

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

*Ellen G. White*



THE  
EARLY YEARS:

1827-1862  
(VOLUME. 1)

ARTHUR L. WHITE



---

**Ellen G. White: Volume  
1—The Early Years:  
1827-1862**

---

**Arthur L. White**

**1985**

**Copyright © 2018  
Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.**



## **Information about this Book**

### **Overview**

This eBook is provided by the [Ellen G. White Estate](#). It is included in the larger free [Online Books](#) collection on the Ellen G. White Estate Web site.

### **About the Author**

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

### **Further Links**

[A Brief Biography of Ellen G. White](#)  
[About the Ellen G. White Estate](#)

### **End User License Agreement**

The viewing, printing or downloading of this book grants you only a limited, nonexclusive and nontransferable license for use solely by you for your own personal use. This license does not permit republication, distribution, assignment, sublicense, sale, preparation of derivative works, or other use. Any unauthorized use of this book terminates the license granted hereby.

### **Further Information**

For more information about the author, publishers, or how you can support this service, please contact the Ellen G. White Estate at [mail@whiteestate.org](mailto:mail@whiteestate.org). We are thankful for your interest and feedback and wish you God's blessing as you read.

# Contents

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Information about this Book . . . . .  | i     |
| About the Author . . . . .   | xi    |
| A Statement the Author Would Like to Have You Read . . . . .                   | xiii  |
| The Author’s Aims and Objectives . . . . .                                     | xiv   |
| Abbreviations . . . . .  | xviii |
| Chapter 1—(1827-1836) The Messenger of the Lord in Our<br>Midst . . . . .      | 19    |
| Here the Story Begins . . . . .  | 21    |
| Harbingers of the Advent Awakening . . . . .                                   | 23    |
| Carefree Childhood Days . . . . .  | 24    |
| Early Experiences Recounted . . . . .  | 25    |
| A “School Days” Experience . . . . .   | 25    |
| The Family Moves to the City of Portland . . . . .                             | 26    |
| The Portland the Youthful Ellen Harmon Knew . . . . .                          | 27    |
| Hatmaking in the Harmon House . . . . .  | 28    |
| Attending Brackett Street School . . . . .                                     | 29    |
| The Textbooks She Read . . . . .   | 30    |
| Robert Harmon’s Trip to Georgia . . . . .                                      | 31    |
| Chapter 2—(1836-1843) Abrupt Changes in Ellen’s Life . . . . .                 | 33    |
| Schooling Cut Off . . . . .  | 36    |
| Early Religious Instruction . . . . .  | 37    |
| Wrestling with the Problems of “Conversion” . . . . .                          | 39    |
| The William Miller Lectures . . . . .  | 39    |
| Ellen’s Developing Christian Experience . . . . .                              | 42    |
| William Miller’s Second Visit to Portland . . . . .                            | 43    |
| Two Significant Dreams . . . . .   | 44    |
| Bearing Public Witness . . . . .   | 46    |
| Cast Out from the Methodist Church . . . . .                                   | 49    |
| Chapter 3—(1844) 1844—The Year of Expectation and<br>Disappointments . . . . . | 52    |
| The Question of the Immortality of the Soul . . . . .                          | 52    |
| The Time of Expectation Passes . . . . .                                       | 53    |
| A Test of True Character . . . . .   | 55    |
| The Second Angel’s Message . . . . .   | 57    |

---

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| October 22, 1844, The Day of Expectation . . . . .                | 58  |
| The Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844 . . . . .            | 61  |
| The Failing Health of Ellen Harmon . . . . .                      | 63  |
| Ellen Harmon Given a Vision—Her First . . . . .                   | 64  |
| The First Vision as Published in the Day-Star . . . . .           | 65  |
| The Vision Answered Many Pressing Questions . . . . .             | 67  |
| Chapter 4—(1844-1845) Make It Known to Others . . . . .           | 69  |
| Ellen’s Confrontation . . . . .                                   | 70  |
| Fear of Exaltation . . . . .                                      | 74  |
| Meeting Hazen Foss . . . . .                                      | 75  |
| Ellen Ventures Into the Field . . . . .                           | 76  |
| The Background of this Traumatic Experience . . . . .             | 77  |
| The Fruitful Journey to Eastern Maine . . . . .                   | 79  |
| Encouraging the Fainthearted and Meeting Fanaticism . . . . .     | 79  |
| Chapter 5—(1845) The Messenger of the Lord at Work . . . . .      | 83  |
| The Otis Nichols Letter of April 20, 1846 . . . . .               | 84  |
| Ellen’s Experience in Delivering the Message . . . . .            | 85  |
| Early Arguments for the Spirit of Prophecy . . . . .              | 87  |
| Some High Points of her Work in Eastern Maine . . . . .           | 88  |
| Vision of Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary . . . . .            | 88  |
| Some Fanatical Positions She Met . . . . .                        | 90  |
| Wrestling With the Views of the Spiritualizers . . . . .          | 90  |
| Ellen Leaves Suddenly for Home . . . . .                          | 92  |
| The Healing of Frances Howland and William Hyde . . . . .         | 93  |
| Preserved from Fanaticism . . . . .                               | 94  |
| Visit to New Hampshire . . . . .                                  | 95  |
| Contending with Spiritual Magnetism . . . . .                     | 97  |
| Called Back to Portland . . . . .                                 | 98  |
| Vision of the New Earth . . . . .                                 | 99  |
| Chapter 6—(1845-1846) Sustained in a Continued Ministry . . . . . | 102 |
| Enabled to Write . . . . .  | 103 |
| The Large Family Bible . . . . .                                  | 104 |
| The Bible Held in Vision . . . . .                                | 104 |
| The Unenviable Position of the Prophet . . . . .                  | 105 |
| A Symbolic Warning . . . . .                                      | 106 |
| “Another Angel, Father!” . . . . .                                | 107 |
| Who Could be Saved? . . . . .                                     | 108 |
| The First Visit to Massachusetts . . . . .                        | 110 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| The 1845 Expectancy of the Second Advent . . . . .            | 112 |
| The Second Visit to Massachusetts . . . . .                   | 114 |
| Otis Nichols' Eyewitness Account . . . . .                    | 117 |
| Meeting Joseph Bates at New Bedford . . . . .                 | 119 |
| The Publication of Her First Vision—January, 1846 . . . . .   | 121 |
| Publication of the Vision of the Heavenly Sanctuary . . . . . | 121 |
| The Place of the Vision in Confirming the Sanctuary Truth     | 122 |
| God's Leadings Clearly Manifest . . . . .                     | 122 |
| The Vision in a Sailboat . . . . .                            | 123 |
| Chapter 7—(1846-1847) Entering Married Life . . . . .         | 125 |
| The Wedding . . . . .   | 127 |
| Their First Home . . . . .                                    | 128 |
| Stricken with Severe Illness . . . . .                        | 130 |
| Acceptance of the Seventh Day as the Sabbath . . . . .        | 132 |
| The Profitable Time in Massachusetts . . . . .                | 133 |
| Vision Confirming the Sabbath . . . . .                       | 136 |
| Rebaptism of Ellen White . . . . .                            | 138 |
| The Visions of Ellen White . . . . .                          | 138 |
| Ellen White's Letter to Eli Curtis . . . . .                  | 141 |
| Chapter 8—(1847-1848) Laying the Foundations . . . . .        | 144 |
| James White on the Prophetic Gift . . . . .                   | 145 |
| New Responsibilities . . . . .                                | 151 |
| Ellen Hits an All-Time Low in Discouragement . . . . .        | 152 |
| Careers Changed . . . . .                                     | 154 |
| The First "General Conference" of Sabbathkeeping              |     |
| Adventists . . . . .  | 154 |
| Chapter 9—(1848) The Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences        |     |
| and the Development of Doctrines . . . . .                    | 157 |
| The Volney Conference . . . . .                               | 158 |
| The Conference at Port Gibson, New York . . . . .             | 161 |
| The Development of the Doctrines . . . . .                    | 162 |
| Ellen White's Mind Locked for a Few Years . . . . .           | 164 |
| A Glimpse of the Activities at the Conferences . . . . .      | 166 |
| Established by the Lord God of Heaven . . . . .               | 167 |
| Commissioned to Print a "Little Paper" . . . . .              | 169 |
| Chapter 10—(1848-1849) Heaven-directed Travels and            |     |
| Important Visions . . . . .                                   | 172 |
| Troubles in Europe and Their Supposed Significance . . . . .  | 173 |

