article or testimony, “Proper Education.”<sup>49</sup> In it she outlined the

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<sup>48</sup>Ellen G. White, *Education*, 13.

<sup>49</sup>*Testimonies for the Church* 3:131 ff.

range of education as beginning in the home with the child's earliest consciousness, prescribing the nature and substance of preschool training, and continuing through the years of school and beyond, so long as life lasts. This was envisaging education as life experience. Moreover, she dealt with the faults and deficiencies of current education, and offered correction by methods and subject matter, foreshadowing and transcending the advances which have since been made in pedagogical science.

[61] Parents being the first teachers, she declared they should be trained for the role, and she presented in detail the fields of knowledge and skills in which they should be prepared to lead their children. The home lays the foundation of every individual's education, and unless it is rightly and worthily done, the superstructure provided by the school is ill-formed and unsafe. This vital feature of her system has never yet been adequately implemented, either in the church or in the world; it remained a chief burden upon her mind throughout her life, and only the year before her death she declared, "This is the most important work before us as a people, and we have not begun to touch it with the tips of our fingers."

Her vision of education was broad and deep. What are its salient features? A few pages are not enough in which to set forth her philosophy and system; the reader is invited to study for himself, beginning with the book above mentioned, and observing the list of auxiliary works in the footnote.<sup>50</sup> But since some analysis will naturally be expected, the following synopsis is offered:

1. Incentive, motivation. As opposed to the world's most common and most powerful motive, competition, rivalry, there is laid down as of primary importance the divine incentive of love. Not self-aggrandizement, either of wealth, learning, or prestige, but instead unselfish service in the spirit and power of Christ, is inculcated in home, school, profession, and business. This principle is so vital that its employment or its neglect determines the character of the education, whether it is to be Christian or profane.

2. Environment. God set the model in the Garden. A country environment for the school, whether home, elementary, or advanced,

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<sup>50</sup>The principal works upon education by Ellen G. White: *Education, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students; Fundamentals of Christian Education; The Ministry of Healing; Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. VI, see. "Education."

is the ideal. Not only does it calm and invigorate the mind, but it spreads before the student the handwriting of God, from which all sciences are derived, and it invites him to test its curriculum with every power of his being—physical, mental, and spiritual.

3. Goal. No limited objective, such as a fitting for a temporal trade, business, or profession, is held before the student. Worthy as such an aim may be, it is but the acquiring of a tool to accomplish an infinitely greater work—service in saving, uplifting, and blessing men and preparing them for the life that measures with eternity. “It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world, and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.”

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4. Organization. The structure of Christian education is an integrated system which has God as its center. Every true science that man has discovered has its origin in God, and is but a statement of a portion of His ways. Educators who leave God out of the equation are bound to reach wrong conclusions and develop false systems. Therefore only those teachers and those schools should be sought that make Christ: the center and active force in all their teaching.

5. Content. There are three fundamental books of God, which in order are: Nature, History, and Revelation, the last primarily contained in the Bible. Nature from the first has been God’s book. In infinite degree, hidden or veiled to the dulled mind of man, the created word of God speaks to us the wisdom and love of the heavenly Father. Next, unrolling through the ages, the parchment of history reveals the great design and the meticulous care of the Sovereign of the universe in the affairs of men. And last, the revelation of God through spokesmen selected for their supreme fitness is the substitute for the visible presence and instruction of the Creator in Eden, a substitute made necessary by the entrance of sin.

In the home or preschool the foundation of education is laid, in acquaintance with God through all His created works, in the association, duties, and responsibilities of the family, and in those basic skills which fit the capabilities of the child. In the elementary school these fundamental sciences are to be continued and enlarged, and in addition the arts of communication and service are to be learned thoroughly. In the secondary school the developing powers of the adolescent are to be harnessed to the work of life, with such com-

[63]

plementary sciences as serve; and young people are to be inducted into the science and the amenities of social life, looking to marriage and united service. In the finishing school, the student's vision is to be broadened into a consciousness of world interests and values, and the specialization of the chosen occupation is to be imparted, with particular attention to the need of preparation for home life and parenthood. This is "the only education worthy of the name."<sup>51</sup> Through all the range of education, the graces of God, in sympathy, understanding, and service, are constantly to be taught by precept and experience. No matter how great the learning, how brilliant the accomplishments, they are of value only as they are consecrated to the service of Christ and humanity.

[64] 6. The teachers. First of all come the parents; after them the professional teachers on various levels and in different directions; finally and comprehensively, every person and every circumstance that touches and affects the life of the individual. Human teachers must be the disciples of God, in character Christlike, in knowledge proficient and apt to teach, above all filled with the love of God toward children, youth, and elders. They must be like the Master: "What He taught He lived. 'I have given you an example,' He said to His disciples, 'that ye should do as I have done.' 'I have kept my Father's commandments.' ... Thus in His life, Christ's words had perfect illustration and support. And more than this; what He taught, He was. His words were the expression, not only of His own life experience, but of His own character. Not only did He teach the truth, but He was the truth. It was this that gave His teaching power."<sup>52</sup>

7. Life is a school. Education is not confined to institutions and curriculums. The mind open to heavenly impressions will learn from every experience; and to the Christian is presented a prospect so glorious, so entrancing, so filled with opportunity, appreciation, and progress, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>The Ministry of Healing, 444.

<sup>52</sup>Education, 78, 79.

<sup>53</sup>1 Corinthians 2:9.

This was the experience, from girlhood to womanhood, of her who wrote: “The life on earth is the beginning of the life in heaven; education on earth is an initiation into the principles of heaven; the lifework here is a training for the lifework there. What we now are ... is the sure foreshadowing of what we shall be.”<sup>54</sup>

Mrs. White’s educational principles and plans were not mere mouthings, words cast to the winds of sound and dispersion. She not only spoke, she wrought. She was active in the location and equipment of schools, in the formation of curriculums, in the shaping of policies, in the establishment of social standards, in the imparting of spiritual tone. The system of Seventh-day Adventist schools, now numbering approximately five thousand, on elementary, secondary, collegiate, postgraduate, and professional levels, is a monument to her. If in the struggle to create and evolve a distinctive system of education the end result has not been perfection, through close adherence to the blueprint, it can be said at least that there has been great progress. There never was a prophet of God, in all the history of His people, who saw perfect acceptance and realization of his teachings; yet who will say that Moses or Elijah or Isaiah left no impression upon the consciousness, the history, and the institutions of the church? Acknowledging the dimness of vision, the perversity of tradition and habit, the tendency to drift with the tide, to be “like the nations round about us,” of many who have professed allegiance to the Spirit of prophecy, there is nevertheless tribute to be paid to the true, strong souls who have stood up against the trend and have built with intelligence and devotion a worthy temple of divine knowledge.

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Mrs. White was identified with every development, every forward movement of the educational program in the church of which she was a founder. She was instrumental in the establishment of the first school, Battle Creek College, though it went against her earnest counsel by locating in the suburbs of a city rather than upon ample lands; twenty-seven years later she was the main force in removing it to a country location. In the years spent in Australia she carved out of the wilderness a school of the prophets, and remaining upon its virgin campus, she gave close attention and affectionate care to the

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<sup>54</sup>Education, 307.

[66] formation of a collegiate institution which was designed to be the model for all Adventist institutions of higher learning. She mapped out the course and by her urgings established the system of elementary and secondary schools which, belatedly, put an underpinning to the college education of the church. The most grievous omission in implementing her blueprint is the foundation work of the home school and the training of its teachers, the parents. This omission she was not in her lifetime permitted to see remedied, though it lay heavy upon her heart to the last; but the great body of her instruction upon home education is pregnant with life, and elements in the church are at work which shall yet effectuate this basic reform and advance.

That such an apostle of true education should be evolved from a child unschooled, frail, timid, self-effacing, is a miracle of divine grace and guidance. She was not the product of school, college, or university, yet she molded the education of childhood, youth, and maturity with bold strokes and infinite art because she saw and adhered to the pattern God set in the beginning. And she brought forth to the educational world a form of service, beauty, and grandeur unapproached by any other scholastic system since the world began, save for her model, the Eden school. She was ever a student, widely read and deeply reflective, and she did not scorn the help of wise men of the past or the present; but her eyes were upon her Master, and in supreme degree she was taught of God.

## Chapter 8—“The Pen of a Ready Writer”

[67]

The author of some seventy books published during her lifetime, and of about twenty posthumous works prepared from her manuscripts and letters, Ellen G. White presents the case of a writer whose hand was steadied and whose pen was inspired by a power beyond herself. As the aftermath of her childhood accident, she was unable, despite valiant attempts, to pursue her school studies; and for seven years, up to the time of her first vision, her trembling hand was unable to hold her pen steady. But while in vision, she was commanded by the angel to write what she had seen. She obeyed, and wrote with steady hand.<sup>55</sup> Thereafter throughout her life, her penmanship was very legible and even, though not classic. In the early years of her career the typewriter had not been perfected and placed on the market, and correspondence and all manuscripts had to be written by hand. She had for the first score of years no secretary, and laboriously she wrote, often far into the night, sometimes more than one copy of her letters and manuscripts. And this in addition to her heavy public ministry and her personal labor for souls, her solicitous care for the church, and her management of her home and training of her children. Few authors, if any, can match her record.

[68]

This great accomplishment is not to be ascribed solely to the afflatus of the Holy Spirit in her life. It was indeed the inspiring influence, the enabling power, the constant prompter; but it was acting, not upon an inert object, a complaisant receptacle; it was the Life infusing a being wholly consecrated to service and eager to do the will of God. She studied, she sought improvement of body and mind, she superlatively exemplified in her own self the teaching she gave to others. And this dedication of her powers God honored, to His glory and the benefit of mankind, by a progressive strengthening and polishing of her spoken and written word.