---

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| View of Heaven and Other Worlds . . . . .                                | 176 |
| Was It Ellen White or the Spirit of God? . . . . .                       | 178 |
| Travels and Labors in Early 1849 . . . . .                               | 179 |
| Another Important Vision . . . . .                                       | 180 |
| Quandary over the Next Move . . . . .                                    | 183 |
| Chapter 11—(1849) Beginning to Publish . . . . .                         | 185 |
| Writing for the Press . . . . .  | 186 |
| Ellen White described its reception: . . . . .                           | 187 |
| The Proclamation of the Third Angel’s Message . . . . .                  | 188 |
| The Content of the Paper . . . . .                                       | 188 |
| Birth of a Second Son, James Edson White . . . . .                       | 189 |
| The Paris, Maine, Conference . . . . .                                   | 191 |
| Among the Believers in Maine and New York State . . . . .                | 192 |
| A Hymnbook for the Sabbathkeeping Adventists . . . . .                   | 193 |
| The Little Paper Almost Died . . . . .                                   | 194 |
| Death Invades the Camp . . . . .   | 196 |
| Fruitage of Public Ministry in Oswego . . . . .                          | 198 |
| Vision of Future Events . . . . .  | 199 |
| The Visit to Vermont and Maine . . . . .                                 | 200 |
| The Gift of a Horse and Carriage . . . . .                               | 201 |
| Chapter 12—(1850) The Summer the Tide Turned . . . . .                   | 203 |
| Satan’s Vicious Attacks . . . . .  | 205 |
| Special Significance Disclosed by Vision . . . . .                       | 208 |
| The Third Angel’s Message to be Made Plain by a Chart . . . . .          | 209 |
| A Marked and Significant Change in the Tide . . . . .                    | 210 |
| Many Visions Giving Insights and Guidance . . . . .                      | 212 |
| A Summary of Other Important Visions . . . . .                           | 213 |
| A Time for Development of the Doctrinal Structure . . . . .              | 215 |
| The Crucial Yet Productive Years of the “Scattering Time” . . . . .      | 217 |
| Taking Up Residence in Maine . . . . .                                   | 219 |
| Significant Conferences at Paris and Topsham . . . . .                   | 220 |
| Chapter 13—(1851) The First Winter of “The Gathering<br>Time “ . . . . . | 222 |
| The Rescue of S. W. Rhodes . . . . .                                     | 222 |
| A Demonstration of Tongues that Misled . . . . .                         | 225 |
| Stabilizing Counsels Given by Vision . . . . .                           | 226 |
| The “Review and Herald” Is Born . . . . .                                | 230 |
| Difficult Days in Paris . . . . .  | 231 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| The 1851 Time Setting . . . . .   | 235 |
| The Time Dropped Before the Expiration . . . . .                        | 237 |
| Chapter 14—(1851) Mixed Experiences in “The Gathering Time” . . . . .   | 239 |
| Concerted Plan to Publish the Visions . . . . .                         | 240 |
| Ellen White’s First Book . . . . .                                      | 242 |
| Settling in Saratoga Springs, New York . . . . .                        | 242 |
| Moves Toward Order and Organization . . . . .                           | 244 |
| The Conference at Washington, New Hampshire . . . . .                   | 245 |
| The Bethel, Vermont, Conference . . . . .                               | 248 |
| The Conference at Johnson, Vermont . . . . .                            | 249 |
| The Conference at Vergennes, Vermont . . . . .                          | 252 |
| Testimony Concerning Using Tobacco . . . . .                            | 253 |
| The Midwinter Tour in Western New York . . . . .                        | 254 |
| Back Home in Saratoga Springs . . . . .                                 | 256 |
| Chapter 15—(1852) Girding Up for a Mighty Thrust . . . . .              | 257 |
| Status of Publishing the Review . . . . .                               | 259 |
| Establishing a Publishing Office in Rochester, New York . . . . .       | 259 |
| The Tour East . . . . .   | 262 |
| A Visit to the Gorham Home . . . . .                                    | 265 |
| On to James White’s Boyhood Home . . . . .                              | 266 |
| Subjects Discussed at the Conferences . . . . .                         | 267 |
| John N. Loughborough Enters the Picture . . . . .                       | 268 |
| Chapter 16—(1845-1852) The Shut and the Open Doors . . . . .            | 271 |
| Ellen G. White Looks Back . . . . .                                     | 271 |
| Positive Denial of the False Charge . . . . .                           | 273 |
| Explained Further as a Charge is Answered in 1883 . . . . .             | 275 |
| Developing Perception on Ellen White’s Part . . . . .                   | 276 |
| A Term with a Changing Meaning . . . . .                                | 277 |
| Vision of the Open and Shut Door . . . . .                              | 277 |
| Labor for Sinners During the Shut-Door Period of 1845 to 1851 . . . . . | 279 |
| Experience of Heman Churchill (July, 1850) . . . . .                    | 280 |
| J. H. Waggoner Recalls His Experience . . . . .                         | 280 |
| A Review of 1851 Developments . . . . .                                 | 282 |
| Criticism of Deletions from the First Vision . . . . .                  | 283 |
| Why Were the Lines Omitted in 1851? . . . . .                           | 286 |
| Chapter 17—(1852-1853) The Message Pushes to the West . . . . .         | 288 |

---

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Strict Economy Maintained . . . . .  | 288 |
| Working in the Opening West . . . . .  | 290 |
| First Visit of James and Ellen White to Michigan . . . . .                       | 290 |
| With the Believers in Jackson, Michigan . . . . .                                | 293 |
| The Strange Case of a Self-Appointed Woman Evangelist . . . . .                  | 294 |
| Lost on the Way to Vergennes . . . . .   | 295 |
| The Vergennes Meeting and Mrs. Alcott . . . . .                                  | 297 |
| Back Home in Rochester . . . . .   | 299 |
| The Review and Herald to be Published Weekly . . . . .                           | 300 |
| The 1853 Eastern Tour . . . . .  | 300 |
| Chapter 18—(1854) Nurturing the Developing Church . . . . .                      | 302 |
| The Vital Need for Church Organization . . . . .                                 | 304 |
| James White Joins in Calling for Gospel Order . . . . .                          | 306 |
| The Tour of Northeastern New York State . . . . .                                | 307 |
| Sins Tolerated in the Camp . . . . .   | 308 |
| Early Light on Basic Health Principles . . . . .                                 | 309 |
| Ellen White’s Battle With Disease . . . . .                                      | 311 |
| Continuing the Evangelistic Thrust . . . . .                                     | 312 |
| The Trip to Wisconsin . . . . .  | 313 |
| Establishing the First “Adventist Book Center” . . . . .                         | 316 |
| Eyes on the Evangelistic Tent . . . . .  | 317 |
| Chapter 19—(1854-1855) Through Hours of Darkness . . . . .                       | 321 |
| Tested by a Physician While in Vision . . . . .                                  | 322 |
| Problems that Loomed Large . . . . .   | 324 |
| The Messenger Party . . . . .  | 326 |
| A Bitter Lesson on Compromising on Doctrinal Truth . . . . .                     | 332 |
| What Happened to the “Messengers” . . . . .                                      | 336 |
| Ellen White Portrays the Steps in Apostasy . . . . .                             | 337 |
| Chapter 20—(1855) Settling Administrative and<br>Theological Questions . . . . . | 338 |
| The Eleven-Week Tour Through New England . . . . .                               | 341 |
| The Review Office to Go to Battle Creek, Michigan . . . . .                      | 341 |
| A Transition Evidencing the Maturity of the Church . . . . .                     | 342 |
| The Doctrinal Point—Time to Begin the Sabbath . . . . .                          | 344 |
| The Impressive Lesson Taught by this Experience . . . . .                        | 347 |
| The Neglect of the Spirit of Prophecy . . . . .                                  | 349 |
| The “Conference Address” . . . . .   | 351 |
| Chapter 21—(1856) Working in a Changed Atmosphere . . . . .                      | 355 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| The Whites and the White Home . . . . .   | 357 |
| Ellen White Revives her Drowned Baby . . . . .                                      | 361 |
| Chapter 22—(1856) Soul-shaking Experiences for the<br>Ministers and Laity . . . . . | 363 |
| The Use of Tobacco . . . . .  | 366 |
| A Profitable Trip into the Field . . . . .  | 366 |
| The Laodicean Message . . . . .   | 367 |
| The Trip into Ohio and Iowa . . . . .   | 370 |
| Chapter 23—(1857) A Year of Many Visions . . . . .                                  | 377 |
| The Vision at Hillsdale, Michigan . . . . .   | 377 |
| Visiting the Churches in Eastern Michigan . . . . .                                 | 380 |
| The Concept of the Investigative Judgment Dawns . . . . .                           | 380 |
| A Power Press for the Review Office . . . . .                                       | 382 |
| Plans for a Trip East . . . . .   | 383 |
| Vision at Buck’s Bridge, New York . . . . .   | 385 |
| The August Vision at Monterey, Michigan . . . . .                                   | 388 |
| The October Visit to Monterey and Another Important Vision . . . . .                | 389 |
| The Battle Creek Conference . . . . .   | 392 |
| The Vision of the Shaking . . . . .   | 393 |
| Chapter 24—(1858) The Great Controversy Vision and<br>Broader Concepts . . . . .    | 395 |
| Meetings in Ohio . . . . .  | 396 |
| The Great Controversy Vision . . . . .  | 397 |
| Counsels for New Believers . . . . .  | 398 |
| A View of the Agelong Controversy in its Broad Sweep . . . . .                      | 400 |
| Ellen White Tells the Story at the General Conference in<br>May . . . . .           | 402 |
| The Choice of Title for the Forthcoming Book . . . . .                              | 405 |
| A Startling and Thought-Provoking Object Lesson . . . . .                           | 405 |
| M. B. Czechowski, the Converted Catholic Priest . . . . .                           | 408 |
| Chapter 25—(1858-1859) Financial Support for the Cause<br>of God . . . . .          | 410 |
| The Support of the Ministers . . . . .  | 413 |
| The Promise of a Way Out . . . . .  | 418 |
| The Development of the Plan of Systematic Benevolence . . . . .                     | 419 |
| The Address . . . . .   | 420 |
| Chapter 26—(1859) Through 1859 With Ellen White’s Diary . . . . .                   | 426 |
| The January Trip to Wright, Michigan . . . . .                                      | 427 |

---

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| The Battle Creek Home . . . . .                              | 433 |
| The Home Program . . . . .                                   | 434 |
| Writing Personal Testimonies . . . . .                       | 436 |
| The Battle Creek General Conference . . . . .                | 438 |
| The June Vision . . . . .                                    | 439 |
| Testimony for the Church No. 5 . . . . .                     | 441 |
| The Autumn Trip East . . . . .                               | 442 |
| Chapter 27—(1860) The Opening of the Year of Little Joy . .  | 444 |
| The Lure of the West . . . . .                               | 445 |
| The Tour in the West . . . . .                               | 447 |
| Letters to the Children . . . . .                            | 448 |
| At Knoxville, Iowa . . . . .                                 | 450 |
| Spiritual Gifts,, Volume II, Comes from the Press . . . . .  | 454 |
| A Fourth Son Is Born . . . . .                               | 454 |
| Chapter 28—(1860) Initial Steps in Church Organization . . . | 456 |
| Adopting a Denominational Name . . . . .                     | 458 |
| “Seventh-day Adventists” The Name Chosen . . . . .           | 460 |
| Led by God in the Switch of Travel Plans . . . . .           | 461 |
| The Husband and Father Away from Home . . . . .              | 462 |
| Chapter 29—(1861) Pointed Reproof and Heartfelt Confessions  | 469 |
| A Soul-Stirring Vision . . . . .                             | 470 |
| Ellen White Alters Her Practice . . . . .                    | 471 |
| General Counsel for the Church . . . . .                     | 474 |
| Steps in Church Organization Commended . . . . .             | 474 |
| Providentially Saved from Financial Loss . . . . .           | 476 |
| A Western Tour . . . . .                                     | 478 |
| The Tide Begins to Turn . . . . .                            | 480 |
| Chapter 30—(1861) The Struggle for Church Organization       |     |
| Continues . . . . .  | 484 |
| The Conference Address on Organizing Churches . . . . .      | 487 |
| The Eight-Week Eastern Tour . . . . .                        | 487 |
| Vision at Roosevelt, New York . . . . .                      | 488 |
| The Battle Creek Church Sets the Pace in Organizing . . . .  | 491 |
| A Creed and the Spirit of Prophecy . . . . .                 | 493 |
| The Formation of the Michigan Conference . . . . .           | 494 |
| Other States Organize . . . . .                              | 496 |
| Cautions Sounded . . . . .                                   | 496 |
| M. E. Cornell to Go to Ohio . . . . .                        | 499 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Confessions of Negative Attitudes . . . . .                 | 500 |
| James White Surveys the Battle and Victory . . . . .        | 501 |
| Chapter 31—(1861) The Clouds of War . . . . .               | 503 |
| Vision at Parkville, Michigan . . . . .                     | 503 |
| Ellen White Examined While in Vision . . . . .              | 505 |
| At Home and Writing Personal Testimonies . . . . .          | 506 |
| The Inroads of Prevailing Fashion . . . . .                 | 508 |
| Letters to the Wife of a Minister . . . . .                 | 509 |
| Another Intimate Glimpse of the White Home Life . . . . .   | 512 |
| A Second Vision of Civil War Involvement . . . . .          | 513 |
| The New Publishing House . . . . .                          | 514 |
| The Five-Week Western Tour . . . . .                        | 516 |
| The War and the Threatening Draft of Recruits . . . . .     | 516 |
| Chapter 32—(1862) The Year 1862 Closes on an Upbeat . . .   | 519 |
| First Annual Session of the Michigan State Conference . . . | 519 |
| The Business Sessions of the Conference . . . . .           | 520 |
| Matters for Conference Consideration . . . . .              | 521 |
| Organization of the General Conference . . . . .            | 522 |
| The Last Few Weeks of 1862 . . . . .                        | 524 |
| A Burden for the Youth of the Church . . . . .              | 524 |
| Victories at Wright and Orleans . . . . .                   | 527 |
| Triumphant Year-End Meetings at Battle Creek . . . . .      | 528 |
| The Church Prepared for Development and Expansion . . .     | 529 |
| Appendix A . . . . .  | 530 |
| [A Geneological Chart of Ellen Gould Harmon White] . . .    | 530 |
| Appendix B . . . . .  | 531 |
| The Experience of William Ellis Foy . . . . .               | 531 |
| Sources . . . . .   | 533 |
| Appendix C . . . . .  | 534 |
| Stephen Smith and the Unopened Testimony . . . . .          | 534 |