There is a marked improvement, in concept and style, to be found in her later writings over her earlier. Her first literary product,

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<sup>55</sup>[Testimonies for the Church 1:73.](#)

reprinted in the book *Early Writings*, in its simplicity is delightful reading, and especially appealing, in parts, to children. It is studied with profit alike by the new convert and by the experienced theologian, for there is wisdom hidden in it; but the sophisticate will not fail to mark the naïveté and the relative circumscription with which its subject matter is unfolded.

[69] The long series of “Testimonies,” stretching through half a century, and chiefly embodied in the nine-volume set of *Testimonies for the Church*, makes a study, apart from their spiritual and instructional purpose, of a steady progression in visualization and expression. There is also discernible, written between the lines, a history of the church’s necessities in its growth from a few members to a great body organized in various departments and with many interests. Her early “Testimonies,” counseling and correcting, were largely personal; and profit for the present must be picked out of them by inference and analogy. Midway, in volume five, a transition is apparent into the larger aspects of ecclesiastical conduct; and the succeeding volumes grow both in grandeur of concept and in force and felicity of expression.

Her historical writings, represented chiefly by the *Conflict of the Ages* series, beginning with creation and ending with a prophetic account of the second advent and the eternal home of the redeemed, are notable for their grasp and depiction of the great principle that God rules in all the affairs of men, and for the lessons drawn from the past to guide the present and point the future. These five books are, indeed, for the most part, revisions of her earlier writings upon the subjects, and bear testimony to the same progression in concept and expression. Midway in the series is her matchless life of Christ, *The Desire of Ages*, which in penetrating analysis, practical application, and beautiful narrative upon that ineffable subject stands unexcelled.

In her guidance of the church in its business—evangelism, publishing, production and distribution of literature, health and medical work, education, as well as the more personal yet contributory fields of marriage, parenthood, and homemaking—there is a wealth of counsel. It is scattered through her *Testimonies*, and appears also in no fewer than twenty-five books, large and small, dealing with departmental business and the ethics, morals, and spirituality of workers and policies. These books, naturally, are of chief interest



to those engaged or studying to engage in the specific activities of which they treat; yet in their profound plumbing of Christian morality and their sound business sense—based, however, more upon faith and work than upon commercial acumen—there is much for the general reader.

[70]

In many an enterprise which affected the welfare and progress of the church she was the driving force, exercising and calling upon her brethren to exercise faith in the opening providence of God, and contributing not only her counsel but her means. Such, for example, were the Avondale School (Australasian Missionary College) in Australia, and the College of Medical Evangelists (the church’s one medical and dental school) in California, which but for her foresight, faith, influence, and labor would never have seen birth and growth. Out of such affairs came the experience that bore fruit in her counsel, and paved the way for great extension of the work in educational, medical, and evangelistic lines.

One can without difficulty set up any of her books as distinctively devotional; because all her work bore the stamp of piety, meditative or militant. But one stands out in the consciousness of a great audience as the rarest gem in the crown of Christian literature. That is *Steps to Christ*. Millions of copies of this book, in many languages, have been distributed to servicemen, students, and seekers after salvation throughout the world. Its simple, beautiful, convincing explanation of the plan of salvation and the means of partaking of its benefits here and in eternity have found a response in the souls of sinners and of saints, and great transformations of life have resulted from its study.

Of similar service, and marked with peculiar charm, are such works as *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, a study of the Sermon on the Mount; *Christ’s Object Lessons*, dwelling upon the parables of Jesus; *The Ministry of Healing*, dealing with health principles and laws of body and mind; and, crowning all, *Education*.

[71]

As it was said of Bunyan, that he was a man of one Book, so might it be said of her, that she was a woman of one Book. She was widely read in history and in the field of literature which bore chiefly upon religion and piety; but she studied them through the lenses of the Word of God. The Bible, chiefly in the Authorized Version, permeated and colored all her thought and speech. She

developed, in her later writing particularly, a style peculiarly her own, modern, yet with the glow of the Muses, a style reminiscent but not imitative of the Bible writers. There are in it reverence, delicacy, a rolling melody, at times the incisiveness that cracks like a whip, again the calm music of the stars. One accustomed to its form and cadences can always distinguish it, even if not signed, from the writing of every other author, whether old or new. This style was not a consciously earned prize; it came out of the sincerity, the deep meditation, the unreserved dedication of her life to the purposes and cause of God. And in its clarity, force, and beauty it marks her writings as of the masters, literature that has merit more than literary.

[72] Of like nature was her development in public address. The shrinking girl of thirteen, who agonized over duty's call to pray aloud and to testify in meeting, the timid maiden of seventeen, awestruck at the vision of the Almighty and crushed beneath the commission to speak forth what she was shown, was to become the woman of resolution and power, whose voice, long before the invention of amplifying aids, carried to thousands in clear and syllabic tones, in eloquent phrase, and with mighty power.