## About the Author

Arthur Lacey White, one of seven grandchildren of James and Ellen White, was born to William C. (Willie) and Ethel May White on October 6, 1907. He grew up in picturesque Pratt Valley, just below the St. Helena Sanitarium in Northern California. This small valley cradled not only the W. C. White home but Elmshaven, the home of Ellen White, and several others. Arthur attended the nearby ten-grade church school and then continued his education at Pacific Union College. He received a certificate in business administration in 1928 and that same year was united in marriage with a classmate, Frieda Belle Swingle. The newlyweds moved to Madison College in Tennessee, he to serve as assistant accountant and she as secretary to college and hospital personnel.

The following year Arthur was called to the office of the Ellen G. White Estate at Elmshaven to serve as accountant and general assistant to his 74-year-old father. The latter was one of five church leaders appointed by Ellen White in her will to administer her estate; when Arthur joined him in 1929 he was secretary of the Board of Trustees. During the next nine years Arthur was given increasing responsibilities, and in 1933 he was appointed assistant secretary of the Board. Shortly after the death of W. C. White at the age of 83, in late 1937, Arthur was elected as a life member of the board and secretary of the Estate, a position he held for forty-one years.

On the death of his father, in harmony with plans of long standing, Arthur supervised the immediate transfer of the office and E. G. White files to the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, D.C. Principal tasks included working with the world field in the development of the available Spirit of Prophecy literature and assembling E. G. White materials for publication, in compilations such as *Evangelism*, *The Adventist Home*, and *Selected Messages*, climaxed by the three-volume *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White*.

[8]

With the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Arthur White was drawn into a teaching program in Washington, Berrien Springs, and overseas. He taught in thirteen overseas Seminary Extension Schools. As secretary of the White Estate he also wrote many periodical articles and produced substantial monographs dealing with various matters relating to Ellen White and her teachings. In 1973 Andrews University conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

In 1966 the Board of Trustees, in counsel with the General Conference officers, asked Arthur White to author a definitive biography of Ellen White. Hesitant because of his personal relationship to the subject of the biography, but conditioned by his stance taken early in his ministry that he would relate to Ellen White as would any other loyal Seventh-day Adventist, viewing her as “Sister White” and not as “my grandmother,” he accepted the assignment. In 1978 he resigned as secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate to devote his energies almost exclusively to the biography project. Adhering to a careful schedule, he produced one volume each year, doing his work largely in his study at home, where he could give undivided attention to research and writing while at the same time maintaining easy access to the rich sources in the White Estate vault.

The foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had been quite well established by the early 1860s, the time with which this volume opens. The doctrinal structure was well formed, each major point having been dug from the word of God and its certainty attested to by the Spirit of God. The battle for church organization had been fought and largely won.

The Publishers

## A Statement the Author Would Like to Have You Read [9]

The story of her life,” wrote F. M. Wilcox, “is the story of this movement. The two are identified in experience.”—[The Review and Herald, February 27, 1913](#).

*Review and Herald* editor Wilcox had just visited Ellen White in her Elmshaven home. Being a seasoned evangelist, a church executive, and now editor of the general church paper, he was in a unique position to make such an appraisal. This biography attests to the accuracy of his observation.

It was a very full and fruitful life that Ellen White lived from 1827 to 1915. It produces a story not so fully told as now in this six-volume biography, *Ellen G. White*. True, biographical sketches and several books have been published down through the years. These began with the seven pages devoted to her experience printed in July, 1851, in her first book, a diminutive volume of sixty-four pages. They include the 480-page *Life Sketches*, hurried into the field on her death in 1915. It had to be limited in detail.

In the Summer of 1950 the board of trustees of the Ellen G. White estate, recognizing the need of a definitive biography for the information and the edification of the church, authorized the production of such a biography. Shortly thereafter the board asked F. D. Nichol, the editor of the *Review*, to prepare the manuscript. Groundwork was begun in the offices of the White Estate. As nichol was about to take up the writing itself, with the assistance of Arthur L. White, the secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate, he died suddenly from a dissecting aneurysm. The board of trustees then, in October, 1966, asked arthur White to undertake the task. A beginning was made as his responsibilities as secretary of the White Estate allowed. That he might give full time to the biography, in 1978 he asked that another be called to fill his office. [10]

As white began writing he faced a number of decisions: what kind of biography would it be? For whom would it be written? How

many pages would be devoted to treating the more than 25,000 days of Ellen White's active ministry in the United States, Europe, and Australia? How would her life story be divided in the projected volumes?

The newly chosen author saw her life and ministry divided rather naturally into six eras:

The early years—1827-1862  
 the progressive years—1863-1875  
 the lonely years—1876-1891  
 the Australian years—1891-1900  
 the early elmshaven years—1900-1905  
 the later elmshaven years—1905-1915

For three reasons, he chose to begin the writing with the elmshaven years:

Other published works, mostly autobiographical, treat Ellen White's early life in considerable detail, while the later years are handled rather sketchily. In *Life Sketches* one third of the volume, or 160 pages, is devoted to the first years of her life and a decade of active ministry, while the major part of her life, sixty years of travels and ministry, are crowded into 320 pages.

Second, there were, at the time the writing was undertaken, a number of persons living who knew Ellen White and who could be interviewed, to obtain interesting information.

Finally, the issues that followed quickly after her return from Australia to the United States in 1900 had a particular interest and relevance to the church at present.

### **The Author's Aims and Objectives**

The author has had before him as aims and objectives: 1. To write for the average reader, but in such detail and with such documentation as will meet the expectations of the scholar.

2. To leave the reader with the feeling that he or she is  
 [11] Acquainted with Ellen White as a very human person.

3. To portray accurately her life and work as the Lord's messenger in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, not by a slavish chronicle

of each day of her active ministry, but by a selection from her experience of events and happenings that illustrate her lifework and make a contribution to the cause.

4. As far as possible, to keep these events in a year-by-year development, picturing her home life, her travels, her weaknesses and strengths, her burden of heart, and her earnest devotional life.

5. To select and present in detail, significant events, two or three in a given year, that best illustrate her prophetic mission, depicting the interplay between the prophet and church leaders, institutions, and individuals, and recounting the sending of testimonies and the response to these messages.

6. To provide a knowledge of the principal points of the history of the church in a unique way as it is seen especially through the eyes of, or in relation to, the messenger of the lord.

7. To make the work not only an interesting narrative but to provide a selection of illustrative experiences with which the reader may at times vicariously associate himself.

8. To keep constantly before the reader the major role the visions played in almost every phase of the experiences comprising the narrative.

9. Where convenient to the purposes of the manuscript, to let Ellen White speak in her own words, rather than providing a paraphrase. This ensures an accurate conveyance of the unique and fine points of the messages in the very expressions of the prophetic messenger herself. Thus, many important statements are provided in a form that will be of value to all readers.

10. To provide a documented running account of the literary work done both by Ellen White and her literary assistants in the production of her articles and books.

11. And in all of this, to present in the narrative, in a natural way, confidence-confirming features.

In dealing with any given era, the pattern of travels and labors is established early by going into detail in narrating certain typical experiences, but as the account continues, much less detail in such features is called for. All through her life, writing almost constantly called for her attention. Therefore, only occasional reference is made to this dominant feature of her work. Also, she suffered from

physical infirmities and she was often in pain, but no attempt is made to keep this fact before the reader.

Mention should be made here of her conversation with the angel in connection with the commission that she should present to others what had been opened up to her. Having observed the experience of some especially favored by God, she feared she might become exalted, but the angel of the Lord responded: “if this evil that you dread threatens you, the hand of God will be stretched out to save you; by affliction he will draw you to himself and preserve your humility.”—1LS, p. 196.

J. N. Loughborough (who was closely associated with Ellen White), addressing the general conference in 1893, referred to this:

[The apostle Paul] tells us that lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh.... Sister White has also a thorn in the flesh; she has continually had great difficulty with her heart, yet she will not have the brethren pray that she may be relieved of this trouble, for she said it was to remain by her, and to be manifested whenever she was in danger of becoming exalted.—[The General Conference Bulletin, 1893, 19.](#)

Relying momentarily and constantly on God kept her very close to him, and left no place for self-exaltation. We would not be justified, however, in attributing every illness and all discomfort to this cause.

Doubtless there will be some differences of opinion as to the value of some of the details presented. It is the Author’s opinion that they make a contribution to reading interest and rather intimate acquaintance with Ellen White.

A task of such proportions as this could not have been accomplished by one person single-handedly within a decade or two. Even before the responsibility fell on the Author’s shoulders, members of the White Estate staff were assigned the task of assembling biographical materials and preparing an indispensable card index to biographical data. As the task has been carried forward, members of

assistance. Certain of these have been mentioned by name in the opening statements of the particular volumes of which they gave special help.

The sources from which the author has worked are voluminous. They include the Ellen G. White diaries, the tens of thousands of pages of her letters and manuscripts, her many articles as they have appeared in the *Review and Herald* and *Signs of the Times* and other journals, her books and pamphlets, the correspondence she and her office received through the years, and letters and historical articles in the White Estate document file. Also, for general historical backgrounds, the *Review and Herald* in its entirety

The reader will find in the pages of this biography a great deal of denominational history, but the limitations of space preclude enlarging on points of interest and value in the development of the church. The record has had to be confined to areas where Ellen White in her presence, or through her writings, has had an important bearing. Nor is the author able to introduce, in the space allowed, each and every incident in the life and work of Ellen White, profitable as that may be.

This volume, *The early years*, the first of the series of six, traces her activities through her developing Christian experience, the advent movement and disappointment of 1844, and how she became the recipient of visions. It deals with her place with her husband and Joseph Bates in laying the foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and discloses the vital role the visions had in this development. If in this and the succeeding volumes Ellen White becomes better known as an individual—a wife and mother, a neighbor and friend—as well as the messenger of the Lord, laboring tirelessly in the pulpit and on the public platform in declaring God's messages and in counseling often and writing incessantly, with influence felt the world around, the objectives of the author will have been largely met.

Arthur L. White

## Abbreviations

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AR     | Advent Review   |
| DF     | Ellen G. White Estate Document File                       |
| EGW    | Ellen G. White  |
| Ev     | Evangelism  |
| EW     | Early Writings  |
| GC     | The Great Controversy                                     |
| GCB    | General Conference Bulletin                               |
| GSAM   | The Great Second Advent Movement                          |
| JNL    | John N. Loughborough                                      |
| JW     | James White   |
| Letter | Ellen G. White letter                                     |
| 1LS    | Life Sketches, 1880 ed. (2LS, 1888 ed.; 3LS, 1915 ed.)    |
| MS     | Ellen G. White manuscript                                 |
| PT     | Present Truth   |
| PUR    | Pacific Union Recorder                                    |
| RH     | Review and Herald   |
| 1SG    | Spiritual Gifts, Vol. I (2SG, etc., for Vols. II-IV)      |
| 1SM    | Selected Messages, book 1 (2SM, etc., for books 2,3)      |
| 1SP    | The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1 (2SP, etc., for vols. 2-4) |
| ST     | Signs of the Times  |
| 1T     | Testimonies, vol. 1 (2T, etc., for vols. 2-9)             |
| TM     | Testimonies to Ministers                                  |
| WCW    | William C. White  |
| WLF    | A Word to the “Little Flock”                              |

## Chapter 1—(1827-1836) The Messenger of the Lord [15] in Our Midst

In old Battle Creek on a Tuesday morning in April hundreds had gathered at the tabernacle for the opening meeting of a General Conference session. After the usual formalities, the president closed his opening address, surrendered the office that he had held for two years, and declared:

“The conference is now formally opened. What is your pleasure?”

A little woman in advancing years arose from one of the seats on the floor, pressed to the front, mounted the steps to the platform, and moved to the desk to speak to the large audience. She had something to say, and she felt that now was the time to say it. After describing the great privilege of the Advent people to stand high above the world, sanctified by the truth and having a close connection with heaven, she came quickly to the burden of her heart—the quality and fitness of those who serve in the cause of God, and especially those who lead. She declared:

Every soul in every conference, in every part of the Lord’s vineyard, has the privilege of knowing the truth. But truth is not truth to those who do not practice it. Truth is only truth to you when you live it in daily life, showing the world what those people must be who are at last saved. [Quotations in this introductory account are from [Ibid., 1901, 23-26, 460-464.](#)]

Then addressing particularly the leaders of the General Conference, she pointed out the damaging impact on a rapidly growing church of restrictive policies imposed by a very small group of men struggling to manage a work that had grown far beyond their ability to handle. “You have no right to manage,” she declared, “unless you manage in God’s order.” She then cried out: [16]

What we want now is a reorganization. We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle.... There are to be more than one or two or three men to consider the whole vast field. The work is great, and there is no one human mind that can plan for the work which needs to be done.

The speaker hastened to say:

According to the light that has been given me—and just how it is to be accomplished I cannot say—greater strength must be brought into the managing force of the conference.... There must be a renovation, a reorganization; a power and strength must be brought into the committees that are necessary.

It was a solemn and breathtaking address. The delegates, representing a world church of seventy-five thousand members, sat spellbound for a full hour. The response was immediate: That very hour steps were taken for the session to turn from usual procedures and address itself to accomplish what the words of the speaker plainly called for—reorganization.

Who was this little woman who spoke so earnestly and so plainly at the opening of a great congress of the church with words of reproof and counsel and then hope, words that burned within the hearts of church leaders and all present that day?

The voice was that of the messenger of the Lord, Ellen G. White, who for nearly a decade had resided overseas, and who for half a century and more had been bringing messages from the God of heaven to encourage, guide, and guard His remnant people on earth.

Just three weeks later the reorganization was fully accomplished. Responsibilities in church management had been shifted from just a few men at the General Conference headquarters to a large number carrying responsibilities in the various portions of the gospel field.

[17] The way was now open for the work of God in its many ramifications throughout the world to forge ahead. At the farewell meeting many

joined J. N. Loughborough, who was present during the organization of the General Conference thirty-eight years before, in the expression “I thank God for what I have seen here in this work of reorganization during this conference.”

In her closing remarks Ellen White asked the question “Who do you suppose has been among us since this conference began? ... Who has walked up and down the aisles of this tabernacle?” She answered, “The God of heaven and His angels,” and added:

We have been trying to organize the work on right lines. The Lord has sent His angels to minister unto us who are heirs of salvation, telling us how to carry the work forward.... Press together, press together. Let us be united in Christ.

The church had heard the voice of God through His messenger, and the response was electrifying and immediate. But, by rights, we should begin the story of the life and work of Ellen G. White with her birth and early life—and in doing so, let her speak.

### **Here the Story Begins**

“By the request of dear friends,” wrote Ellen White just fifty years earlier as she traced the opening lines of her first little book in 1851, “I have consented to give a brief sketch of my experience and views, with the hope that it will cheer and strengthen the humble, trusting children of the Lord.” The “brief sketch” did that. But her active life was to extend over another sixty-four years. Now it is with difficulty that the story is confined to six large volumes.

In a fuller account she makes the simple statement:

I was born at Gorham, Maine, November 26, 1827.  
My parents, Robert and Eunice Harmon, were for many years residents of this state.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:9](#).

The village of Gorham is situated some twelve miles west of the city of Portland in rolling country. If tradition can be trusted, the Harmon family lived in a little one-and-a-half-story cottage on Fort Hill, two miles north of the village. The home stood until 1971, when it was destroyed by fire. It was in this home, in a second-floor

[18] bedroom, that twins, Ellen Gould and Elizabeth M. Harmon, were born. Robert Harmon worked the land and possibly, during the bitterly cold winter months, engaged in making hats part-time to supplement the rather meager returns from agricultural pursuits.

The name Harmon is well known in the area stretching out to the west from Portland. The family was not an insignificant one. [Ellen's father and mother both sprang from Anglo-Saxon families with traceable lines back through early American history to England. [See Appendix A](#) for the genealogical records of her immediate progenitors. A comprehensive "family tree" is available from the Ellen G. White Estate.] Ellen's grandfather Daniel had been a corporal in the Revolutionary War. Her great-grandfather John had married an Irish woman; they were the first of the Harmons to settle in Standish, Maine. Ellen's great-great-grandfather Samuel had been a landowner in comfortable circumstances in Scarborough, Maine, where he built a mill on the river, known as "Harmon's Mill." Ellen's great-great-great-grandfather John served in King Philip's War, which broke out in 1675. He fought the Indians in "the great swamp fight," then as a reward was given a grant of land in Maine. He moved to Scarborough in 1726 and was one of the organizers of the First Congregational Church. Most of the Harmons were Congregationalists, but Robert, Ellen's father, broke the tradition. He became a Methodist.

On July 11, 1810, Robert Harmon married Eunice Gould, of Portland. At this time Maine was still a part of the State of Massachusetts. It was not until 1820 that it came into its own as a State in the Union. Robert and Eunice are spoken of in 1843 as having been Methodists for forty years, so it seems that both were members of the church from childhood.

When Ellen and Elizabeth were born, their oldest sister, Caroline, was 15, Harriet was 13, and John was 11 years old. Mary was 6, and then there was Sarah—with whom Ellen would have the closest relationship—who was 5. Robert was nearly 2 years old when the twins were born.

The Fort Hill farm, on which the Harmon home has been understood to have been situated, is two or three hundred yards from the spot where the first settlers of Gorham—also veterans of King Philip's War—built their fort for protection against the Indians. We

can well imagine Ellen as a child listening with other children to the old-timers of Gorham telling harrowing stories of the Indian wars, especially of one Gorham settler who decided to stay at home one more day before going to the fort. He wanted to gather the last of his crops, then would come with his family. But on that last day the Indians came, and only one small boy escaped, by hiding in the woods. [19]

But probably the recollection of Gorham that Ellen would cherish most was the spacious beauty of the place. The home was located on the brow of a hill overlooking the valley and the mountains beyond. Star flowers and trillium spread their carpet of bloom over the forest floor; beech trees and oaks and birches flung their delicate new leaves in the breeze against the background of the dark evergreens. The land sloped away from the farmhouse and provided a beautiful view of the broad expanse below Sebago Lake; in the distance were the lifting heights of the White Mountains.

### **Harbingers of the Advent Awakening**

Just two weeks before Ellen's sixth birthday the local Portland Advertiser reported:

We are told by the early risers ... that the sky yesterday morning [November 13], before sunrise, was full of meteors and luminous traces, shooting athwart the heavens in all directions. The sky, some say, seemed to be on fire—others add that the stars appeared to be falling.—November 15, 1833.

A few hundred miles away in Low Hampton, New York, a farmer and former Army officer named William Miller was just beginning a new career as a preacher. He was telling the world what he had discovered in the prophecies—that Christ was coming soon, yes, within ten years. Miller's first published work, a sixty-four-page pamphlet, appeared in 1833. That was the year he received his license to preach, and his traveling, preaching, and correspondence were increasing rapidly (F. D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*, pp. 52-57).

But in nearby Gorham little Ellen slept soundly through the night when the stars fell. She knew nothing yet of William Miller and his message, and in November, 1833, she was probably just starting to attend school. It is logical to assume that like any healthy youngster she must have used the carefree moments of her childhood to learn more about the things around her.

[20]

### Carefree Childhood Days

With her brothers and sisters Ellen made little journeys into the woods. In later years she told her children of how on one fall day they went in search of hickory nuts, gathered and hidden by the squirrels.