She seemed in her youth immoderately handicapped for public address. Not only was she unschooled, her spirit fearful, but physically she was unfit. Incipient tuberculosis took hold upon her, and her voice was husky. Even after her ministry had begun, her throat would at times become so constricted that she could scarcely speak in whispers. Thrilling is her simple recital of the miracle often wrought in her when, obeying the call of God, she stood before the people, beginning in a whisper which could be heard only a few feet away, but suddenly relieved of pain and pressure, her voice becoming clear and resonant to speak the word of God.

But she did not suddenly become the compelling speaker. Her public efforts began as a narrator and exhorter. Accompanying her husband, a powerful and eloquent preacher, she would come in as an addenda to a treatise, melting her way into the hearts of her hearers. The novelty of a woman speaker, then not so common as now, attracted some, and perhaps in indulgent humor they initially gave her audience; but they were held by an unexpected attraction. She had no impressive presence; she could have been stricken with fright, tongue-tied before the awesome public. It was through no

natural gift that she commanded her congregations. But when the moment came, her sense of duty, her consciousness of having been and being in the presence of God, the conviction that she had a message which must be given, lifted her above her liabilities, made her oblivious to the bogey of a public, and transformed her into an oracle.

While the power of the Master Physician was evident in her frequent incidents of relief, she did not idly lean upon the miraculous to heal her. She studied the physiology of her own body and put into practice the art of improving her voice. She was given instruction concerning the use of the voice, the art of deep breathing, of breath control, of clear enunciation; and her respiratory and vocal tracts responded under the blessing of God. It was out of such enlightenment and experience that she later gave to her ministering brethren directions about public speaking that: voiced a practical science of elocution. And she was the exemplar of what she taught. No one who heard, in her later years, her musical, resonant voice, peeling out over a vast audience, chaining her listeners not only with the message she bore but with the manner in which she bore it, can ever forget. Through the dim reaches of half a century memory calls up the magic of that hour.

From her subsidiary position as an exhorter, supplying emotion to the logic of her husband, she developed into an independent speaker. Particularly was this need and opportunity thrust upon her in the long illness and convalescence of her husband in the late 1860's. Then their roles were curiously reversed. James White, left to himself in his stricken condition, would have sunk beneath the burden, and would have forsaken the pulpit forever. But she determined, in her own words, that "that masterly mind must not be left to ruin." While her powers as a public speaker had greatly improved, and while audiences small and large eagerly hung upon her words, she took him with her as soon as he was able to travel, and at the conclusion of her sermon he would speak a few words, as long before she had added to his address. Gradually, as his health and mental vigor returned, he resumed his aggressive public speaking; but she had emerged into the paragon who held spellbound great audiences, on one occasion as many as twenty thousand in the open air.

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While her themes were chiefly religious, she was also a persuasive and eloquent speaker upon the subject of temperance and other phases of health. She was much sought after by the forces of reform, and her platform addresses were frequently featured in their rallies and campaigns. In those days she was more noted as a speaker than as a writer.

Yet, in the long and broad view, it is as an author that her influence has been and is most greatly exerted. Her voice charmed thousands; but through her writings, an imperishable record, she has reached and continues to reach millions, in many languages and many lands. From her who could not hold a pen, who in her misfortune despairingly forswore all hope of becoming a teacher, God in His mighty and gracious providence brought forth a ready writer, an oracle whose words shall echo through the final halls of time.

## Chapter 9—“Into All the World”

[75]

Seventh-day Adventists are noted as a missionary-minded people and church. In proportion to their numbers they have a higher rate of employed church workers than any other body of people. One twentieth of their membership are employed by the church organization in evangelistic and institutional work, and the remainder are, almost completely, self-supporting missionary workers. Their annual per capita contribution of funds to the work of the church is \$73.60. Of the 230 countries—political units—in the world, they have entered and maintain work in all but thirty-six, and they are carrying on mission activities in 716 languages, with printed literature in 197. Their aim and effort is to fulfill to the letter the command of the Lord Jesus: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”<sup>56</sup>

But they did not start out with such a vision. A mere handful in the beginning, and but three and one-half thousand at the time of their organization, they saw the stupendous enterprise of covering the earth with the message of the soon-coming King as an impossible task. They looked at the shortness of time, they counted their few men, they inventoried their slender resources; and they said that it must be that this gospel is to be preached to all the world *in token*. Here in America, said they, we meet representatives of every race and every nation: Jew and Gentile, Anglo-Saxon, Teuton, Latin, Slav, Indian, Negro, Mongolian. We may reach them here, and so fulfill the commission. Even though there be only ten Chinese, three Hindus, and one Malay, let them but hear a sermon on the coming, or read a tract on the Sabbath, and the message has gone to their nations! It was a comforting rationalization, to bring the supernal down to the practical. How otherwise could they compass the world in the short time given them? Should a giant’s work be assigned a child?

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<sup>56</sup>Mark 16:15.