Ellen, always compassionate, took with her a little cloth bag of corn. When she found a cache of nuts in a hole in a hollow tree, she eagerly retrieved her find and then substituted the corn she had brought, hoping that the exchange would not be too disappointing to the provident squirrels.

As with most families of modest circumstances in those days, the milk supply came from the family cow. Whether the story she was to tell in later years took place in Gorham before the family moved to Portland, or after they had taken up residence in the southern outskirts of the city, is difficult to determine. We do know that Ellen at an early age learned to milk and loved the animals for which she cared.

One evening as she went to the pasture gate to bring the cow to the shed for milking, the bossy that usually was there waiting for her was nowhere in sight. Ellen went down through the woods, frequently calling the cow. Not until she had reached a little brook in the valley below, did she hear a response. To her dismay she found the cow in the middle of the stream, with all four feet stuck in the mud. Immediately Ellen set about devising a plan to get the cow unstuck. Picking some luscious grass nearby, she reached out to the cow, who was grateful for something to eat. After repeating this several times, Ellen offered the cow another generous handful of grass, but this time held it just a little beyond her reach. Then with her free hand grasping the nearest horn Ellen urged, "Come, Bossy," and moved the grass away. The cow, fearful of losing the promised

morsel, put forth extraordinary effort to break loose from the mud. Soon Ellen and cow were making their way back to home and shed.

### **Early Experiences Recounted**

Occasionally in later years Ellen mentioned her girlhood experiences. When she and her twin sister, who was rather chubby and could not climb as Ellen could, were going through the woods, Elizabeth would say to Ellen, “Help over log.” Of course Ellen did, and as she recounted this years later to a nurse, Delia Walker-Lovell, she remarked, “I have been helping over logs ever since.” [21]

In 1901 she wrote of the character-building discipline that had a mold on her life:

When I was a child, and was told to do something, sometimes I would begin to speak words of complaint, and would go out of the room. But I would be called back, and asked to repeat what I had said. Then I would repeat it. My mother would take that up, and show me how I was a part of the family, a part of the firm; that it was as much my duty to carry my part of the responsibility as it was my parents’ duty to take charge to me. She would carry that out to the letter. I had my times now and then for amusement, but I tell you there was no idleness in my home, and there was no disobedience there that was not taken in hand at once.—  
[Manuscript 82, 1901.](#)

### **A “School Days” Experience**

An experience at school, as recounted to a group of educators in the summer of 1891, gives us a glimpse of young Ellen and her character and her relation to people and circumstances.

In the days that she attended the school on Brackett Street, two or three students often sat together at one long desk. The girl sitting beside Ellen one day did something that provoked the teacher. In a rage he threw a ruler at the head of the offending pupil. His aim was poor and the ruler hit Ellen instead, gashing her forehead. Here

is how she told about it years later at the Harbor Springs teachers' convention:

It hit me and gave me a wonderful wound. I rose from my seat and left the room. When I left the schoolhouse and was on the way home, he ran after me and said, "Ellen, I made a mistake; won't you forgive me?"

Said I, "Certainly I will; but where is the mistake?"

"I did not mean to hit you."

"But," said I, "it is a mistake that you should hit anybody. I would just as soon have this gash in my forehead as to have another injured."—[Manuscript 8a, 1891](#).

[22] But now back to the times when Ellen Harmon was born. On that Monday, November 26, when the twins arrived in the second-floor bedroom of the Harmon home, John Quincy Adams was President of the United States. The next year, after a bitter election campaign, he would be replaced by Andrew Jackson. Experiments were being conducted in building the country's first railroad. In 1826, just one year before, the American Temperance Society was incorporated in Boston.

### **The Family Moves to the City of Portland**

While the Harmon family enjoyed the rural location of their Gorham home, Robert found his work as a hatter more prosperous than his farming, and the family moved sometime between 1831 and 1833 to the city of Portland, where he could give his full time to his trade. They first lived in a house on Spruce Street on the growing western edge of the city. Later they moved a few blocks down the hill to 44 Clark Street, for according to the city records it was there that Robert Harmon the Hatter lived in 1844.

When the family moved to Portland the population of the city was thirteen thousand. Business was good and growing. The city itself was situated on a peninsula jutting out into Casco Bay. When the Harmons moved there, the hills were virtually uninhabited, the main part of the city being concentrated in the center of the peninsula, which is about three miles long.

Ellen's mother, Eunice Gould, had grown up in Portland and came from a highly respected family. The city directory of 1834

shows seventeen Goulds, including a hatter, a hat store owner, and a widow named Sarah Gould. The name Sarah was given to Ellen's favorite older sister.

### **The Portland the Youthful Ellen Harmon Knew**

Portland, Maine, from its infancy was an important seaport. At no time was this more true than during Ellen's childhood. The poet Longfellow was born in a home at the edge of Casco Bay, and had grown up there just twenty years earlier. He left a rich source of poetic descriptions of Portland life. "I remember," Longfellow wrote, "the black wharves and the slips, and the sea-tides tossing free; and Spanish sailors with bearded lips, and the beauty and mystery of the ships."—"My Lost Youth," *Complete Poetical Works*, p. 194.

[23]

We can imagine Ellen and Elizabeth, perhaps in company with their older brother John, or even their father, visiting Portland Pier along Fore Street. Portland was noted for its trade with the West Indies, just as Salem, Massachusetts, specialized in the East India trade, and New Bedford in whaling. Along the Fore Street wharves were crowded a forest of masts: brigs, barks, majestic clippers, schooners, and even a few whalers. The "Spanish sailors with bearded lips" and with elaborate tattoos were there too. As Ellen and Elizabeth walked along, wide-eyed, under the pointed bowsprits of the graceful square-riggers, they could see the busy counting offices; the ship chandler's stores with their ropes, pulleys, anchors, chronometers, and other navigational instruments; and, here and there, the two-story sail lofts with their signs flapping from the upper windows.

The stevedores, many of them black, were hoisting the heavy barrels of Jamaica rum and molasses from the holds of the ships, and along with the sweating and swearing came the rhythmic songs of the islands.

The life of the sailors was hard and hazardous, and the Portland papers frequently carried stories about ships lost at sea or grounded and thrashed to shreds on the rocky coasts of New England. Many a home built in the city of Portland had its "widow's walk," a little porchlike area with a neatly painted white balustrade around it at the very top of a house. It is said that from these vantage points those

who waited the return of a husband, father, or son could look out over Casco Bay to watch for the return of the ship that had been out upon the seas for months or perhaps even a year or more.

The chief export from Portland was lumber. Portland's streets were often lined with teams of oxen hauling timber out of the virgin wilderness of Maine. While Portland sent its lumber out to different parts of the world, it received from the West Indies sugar, molasses, coffee, tobacco, spices, and of course, rum. The big share of the latter, considering the large sailor population in the town, kept things lively. Portland was early a center of temperance activity.

[24] The city directory of 1834 lists the professions of the men of the city and shows that it had 256 laborers, 220 mariners, 209 dealers in West Indian goods, 145 carpenters, and 131 ship captains. All of these jobs were related to the sea, for Portland was not only a seaport but also a shipbuilding center of considerable importance.

The weather in Portland was colder than it is today. The average yearly temperature between 1820 and 1833 was a mere 43 F. February was the coldest month, with the temperature hovering around 20 F. most of the time. In July the temperature reached the upper 60s. Snow was heavy, a little under five feet annually, but in 1833 nearly eight feet fell. The homes were heated by wood-burning stoves, and for light, whale-oil lamps were used. Common use of kerosene was yet two or three decades away. The Harmon home was brightened outside by the flowers that Eunice Harmon loved. The inside of the house was equipped for hatmaking.

We can imagine Robert Harmon taking his twin girls along to the wood market that occupied an entire block in the heart of the city, bounded by Brown, Congress, Center, and Free streets. Here farmers would unload cord wood and bargain with the townspeople. It might well have been here that Robert Harmon bought beaver and rabbit pelts of animals that the farmers had trapped. He would have to hire someone to take his wood and pelts home, for only a wealthy family kept its own horse and carriage or wagon.

### **Hatmaking in the Harmon House**

The animal pelts he bought would soon begin their transformation into fur top hats. First he would lay the pelt on a table and

with a stout brush rub in a solution of mercuric nitrate. This highly poisonous solution was necessary to make the infinitesimal barbs on each strand of fur become more pronounced. Then with either large shears or a scraping knife he would remove the fur from the skin and place it in a stack. After the hair had been laboriously picked out of the fur, the most difficult part of the process began. A device resembling a violin bow but five or six times as big was brought down over the table. Snapping the catgut on the pile of fur on the bench separated, scattered, and gradually deposited the particles in a smaller and finer sheet. Each sheet represented one hat. With further manipulation, the fibers hooked themselves together into what ultimately became the fur fabric of the hat. The rest of the process is difficult to describe, but Ellen eventually learned the simplest part of it, which was shaping the crown of the hat. [25]

The price of a hat ranged all the way from 75 cents to \$15, depending on the quality of the fur. It must be remembered that in those days 75 cents was the pay for ten hours of diligent work of a well-trained artisan.

Robert Harmon soon discovered, as did others in Portland, that in the South, with its agricultural economy, the prices for hats were much better than they were for those sold locally. In early 1804 the hatters of New England had established stores in Savannah, Georgia. Hats worth \$90 a dozen in the North went for \$120 a dozen in the South. Robert Harmon made a business trip to Georgia in 1837, the year of Ellen's accident.

### **Attending Brackett Street School**

It was probably in the autumn of 1833 that Ellen started school, just before her sixth birthday. It could have been earlier, for at that time children could be in school at 5 or even a bit younger. The school was conducted in a frame building on Brackett Street, some four or five short blocks from the Harmon home. In 1836 the wooden building was replaced by a two-story brick structure, and it was doubtless in this building that Ellen spent her last full year in school. School was conducted during both summer and winter in Portland, and once the grind began it was merciless on

small children. But Ellen loved it, and she had great ambitions in obtaining a good education and making something of herself.

As for textbooks, Samuel Worcester's first, second, and third books of reading and spelling were prescribed, but there were never enough books to go around. Ellen advanced rapidly, and soon the teacher was calling on her to read the lessons for the rest of the class. She moved upstairs with the more advanced pupils, but was sometimes called down to read for the little ones in the primary room.

Years later, when she was traveling on the train with her husband, James White, she was reading to him an article he had written, and together they were correcting it. A lady leaned forward and touched her shoulder, saying, "Aren't you Ellen Harmon?"

"Yes," she replied, "but how did you know me?"

[26] "Why," said the lady, "I knew you by your voice. I attended school on Brackett Street in Portland, and you used to come and read our lessons to us. We could understand them better when you read them than when anyone else did."—DF 733c.

### The Textbooks She Read

Instead of *Dick and Jane*, the reader Ellen Harmon used had none other than a little girl named Ellen as a heroine. The sketches that illustrate the primer show Ellen wearing a long, straight, light-colored skirt. The hem had a little ruffle that came just to the top of her shoes. The blouse had a broad collar and short, puffed sleeves and was fastened down the front with hooks and eyes. Other pictures of the primer depict long-sleeved dresses for older girls and sometimes a hat with a gracefully upturned broad brim and a low, round top. One lesson about Ellen is titled "A Good Girl."

No pains were spared to indoctrinate the youngsters with the virtues of hard work and obedience. In other lessons Christian theology was forthrightly taught, and every scholar who could read was required to have a Testament of his own from which several verses were read each day at the opening and close of school.

Among the prescribed books for children, and possibly some of the same ones she referred to in later years, was the *Methodist Sabbath School*. Ellen was to recall that she had "read many of the

religious biographies of children who had possessed numberless virtues and lived faultless lives.” She would repeat to herself again and again, “If that is true, I can never be a Christian. I can never hope to be like those children.”—[Notebook Leaflets from the Elmshaven Library, 1:146, 147](#). Such thoughts drove her almost to despair.

### **Robert Harmon’s Trip to Georgia**

In 1837, when Ellen was 9, America was struck with depression, and the hat business was severely affected. Robert Harmon found that the stock of hats made during the long winter months of 1836-1837 moved very slowly, so he decided to take his supply to Georgia in hope of a more ready sale. There was doubtless an air of excitement in the family the night before he was to leave, and they helped wrap the hats and place them in a large leather bag. We can imagine the whole family following the father to the stage depot early the next morning, first along the dirt paths near their home, and then on the wooden sidewalks down to the old “Elm House” on the corner of Federal and Temple streets, to catch the western stage for Portsmouth, Boston, and points south. [27]

This was the golden age of stage travel, and Portland was a major center on which all the lines converged. At times it was almost impossible to pass through Federal Street on account of the coaches drawn up two and three deep, morning and night.

The horses of the leading coach were tied to the splendid elm tree that stood in front of the inn. Behind this there might be a great variety of vehicles, even an imposing Concord coach drawn by six or perhaps eight horses. This wonderful affair must have delighted Ellen and the other youngsters with its decorations of gold and yellow.

The family probably waited outside on the sidewalk as Father Harmon went in to purchase his ticket. Perhaps as they waited they would hear the coachman’s horn signaling an approaching stage. This was the best part of it all, for no matter how slowly the stages traveled between stops, the drivers had trained their teams to perfection in the art of arriving at the tavern door with great dash and spirit.

And the stage driver himself, as he hopped down from his perch, was a sight to behold. He wore new store clothes in contrast with the homespun of most people, and with his fancy tailored overcoat and gorgeous-colored sash, he inspired the awe of any curious child.

As Robert Harmon passed up his hat bag to the top of the stage, then climbed in and turned to wave Goodbye, he had his last look at the cheerful, perfectly formed features of Ellen's face. The next time he was to see her, she would be much changed.

## Chapter 2—(1836-1843) Abrupt Changes in Ellen's Life [28]

It was midafternoon and school was out. The 9-year-old twins, Ellen and Elizabeth, were on their way home, along with a classmate. As the three girls crossed the park they noticed that an older girl who also attended the Brackett Street School was following them. She shouted some angry words and was closing the gap between them. The Harmon children had been taught never to retaliate, never to engage in a fight with anyone, but rather if there was trouble to hurry home. This the girls were intent on doing. Ellen later wrote of what happened next:

We were doing this, running towards home, but the girl was following us with a stone in her hand. I turned to see how far she was behind me, and as I turned, the stone hit me on my nose. I fell senseless. When I revived, I found myself in a merchant's store, the blood streaming from my nose, my garments covered with blood, and a large stream of blood on the floor.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:7.](#)

A customer in the store, a total stranger to the Harmon girls, offered to take Ellen home in his carriage, but the little girl, fearing that she would soil his carriage with her blood, refused the offer. Little did she realize the severity of her injury or how weak she was. With her two companions she started on foot for home, but soon grew faint. Dizziness overtook her, and then she collapsed to the ground. Her twin sister and her schoolmate carried her the block or two to her home. She later recounted:

I have no recollection of anything for some time after the accident. My mother says that I noticed nothing, but lay in a stupid state [a coma] for three weeks. No one thought I would live except my mother. For some reason she felt that I would not die.—[Ibid., 2:8.](#) [29]

The description of her symptoms would lead to the opinion that she suffered a concussion. The physician who was called offered no hope of her making a recovery, nor had he any treatment to recommend. These were times of great ignorance in the medical world. One of the neighbors, certain that Ellen could not live, asked if she might buy a burial robe for her. "Not yet" was Eunice Harmon's reply, for something told her that Ellen would live.

As the little girl regained consciousness she was totally ignorant of the cause of her illness. It seemed to her she had been in a long sleep. She had no memory of the accident; all she knew was that she lay on her cot in great weakness. Then one day on hearing a visiting neighbor say, "What a pity! I should not know her," her curiosity was aroused. She asked for a mirror, only to be shocked at what the glass reflected. Of this she wrote:

Every feature of my face seemed changed. The sight was more than I could bear. The bone of my nose proved to be broken. The idea of carrying my misfortune through life was insupportable. I could see no pleasure in my life. I did not wish to live, and I dared not die, for I was not prepared.—[Ibid., 2:9](#).

As Ellen's father was in Georgia on business, the mother carried the burden created by the accident. Friends who visited advised Ellen's mother to prosecute the father of the girl who, as they said, "ruined" her. But her mother was for peace, and she replied that if such a course could bring Ellen back to health and natural looks, there would be something gained, but as that was impossible, it was best not to make enemies ([Ibid., 2:8](#)).

Physicians were consulted. One thought that a silver wire might be put in her nose to hold it in shape, but doing so would have been excruciatingly painful, for anesthetics were not known in those days, and the doctor thought it would be of little use. Since she had lost so much blood it was considered doubtful that she could sustain the shock of surgery.

This was followed by a crushing experience of which she wrote:

in Georgia. When he returned, he spoke to my brother and sisters, and inquired for me.... It was hard to make him believe that I was his Ellen. This cut me to the heart; yet I tried to put on an appearance of cheerfulness, when my heart ached.—[Ibid., 2:10](#).

By sad experience she soon learned the difference one's personal appearance makes in the treatment received from others, especially among children. Slowly she gained her strength, but as she was able to join in play with young friends, she found that they spurned her. She was almost crushed by this experience. She wrote:

My life was often miserable, for my feelings were keenly sensitive. I could not, like my twin sister, weep out my feelings. My heart seemed so heavy, and ached as though it would break, yet I could not shed a tear.... Others would pity and sympathize with me, and that weight, like a stone upon my heart, would be gone.

How vain and empty the pleasures of earth looked to me. How changeable the friendship of my young companions. A pretty face, dress, or good looks, are thought much of. But let misfortune take some of these away, and the friendship is broken.

But I began to turn to my Saviour where I found comfort. I sought the Lord earnestly, and received consolation. I believed that Jesus did love even me.—[Ibid., 2:10, 11](#).

Some fifty years later, on a visit to Portland, Maine, she had an opportunity to ponder in retrospect:

I visited ... the spot where I met with the accident.... this misfortune, which for a time seemed so bitter and was so hard to bear, has proved to be a blessing in disguise. The cruel blow which blighted the joys of earth, was the means of turning my eyes to heaven. I might never have known Jesus, had not the sorrow that clouded my early years led me to seek comfort in Him.

She added:

[31] I have read of a little bird that while his cage is full of light never sings the songs his master would teach him. He will listen, and learn a snatch of this, a trill of that, but never a separate and entire melody.

But the master covers his cage, and then, in the dark, he listens to the one song he is to sing. He tries and tries again to sing that song, until it is learned, and he breaks forth in perfect melody; and then the cage is uncovered, and ever after he can sing it in the light.

Thus God deals with His creatures. He has a song to teach us, and when we have learned it amid the deep shadows of affliction, we can sing it ever afterward.—[The Review and Herald, November 25, 1884.](#)

### Schooling Cut Off

As soon as Ellen felt she was able to do so, she attempted to continue her schoolwork, but she could attend classes only intermittently. She recounted:

My health was so poor that I could attend school but little. It was almost impossible for me to study, and retain what I learned. The same girl who was the cause of my misfortune, was appointed by our teacher as a monitor to assist me in writing, and to aid me in getting my lessons. She always seemed sorry for what she had done, and I was careful not to remind her of the great injury she had done me. She was tender and patient with me, and much of her time seemed sad and thoughtful, as she saw me laboring to get an education.

My hand trembled so that I made no progress in writing, and could get no further than the first examples, which are called coarse-hand. As I labored to bend my mind to my studies, the letters of my book would run together, large drops of perspiration would stand upon my brow, and I would become dizzy and faint.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:11, 12.](#)

Advised by her teacher to drop out of school until her health had improved, she for a time gave up attempts to attend. She recalled:

It was the hardest struggle of my young life to yield to my feebleness and decide that I must leave my studies and give up the hope of gaining an education.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:13](#).

Some three years later Ellen attempted to pick up her schoolwork, enrolling in a “female seminary,” but she soon discovered that it was difficult to maintain her religious experience in a large seminary. Besides, she was physically unable to cope with the strain. At this point she gave up all attempts to gain a formal education ([Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 148](#)). [32]

Her mother, a wise and careful woman, did not allow Ellen to grow up in ignorance; at home she learned many of the practical lessons needed in preparation for life. And Ellen studied in the school of nature, for the spacious Deering's Oaks Park was within walking distance, over the hill, from her home. Later she reported: “I have spent many pleasant hours in the woods at that place.”—[Letter 193, 1903](#).

### Early Religious Instruction

The Harmons were members of the Chestnut Street Methodist church. There under a succession of pastors (most of them did not stay more than one or two years) Ellen and her twin sister and older members of the family received their early religious instruction. The church had pews in the gallery and on the main floor. The Harmons probably occupied main-floor pews. There were also backless benches for the less affluent worshipers, who paid a yearly fee of \$1 apiece to reserve a place.

Robert Harmon was a pillar in the church—an exhorter, which means that sometimes he would stand at the close of the sermon to give, in good Methodist fashion, an extemporaneous layman's response to the challenge of the sermon.

History records one point of early contention—the use of instrumental music. The church was rocked by controversy when

it installed a pipe organ—said to be the first church organ in any Methodist church in the United States. “The New York *Christian Advocate* came out strongly against the move, arguing that it would lead away from the simplicity of Methodism and spirituality of religion. When a Methodist bishop was asked how he liked the tone of the new organ he replied, ‘Oh, it is so loud I heard it all the way to New York.’”