Ellen White was of her people. She shared their experiences and their thoughts; but it cannot be said that she shared their fears. She feared not, because she believed God; her courage was born of her faith. And her vision was cleared, her hopes enlarged, the plans she recommended wise, because of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

The messages she received from God went beyond her own horizons. Like the prophets of old, she pondered what was spoken through her. She was ever stretching the resources and urging on the slender forces of the church, confident that, like the widow's meal and oil, they would be multiplied to cover the needs. This vision she succeeded, in time, in imparting to her people, and it is that vision which animates them today when the demands upon their treasury of men and money still swamp their visible resources.

[77] Mrs. White consistently urged her people to reach beyond, to plan largely, to venture greatly. While they sought to strike roots in the northeastern United States, they were urged to launch out into the new West of the Lake States. When they were seeking to consolidate their gains in this Middle West, they were pointed to California, then almost a foreign land, to be reached only by a tedious and dangerous overland journey or by sea around Cape Horn or over the Isthmus route. When California and the North Pacific States had been added to their roster, they were urged to consider Europe. No sooner had Europe been entered and begun development, than Australia, Africa, India were pointed out. Answering to calls as far and as fast as they could, they yet found ever new horizons and new missions.

Some of Mrs. White's earliest utterances indicated this world-wide mission. Of her first vision, in December, 1844, she long afterward said: "And then the world was spread out before me, and I saw darkness like the pall of death. What did it mean? I could see no light. Then I saw a little glimmer of light and then another, and these lights increased and grew brighter, and multiplied and grew stronger and stronger till they were the light of the world. These were the believers in Jesus Christ."<sup>57</sup>

Again, in the vision at Dorchester, in November, 1848, she was instructed to tell James White to start a paper, and "from this small

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<sup>57</sup>Ellen G. White [Manuscript 16, 1894](#); quoted in *The Prophetic Gift in Action*, p. 4; Arthur L. White.

beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.”<sup>58</sup> In December, 1871, she gave a message on “Missionary Work,” which included such exhortations as these: “Young men should be qualifying themselves by becoming familiar with other languages, that God may use them as mediums to communicate His saving truth to those of other nations.... Our publications should be printed in other languages, that foreign nations may be reached.... Missionaries are needed to go to other nations to preach the truth.... Every opportunity should be improved to extend the truth to other nations. This will be attended with considerable expense, but expense should in no case hinder the performance of this work.”<sup>59</sup>

[78]

A light had been kindled in Europe by advance literature, and the new adherents there pleaded for a living teacher. The issue came to a head at the General Conference of 1874, and it was voted to send a representative. “Whom shall we send?” was the question. “Send the best,” was the reply. Most of the front-rank men were unavailable. Joseph Bates was in his grave. James White was again, in 1874, elected president of the General Conference. John Loughborough was engaged in developing the young work in California. J. H. Waggoner was being called to edit the new missionary paper, *Signs of the Times*. A number of younger men were in harness, and some were wheel horses; but the mission in Europe demanded special qualifications of experience, judgment, learning, and zeal. The finger pointed to John N. Andrews, and he was called. “We sent you the best man among us,” said Mrs. White afterward to the European believers.

Andrews, the first overseas representative of Seventh-day Adventists, led the van of the army who were, in the last quarter of that century and particularly in the first quarter of the twentieth, to reach to every continent and the islands of the sea. But age and death were taking toll of the pioneers.

In August of 1881 James White laid down his leadership and his life. Stricken to the heart, Mrs. White, seriously ill herself, yet rose from her sickbed to declare at his funeral: “At times I felt that

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<sup>58</sup>Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 125.

<sup>59</sup>Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 204-206.

I could not have my husband die. But these words seemed to be impressed on my mind, ‘Be still, and know that I am God.’ [Psalm 46:10](#). I keenly feel my loss, but dare not give myself up to useless grief. This would not bring back the dead. And I am not so selfish as to wish, if I could, to bring him from his peaceful slumber to engage again in the battles of life. Like a tired warrior, he has lain down to sleep. I will look with pleasure upon his resting place. The best way in which I and my children can honor the memory of him who has fallen is to take the work where he left it, and in the strength of Jesus carry it forward to completion. We will be thankful for the years of usefulness that were granted to him, and for his sake, and for Christ’s sake, we will learn from his death a lesson which we shall never forget.” She had labored with her husband for thirty-five years; she was to carry on for as many more without him.

In 1883 John N. Andrews, laboring valiantly in the burgeoning cause in Europe, laid down his life. Joseph H. Waggoner, who took his place, fell six years later. Younger men were taking the places of the fallen veterans. Two of the three founders, and several of their earliest helpers, were gone. It left even more prominent in the constitution of the church the one remaining founder, Mrs. White. She who had in the beginning been physically “the weakest of the weak” outlived them by many years, continuing in her work of encouraging and instructing.

[80] In 1885, responding to a pressing invitation from the European believers, she ventured upon her first transoceanic voyage. Her son, W. C. White, had also been asked to come, because of his experience in the publishing work, which was now assuming promising proportions in Central Europe, Scandinavia, and England. Several other helpers accompanied them.

They first attended the European Council at Basel, Switzerland. At these meetings the addresses of Mrs. White were both highly practical and deeply spiritual, showing a wisdom in their counsel concerning attitude and operation which came from the True Witness. Their coverage of the problems involved in this new field, so strange to most of the workers, and of the spirit and power of Christ in the meeting of them, was penetrating and comprehensive. <sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Contained in Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of Seventh-day Adventists.



Mrs. White and her helpers spent many months in most of the several fields—Scandinavia, England, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and France. To the counsel and inspiration of her labors there may be ascribed in great part the solid progress, under many trials and hindrances, of the work in Europe, which became in time the second great stronghold of the Adventist cause. She maintained the possibility of the colporteur work and of tent meetings against the doubt of disappointed experimenters; and the events proved the correctness of her vision. Her visit also served to inform and broaden her own concepts, and reinforce her appeals for the worldwide mission of the church. She and her son returned to the United States in 1887, in time for the General Conference of that year.

In the same year, 1885, that Mrs. White went to Europe, Stephen N. Haskell, one of the pioneers, and the father of the missionary literature work among Seventh-day Adventists, was sent with a company of workers to Australia. He and his co-workers carried the message not only to that continent but also to New Zealand, a thousand miles to the southeast. A publishing work was started, and both evangelistic and literature work were pressed. In 1890 Arthur G. Daniells, a young and promising minister, was sent to Australia, and he immediately shouldered great responsibilities, the beginning of a career which was to take him to the presidency of the General Conference and a leadership which measured with that of James White.

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In 1891 Mrs. White, responding to urgent appeals, gathered about her a small band of helpers, and with her son sailed for Australia, where she was to remain for nine years, developing important agencies and seeing the church constituency increase from half a thousand to four times that number. Her presence on the scene in that southern continent had a decided molding influence on the work—evangelistic, publishing, medical, and educational.

She was far from America, the heart of the work, as far as she could physically be; but her pen was employed in those messages which, appealing to loyal and spiritual hearts, still held incalculable power. It was during this period that, besides all her other labors and writings, she spoke forth those urgent, glowing, vital messages which constitute the educational section of *Testimonies for the Church*, volume six, and prepared much of the matter which later

appeared in that compendium of pedagogical wisdom, *Education*. These messages were having their effect not only in the land of her adoption but also in America and over all the world.

[82] She had scarcely touched the soil of Australia when she began to ensure the establishment of a school. Small as was the constituency, there were among them many youth, whose only chance for an education under church auspices was to take the long journey to America—for most of them an impossible project. There must be for them in their own land a school of advanced grade. At the same time she urged the Christian education of the children; and it was here, in the land “down under,” that she wrote those compelling testimonies which resulted in the beginning, in America, of the elementary church school work in 1897.

The audacity of this educational program took the breath of the Australian members, but it also took hold of their imaginations and their spirit of enterprise. America had had seven thousand believers when it established the first school. Here was young Australia with less than a thousand, already supporting a publishing enterprise, and she was called upon to lengthen her cords, strengthen her stakes, enlarge the place of her tent, and start an educational program more extensive, compared to constituency, than America had even yet tried. But there were loyal hearts and strong. Australian Adventists were thankful that Mrs. White had come to live with them and had elected them to be the spearhead in the educational reform and expansion.

[83] Yet there were obstacles great and forbidding. The constituency was small and, while liberal, not wealthy. The population of Australia was, beyond that of any other land, concentrated in the cities: Sydney and Melbourne held from a third to a half of the inhabitants of their states, and together with other cities made the urban population exceed the rural three to one. One of Mrs. White’s educational principles was that the school should be located on the land and teach a variety of industrial subjects. To many of the constituency the idea of getting a large tract of land far from city centers was repugnant. They held that the purchase of thirty or forty acres near Sydney or Melbourne would be much more sensible. But Mrs. White held firmly to the ideals which had been thwarted in Battle Creek College, of ample room under rural, even pioneer, conditions, and she

supported her belief through messages which became a part of basic instruction in education.

A country estate was located in New South Wales at Cooranbong, seventy-five miles north of Sydney, at a low price. To some of the investigators it seemed a forbidding site, mostly covered with virgin forest, towering eucalyptus trees, patches of scrub, and swamp. The soil they thought was poor; and in this idea they received ready support from government experts, who said it was more than poor, it was worthless. It "wouldn't support a bandicoot." Mrs. White declared that they bore false witness against the soil; subsequent history proved her right.