[33] It is difficult to judge by the available data just how formal or enthusiastic the worship was in the Chestnut Street church. At one time there was quite a controversy over shouting loud amens. [There was a branch of the methodists that engaged in ecstatic experiences, particularly that of shouting. Meetings were conducted on weeknight evenings where it was expected there would be considerable shouting of the praises of God. It was not uncommon when one anticipated attending such a meeting to say that he was “going to a shout.”]

And then there were the Methodist class meetings. These were always less formal than the Sunday services. Held in private homes, they were each attended by a dozen or so people. A Methodist paper published both in Boston and Portland gives a sketch of the class meeting:

After opening the meeting in the usual way [with singing and prayer], he [the class leader] states his own experience for the week; then, requesting the members to keep their seats (as rising often imposes stiffness and embarrassment), he enters into a familiar conversation with each one, in which he aims to develop some one or all of the following points: namely, perfection in love, how obtained, and the evidences of it; freedom from condemnation; abiding witness of the Spirit; sense of darkness; recent victories over sin; growth in grace; besetting sins; faithfulness in duty, in prayer, watchfulness, self-denial; honesty in business transactions; entire consecration to God, etc.—*Zion’s Herald* and the *Maine Wesleyan Journal*, vol. 13, p. 158.

The comment follows that “Brother Y’s class meetings are always lively, spiritual, and profitable sessions.”— *Ibid.*

This kind of meeting, with its testimony, counsel, confession, encouragement, and praise, lent itself to free expression and religious fervor. Attendance was considered mandatory for any good Methodist. It was in this environment that Ellen faced the struggles in her religious experience in her girlhood.

### **Wrestling with the Problems of “Conversion”**

“I was unreconciled to my lot,” she wrote, “and at times murmured against the providence of God in thus afflicting me.” She comments on her unwise course:

I concealed my troubled feelings from my family and friends, fearing that they could not understand me. This was a mistaken course. Had I opened my mind to my mother, she might have instructed, soothed, and encouraged me.... I locked my secret agony within my heart, and did not seek the advice of experienced Christians as I should have done. No one conversed with me on the subject of my soul's salvation, and no one prayed with me. I felt that Christians were so far removed from me, so much nobler and purer than myself, that I dared not approach them on the subject that engrossed my thoughts, and was ashamed to reveal the lost and wretched condition of my heart.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 135, 136.

[34]

### **The William Miller Lectures**

In March, 1840, [Ellen White's earliest accounts, based on memory, incorrectly give the year as 1839 (see [Spiritual Gifts, 2:12](#)).] a revival in Portland, Maine, brought some hope to the 12-year-old girl. William Miller lectured in the city on the second coming of Christ. The meetings were held in the Casco Street Christian church. She attended with her friends and family. Her description of the meetings is vivid:

These lectures produced a great sensation, and the Christian church, on Casco Street, that Mr. Miller occu-

plied, was crowded day and night. No wild excitement attended these meetings, but a deep solemnity pervaded the minds of those who heard his discourses. Not only was there manifested a great interest in the city, but the country people flocked in day after day, bringing their lunch baskets, and remaining from morning until the close of the evening meeting.

Mr. Miller dwelt upon the prophecies, comparing them with Bible history, that the end of the world was near. I attended these meetings in company with my friends and listened to the strange doctrines of the preacher. Four years previous to this, on my way to school, I had picked up a scrap of paper containing an account of a man in England who was preaching that the earth would be consumed in about thirty years from that time.... Now I was listening to the most solemn and powerful sermons to the effect that Christ was coming in 1843, only a few short years in the future. The preacher traced down the prophecies with a keen exactitude that struck conviction to the hearts of his hearers. He dwelt upon the prophetic periods, and piled up proof to strengthen his position. Then his solemn and powerful appeals and admonitions to those who were unprepared, held the crowd as if spellbound.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 136, 137.](#)

[35]

As to the reaction of the listeners and the influence of his work on the city of Portland, Ellen White observed:

Terrible conviction spread through the entire city. Prayer meetings were established, and there was a general awakening among the various denominations, for they all felt more or less the influence that proceeded from the teaching of the near coming of Christ.—[Ibid., 137.](#)

The *Maine Wesleyan Journal* reported “crowded congregations in [the] Casco Street church.” Miller is described as “self-possessed

and ready; distinct in his utterance, and frequently quaint in his expressions.”—Quoted in Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*, p. 77.

It was reported that Miller held his listeners spellbound, speaking for one and a half or two hours. At times he carried on make-believe conversations between the objector and the inquirer, supplying in a very natural manner the questions and answers. Although he was grave, he sometimes produced a smile from his audience.

The work Miller started in Portland in the thirteen days he spent there continued after his departure. Lorenzo D. Fleming, pastor of the local Christian Connection, reported to Miller soon after the meetings closed:

The good work has been progressing firmly. I should think somewhere near two hundred have professed conversion in our meetings since you left and the good work is spreading all over the city and in the country all around the city. Such a time was never known here. A number of grogshops have been broken up and converted into little meetinghouses. One or two gambling establishments have been also broken up. Little prayer meetings have been set up in almost every part of the city.... Many opposers begin to acknowledge that there is a work of God here.—Quoted in Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*, p. 76.

Another Fleming letter, the one addressed to Joshua V. Himes, [36] the publisher of the *Signs of the Times*, reported:

Being down in the business part of our city on the fourth instant [April 4, 1840], I was conducted into a room over one of the banks, where I found about thirty or forty men of different denominations engaged in one accord in prayer at about eleven o'clock in the daytime! ... There was nothing like extravagant excitement, but an almost universal solemnity on the minds of all the people. One of the principal booksellers, informed me that he had sold more Bibles in *one month* (since Brother Miller came here) than he had in any four months previous.—Quoted in Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*, p. 78.

Miller's burden of soul is reflected in a letter he wrote as he closed his work in Portland:

Those souls whom I have addressed in my six months' tour are continually before me, sleeping or waking; I can see them perishing by thousands; and when I reflect on the accountability of their teachers, who say "Peace and safety," I am in pain for them.—  
Quoted in Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*, p. 78.

The memories of 12-year-old Ellen regarding the far-reaching influence of William Miller preaching in Portland are well sustained in contemporary records.

### **Ellen's Developing Christian Experience**

In the autobiographical accounts as found in the 1880, 1888, and 1915 editions of *Life Sketches* (designated in this account as 1LS, 2LS, and 3LS) Ellen White presents in detail her struggles in her developing Christian experience. Much is omitted here in order to allow a quick running account touching essential points. With her parents, she had been very faithful in attending the Methodist meetings. She and her brother Robert also attended rather faithfully the Millerite meetings on Casco Street. In the summer of 1842 she and her parents attended the Methodist camp meeting at Buxton, Maine. She went hoping that she would find an experience that would bring her peace of mind. One sermon in particular led her to an understanding of justification by faith. Of this she wrote:

[37]

At length I was greatly relieved while listening to a discourse from the words: "I will go in unto the king," "and if I perish, I perish." In his remarks the speaker referred to those who were wavering between hope and fear, longing to be saved from their sins and receive the pardoning love of Christ, yet held in doubt and bondage by timidity and fear of failure. He counseled such ones to surrender themselves to God and venture upon His mercy without delay.... All that was required of the sinner, trembling in the presence of his Lord, was to

put forth the hand of faith and touch the scepter of His grace. That touch insured pardon and peace.... These words comforted me and gave me views of what I must do to be saved.—[Ibid.](#), 140, 141.

But the lessons in the simplicity of faith and the importance of implicit trust came to Ellen slowly. Soon after her return to Portland from the camp meeting, she was taken into the Methodist Church on probation, with baptism to follow in due time. At that period baptism as a means of full acceptance into the Methodist Church was performed either by sprinkling or immersion. Ellen chose immersion; on Sunday afternoon, June 26, 1842, she and eleven others were baptized in the rather rough waters of Casco Bay. She described the important event:

The waves ran high, and dashed upon the shore; but my peace was like a river. When I arose out of the water, my strength was nearly gone, for the power of God rested upon me. Such a rich blessing I never experienced before. I felt dead to the world, and that my sins were all washed away. The same day a sister and myself were taken into the church.—[Spiritual Gifts](#), 2:13.

### **William Miller's Second Visit to Portland**

At about this time—in 1842—William Miller was back in Portland for a second series of meetings on the Second Advent. As before, the meetings were held in the Christian church on Casco Street. Of his reception and the manner of his work Ellen White wrote:

This second course created much more excitement in the city than the first. The different denominations, with a very few exceptions, closed the doors of their churches against Mr. Miller. Many discourses from the various pulpits sought to expose the alleged fanatical errors of the lecturer. But crowds of anxious listeners attended his meetings, while many were unable to enter

the house, which was literally packed. The congregations were unusually quiet and attentive.

She described his demeanor and manner of delivery:

His manner of preaching was not flowery or oratorical, but he dealt in plain and startling facts that roused his hearers from the apathy in which they had been locked. He substantiated his statements and theories by Scripture as he progressed. A convicting power attended his words that seemed to stamp them as the language of truth.

He was courteous and sympathetic. When every seat in the house was full, and the platform and places about the pulpit seemed crowded, I have seen him leave the desk and walk down the aisle, and take some feeble old man or woman by the hand and find a seat for them, then return and resume his discourse. He was indeed rightly called Father Miller, for he had a watchful care over those who came under his ministrations, was affectionate in his manner, of genial and tender heart. He was a very interesting speaker, and his exhortations, both to professed Christians and the impenitent, were appropriate and powerful.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 148, 149.](#)

Ellen fully accepted Miller's presentations and continued to attend the Advent meetings in the church on Casco Street. At times in the development of her Christian experience, clouds seemed to hang low over her. There were periods of joy and happiness and periods of deep concern ([Ibid., 154](#)).

### **Two Significant Dreams**

At this time she had two dreams, one of visiting the temple in heaven ([Testimonies for the Church, 1:27, 28](#)) and the other in which she was taken up steps to see Jesus ([Ibid., 1:28, 29](#)). In this latter dream it seemed that He received her with a smile. Putting His hand on her head He said, "Fear not." She was given a green cord, which represented faith, and she later declared, "The beauty and simplicity

of trusting in God began to dawn upon my soul.”—[Ibid.](#), 1:29. Now [39]  
she did what she had not done before:

I now confided all my sorrows and perplexities to my mother. She tenderly sympathized with and encouraged me, advising me to go for counsel to Elder [Levi] Stockman, who then preached the Advent doctrine in Portland.... Upon hearing my story, he placed his hand affectionately upon my head, saying with tears in his eyes: “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.” ... “Go free, Ellen,” said he; “return to your home trusting in Jesus, for He will not withhold His love from any true seeker.”—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 157-159.](#)

What courage the counsel of this man of God brought to Ellen! She later commented:

During the few minutes in which I received instruction from Elder Stockman, I had obtained more knowledge on the subject of God's love and pitying tenderness than from all the sermons and exhortations to which I had ever listened.—[Ibid.](#), 159.