Relying upon the testimony of Mrs. White, the leaders stepped out by faith, purchased the land, went in with their axes, set up a sawmill, called the youth of Australia to come. And the youth responded. City-bred though most of them were, with the characteristic ardor of youth they hailed the opportunity as a great adventure for God. Space will not permit a recital of the pioneering work done in this Avondale School, as it was at first called from the many flowing streams on the place. There were times of distress, times of discouragement, times when the work lagged. But Mrs. White moved to the place with her family, built a cottage for their home, and, like Elisha of old, made the iron to swim when it was lost. Some of the most inspiring messages come out of this period of stress and hardship. [84]

The Avondale School developed into the present Australasian Missionary College, a fountainhead of workers who have covered the continent and reached out into the great and small island groups of the South Seas. There today a most notable work has developed and is still developing in the coral isles and in the hinterland of the great islands like New Guinea and Borneo. Native savages, devil worshipers, and cannibals have become some of the most devoted missionaries to the people of their own and other lands.

Late in 1900 Mrs. White returned to America, in time to attend the General Conference of 1901. There, under her inspiration, great and significant changes in administration and missionary direction were made. Arthur G. Daniells was elected president of the General Conference and for twenty-one years led the denomination in an unprecedented crusade which quadrupled its membership and spread

the gospel of the second advent, the Sabbath, and kindred truths throughout the world.

## Chapter 10—Her Works Follow Her<sup>61</sup>

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Fifteen years of life and service remained to Ellen G. White upon her return to America in 1900. For two thirds of that time she still traveled, spoke, and worked actively, attending conferences and councils and giving interviews to many, small and great. At the same time she was engaged in writing and supervising the collation of her manuscripts and correspondence in the formation of new books.

Soon after her arrival she purchased a home in the country near St. Helena, California, and named it Elms-haven, for the great trees that overarched the house. It lay in the valley just at the foot of the mountain on the side of which, by the great spring which had first attracted it, spread the St. Helena Sanitarium, the second medical institution built by Seventh-day Adventists, in 1878. Five miles farther into the mountains lies Pacific Union College, a newer institution, yet older in that it succeeded Healdsburg College, second Adventist school of collegiate rank. In the shadow of these institutions which represented two branches of the cause to which she had given so much of her constructive energy she spent her last years, rejoicing in the life which God had so graciously extended, and devoting it to His cause in the last full measure.

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Her son, W. C. White, also located there with his family, as did D. E. Robinson and his wife Ella, her granddaughter. These, with a small staff of secretaries and helpers, gave themselves to the work, now grown great, of correspondence and preparation of her literary products. Marian Davis, her faithful and competent secretary for many years, did not long survive the return to America. Her place as head of the secretarial staff was taken by Clarence C. Crisler, who remained with Mrs. White until the last, and afterward gave invaluable service in a foreign land as secretary of the China Division, where he died while on tour in the far interior. Mrs. White was gratified, in 1914, by the weeks-long visit of her elder son,

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<sup>61</sup>This final chapter largely follows the account in [Life Sketches of Ellen G. White](#), 425-449.

James Edson, whose extensive work in the South in behalf of the colored race she had so earnestly and effectively seconded.

There was some land in the estate, and Mrs. White took pleasure in its development, in the planting of orchards and the cultivation of annual crops, and the ornamental garden at the front. Here she loved to walk and meditate upon the handiwork of God. She also found recreation in a daily ride, when weather permitted, in a horse-drawn carriage, accompanied by her long-time nurse and companion, Sara McEnterfer. The countryside came to know well the gracious old lady who often stopped to converse with parents, to cheer the children, and to brighten the day.

[87] Her initial service after her return from Australia was at the great conference of 1901 in Battle Creek, where she counseled and, with the assistance of men of broad vision and noble aims, put through the reorganization which set the church upon its great forward movement. She also attended the General Conferences of 1903 in Oakland and of 1905 and 1909 in Washington, D.C. These were her last great public efforts. To the conference of 1913, though the days of her traveling were over, she sent strong counsel and cheering inspiration. She wrote:

“I have been deeply impressed by scenes that have recently passed before me in the night season. There seemed to be a great movement—a work of revival—going forward in many places. Our people were moving into line, responding to God’s call. My brethren, the Lord is speaking to us. Shall we not heed His voice? Shall we not trim our lamps, and act like men who look for their Lord to come? The time is one that calls for light bearing, for action. ‘I therefore ... beseech you,’ brethren, ‘that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’”

The final months of her life were quiet and serene. The vast world-sweeping movement of the cause which, under God, she with her husband and Joseph Bates had set in motion threescore and ten years before brought music to her ears. She spoke with confidence and faith and courage to those who came to her, and through infrequent, brief messages in writing. Her interests were universal; and every people, every channel of service, every field,

received the touch of her hand. The parents and children and youth of the church were especially upon her heart.

A halt, a backward turning, was to her unthinkable. As in her earliest days she saw in vision a light as of the sun rising in the east, and cried, "Oh the power of those rays! They grow in strength! Like streams of light that encircle the earth!" so now, in the last months of her life, she heard in the night season voices crying, "Advance! Advance! Advance! Press the battle to the gate!" [88]

For the last two years of her life she was freer from suffering and pain than in any other period of her experience. She walked with quick, sure steps about the house and in the garden. When in January of 1915 her son, W. C. White, returned home after a four months' absence in the East and the South, she was apparently as strong as when he had left. She was still enjoying a good degree of comfort, healthwise, and was able to be about. Some two weeks later, only the day before she was stricken, she spent a little time walking in the yard with him, and conversing on the general interests of the cause of God.

It was on a Sabbath day, February 13, 1915, that she met with the accident which prostrated her for the remaining five months she was to live. An accident had ushered in her career seventy-seven years before, and an accident now signaled its close. As she was entering her study from the hallway that Sabbath morning, she fell. Her niece and nurse, May Walling, hastened to her. Succeeding finally in removing her to her bed, she called a physician from the sanitarium. Examination proved that she had suffered a break of the left femur within the hip socket. At her advanced age, eighty-seven, there could be no hope of healing. But mercifully the Lord spared His aged servant from severe pain, shock, or weariness. Her spacious study [89] on the second floor was made her chamber, and here for the weeks and months of her illness she filled the room with her patience and cheer. Sometimes she was moved to her study chair, transformed now into a reclining couch; and here in the sunny bay window she could look out upon the pleasant landscape, in the resurrection time of the year. Her Bible was still her ever-present companion, more in memory, however, than in reading. Others read to her as she wished. Some of her books lay upon the table by her side, and often she

fingered them lovingly. “They are truth, and they are righteousness,” she said; “they are an everlasting testimony that God is true.”

Often, when she was briefly alone, her family heard her voice raised in song, a favorite hymn being that one composed by W. H. Hyde seventy years before, when he saw and heard her witness in an early vision:

“We have heard from the bright, the holy land,  
We have heard, and our hearts are glad;  
For we were a lonely pilgrim band,  
And weary, and worn, and sad.  
They tell us the saints have a dwelling there—  
No longer are homeless ones;  
And we know that the goodly land is fair,  
Where life’s pure river runs.  
“We’ll be there, we’ll be there in a little while,  
We’ll join the pure and the blest;  
We’ll have the palm, the robe, the crown,  
And forever be at rest.”

[90] Many were the friends of old time who visited her, and as much as she was able she talked and prayed with them. She testified, “Jesus is my blessed Redeemer, and I love Him with my whole being.” “I see light in His light. I have joy in His joy, and peace in His peace. I see mercy in His mercy, and love in His love.” To Sara McEnterfer she said, “If only I can see my Saviour face to face, I shall be fully satisfied.” And to another she said: “My courage is grounded in my Saviour. My work is nearly ended. Looking over the past, I do not feel the least mite of despondency or discouragement. I feel so grateful that the Lord has withheld me from despair and discouragement, and that I can still hold the banner. I know Him whom I love, and in whom my soul trusteth.”

One day, following a prayer by her secretary, Clarence Crisler, she prayed: “Heavenly Father, I come to Thee, weak, like a broken reed, yet by the Holy Spirit’s vindication of righteousness and truth that shall prevail. I thank Thee, Lord, I thank Thee, and I will not draw away from anything that Thou wouldst give me to bear. Let



Thy light, let Thy joy and grace, be upon me in my last hours, that I may glorify Thee, is my great desire; and this is all that I shall ask of Thee. Amen.”

The months passed, and she grew steadily weaker. As the summer harvest days came, her life, like a sheaf fully ripened, was gathered to the garner. On Friday, July 16, 1915, she passed quietly to her rest. The last words she spoke to her son were, “I know in whom I have believed.”

“And I heard a voice from heaven,” wrote John, speaking of this last period in earth’s history, “saying unto me, Write: Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”

[91]

<sup>62</sup>

Long was the day of her labor, peaceful its twilight, and blessed its shades. The cause to which she had given her life saw no night in the eventide of her death. Wrought in God, it was to rise ever higher, stronger, farther-reaching, to meet the glorious day of God. A life had gone, but the Life remained. And still the Light shines on.

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<sup>62</sup>Revelation 14:13.

## And Israel Mourned

Upon the sweet Sabbatic calm  
The evil tidings swept;  
And hushing every joyful psalm,  
An orphaned people wept.  
Alas, that human lips must tell  
The somber message dread:  
“O Israel, O Israel!  
Thy sainted seer is dead!”  
Long, long the tale of freighted years  
That marked the judge’s seat,  
From Shiloh’s mingled hopes and fears  
To Ramah’s counsel sweet.  
The chorus of their graces swell  
The lamentation sore:  
“O Israel! O Israel!  
Thy prophet speaks no more!”

[92]

What hand hath not that guidance felt,  
Or sore-pressed heart that touch,  
When wayward life its impulse dealt  
And sorrow overmuch?  
What tender memories compel  
That saddened, low refrain:  
“O Israel! O Israel!  
Thy comforter is slain!”  
But hush, thou Jacob, feeble, faint,  
Beset by traitor foe;  
Take thee a paeon for thy plaint,  
A kingdom for thy blow.  
With seer and prophet all is well.  
Loud let the heavens ring:

“O Israel! O Israel!  
Prepare to meet thy King!”