This was the turning point in Ellen's experience. Reaching home, she promised the Lord that she would do and suffer anything to have the favor of Jesus. That evening she attended a prayer meeting. As she offered her first prayer in public, the burden and agony of soul she so long endured vanished. Relating the experience, she told how “the blessing of the Lord descended upon me like the gentle dew. I praised God from the depths of my heart. Everything seemed shut out from me but Jesus and His glory, and I lost consciousness of what was passing around me.”—[Ibid.](#), 159. She wrote:

For six months not a shadow clouded my mind, nor did I neglect one known duty. My whole endeavor was

[40]

to do the will of God and keep Jesus and heaven continually in my mind. I was surprised and enraptured with the clear views now presented to my mind of the atonement and the work of Jesus Christ. I will not attempt to farther explain the exercises of my mind, suffice it to say that old things had passed away, all things had become new. There was not a cloud to mar my perfect bliss. I longed to tell the story of Jesus' love, but felt no disposition to engage in common conversation with anyone. My heart was so filled with love to God and the peace that passeth understanding, that I loved to meditate and to pray.—[Ibid., 161.](#)

### **Bearing Public Witness**

After this experience Ellen, when opportunity came, bore witness for the Lord. Of one such experience she wrote:

I attended the Advent meeting. When the time arrived for the followers of Christ to speak in His favor, I could not remain silent, but rose and related my experience. Not a thought had entered my mind of what I should say; but the simple story of Jesus' love to me fell from my lips with perfect freedom, and my heart was so happy to be liberated from its thralldom of dark despair that I lost sight of the people about me and seemed to be alone with God. I found no difficulty in expressing my peace and happiness, except for the tears of gratitude that choked my utterance, as I told of the wondrous love that Jesus had shown for me.... My heart was so overflowing with joy that I wanted to tell others how much the Lord had done for me.—[Ibid., 161, 162.](#)

The witness she bore was so effective that she received invitations to bear her testimony in “conference” meetings. Then, concerned for her young friends, she arranged meetings with them. Often these young people were considerably older than she. “In every instance but one,” she reported, “these persons yielded them-

selves to the Lord.”—[Ibid.](#), 163. Her work was received with mixed reactions. “Peculiar trials sometimes beset me,” she noted.

Those older in experience than myself endeavored to hold me back and cool the ardor of my faith, but with the smiles of Jesus brightening my life, and the love of God in my heart, I went on my way with a joyful spirit.—[Ibid.](#), 164.

Ellen's father and mother were earnest believers in the near Advent, and members of the family still attended the Methodist church and the class meetings held in private homes. At one such class meeting Ellen told in a simple way the story of her experience, first of suffering under the burden of sin and then the blessings she enjoyed as her life had been brought into full conformity to the will of God. She mentioned her joy in the confidence of Jesus' soon coming. [41]

She wrote of the reaction of some:

In unsuspecting simplicity I expected that my Methodist brethren and sisters would understand my feelings and rejoice with me. But I was disappointed; several sisters groaned and moved their chairs noisily, turning their backs upon me. I could not think what had been said to offend them, and spoke very briefly, feeling the chilling influence of their disapprobation.—[Ibid.](#), 165.

The class leader turned to her and asked if it would not be more pleasant to live a long life of usefulness, doing others good, than for Jesus to come speedily and destroy poor sinners. She replied that she longed for the coming of Jesus to put sin to an end.

He then inquired if I would not rather die peacefully upon my bed than to pass through the pain of being changed, while living, from mortality to immortality. My answer was that I wished for Jesus to come and take His children; that I was willing to live or die as God willed, and could easily endure all the pain that could

be borne in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; that I desired the wheels of time to roll swiftly round, and bring the welcome day when these vile bodies should be changed, and fashioned like unto Christ's most glorious body. I also stated that when I lived nearest to the Lord, then I most earnestly longed for His appearing.—*Ibid.*, 165, 166.

The class leader responded that he took great joy in anticipating the temporal millennium of a thousand years, when the earth would be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. When the meeting broke up, Ellen and her brother Robert felt the coldness of their erstwhile friends. As they walked home they talked of their surprise that the subject of the near coming of Jesus should awaken such bitter antagonism.

[42]

“Ellen,” said Robert, “are we deceived? Is this hope of Christ's soon appearing upon the earth a heresy, that ministers and professors of religion oppose it so bitterly? They say that Jesus will not come for thousands and thousands of years. If they even approach the truth, then the world cannot come to an end in our day.”—*Ibid.*

To this Ellen quickly replied:

“I have not a doubt but that the doctrine preached by Mr. Miller is the truth. What power attends his words, what conviction is carried home to the sinner's heart.”—*Ibid.*

They decided that it was their duty and privilege to look for the Saviour's coming, and it would be safest to be ready.

At another class meeting, when it came time to testify, Ellen's heart was so full that she again spoke of looking forward in glad expectation of soon meeting her Redeemer. She said that this hope stirred her to earnestly seek sanctification of the Spirit of God.

“You received sanctification through Methodism,” interjected the class leader. “Through *Methodism*, sister, not through an erroneous theory.” Reporting the experience, she noted:

My heart was full of love and happiness, but I felt compelled to confess the truth, that it was not through Methodism my heart had received its new blessing, but by the stirring truths heard concerning the personal appearance of Jesus. Through them I found peace, joy, and perfect love. Thus my testimony closed, the last that I was to bear in class with my Methodist brethren. Robert then spoke in his meek way, yet in so clear and touching a manner that some wept and were much moved; but others coughed dissentingly and seemed quite uneasy. After leaving the classroom, we again talked over our faith, and marveled that our Christian brethren and sisters could so illy endure to have a word spoken in reference to our Saviour's coming. We thought if they loved Jesus as they should, it would not be so great an annoyance to hear of His second advent, but, on the contrary, they would hail the news with great joy. We were convinced that we ought no longer to attend the Methodist class meeting.—*Ibid.*, 168.

### Cast Out from the Methodist Church

[43]

Not long after this steps were taken by officers of the Chestnut Street Methodist church to separate the Harmon family from its membership. Ellen recounted the traumatic experience:

The Methodist minister made us a special visit, and took the occasion to inform us that our faith and Methodism could not agree. He did not inquire our reasons for believing as we did, nor make any reference to the Bible in order to convince us of our error; but he stated that we had adopted a new and strange belief that the Methodist Church could not accept. My father replied that he must be mistaken in calling this a new and strange doctrine, that Christ Himself had preached His second advent to His disciples.—*Ibid.*, 172.

Robert Harmon was prepared to quote Scripture in defense of his faith, including the promises of Jesus Himself that He would

come again. "This is our offense," Harmon said, "believing the word of Jesus and His disciples. This is a very old doctrine, and bears no taint of heresy." The minister mustered no Scripture text to prove the Harmons in error. Rather, he advised the family to withdraw quietly from the church and avoid the publicity of a trial. But this proposition Robert Harmon refused to accept. Explained Ellen White:

We were aware that others of our brethren were meeting with similar treatment, for a like cause, and we did not wish it understood that we were ashamed to acknowledge our faith, or were unable to sustain it by Scripture; so my parents insisted that they should be acquainted with the reasons for this request.—*Ibid.*, 173.

The family could not see that looking for the coming of their Saviour constituted a wrong that called for separation from the church. Shortly they were notified to be present at a meeting to be held in the church vestry. Ellen told of what took place:

There were but few present. The influence of my father and his family was such that our opposers had no desire to present our cases before a larger number of the congregation. The single charge preferred was that we had walked contrary to their rules.

[44]

Upon our asking what rules we had violated, it was stated, after a little hesitation, that we had attended other meetings and had neglected to meet regularly with our class....

It was asked if we would confess that we had departed from their rules, and if we would also agree to conform to them in the future. We answered that we dared not yield our faith nor deny the sacred truth of God; that we could not forego the hope of the soon coming of our Redeemer; that after the manner which they called heresy we must continue to worship the Lord.

My father in his defense received the blessing of God, and we all left the vestry with free spirits and happy in the consciousness of right and the approving smile of Jesus.—[Ibid.](#), 175.

The outcome was as expected, and there was no delay on the part of the church in dealing with the Harmon family:

The next Sunday, [According to the church records, September, 1843.] at the commencement of love-feast, the presiding elder [Charles Baker] read off our names, seven in number, as discontinued from the church. He stated that we were not expelled on account of any wrong or immoral conduct, that we were of unblemished character and enviable reputation; but we had been guilty of walking contrary to the rules of the Methodist Church.

He also declared that a door was now open and all who were guilty of a similar breach of the rules, would be dealt with in like manner.—[Ibid.](#)

Some of the members who held in their hearts the Advent hope soon withdrew from the church, but, observed Ellen, by some “the favor of God was sold for a place in the Methodist Church.”

This is one of the early cases in connection with the proclamation of the soon coming of the Lord that the message of the second angel of [Revelation 14](#) seemed to apply: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city” ([verse 8](#)). (The message was repeated in [Revelation 18](#), with the added warning: “Come out of her, my people” [[verse 4](#)].) It was to become clearly recognized a few months later, in the spring of 1844.

[45] **Chapter 3—(1844) 1844—The Year of Expectation  
and Disappointments**

The days came and went, bringing the expectation of the coming of Jesus ever nearer. Ellen, her older sister Sarah, and her twin sister Elizabeth worked in the home with textiles that they might have means with which to purchase tracts and books heralding the message of the Second Advent. Ellen could earn 25 cents a day, many times working while propped up in her bed. The literature thus purchased they placed in the hands of persons of experience who could send it abroad.

**The Question of the Immortality of the Soul**

About this time Ellen's mother and a sister attended a meeting at which was presented the mortal state of man. It was explained that at his death man did not go to heaven or hell, but back to the dust from whence he came. As the subject was talked over in the home, Ellen was deeply concerned. She wrote:

I listened to these new ideas with an intense and painful interest. When alone with my mother, I inquired if she really believed that the soul was not immortal. Her reply was she feared we had been in error on that subject as well as upon some others.

“But Mother,” said I, “do you really believe that the soul sleeps in the grave until the resurrection? Do you think that the Christian, when he dies, does not go immediately to heaven, nor the sinner to hell?”

[46] She answered: “The Bible gives us no proof that there is an eternally burning hell. If there is such a place, it should be mentioned in the Sacred Book.”

“Why, Mother!” cried I, in astonishment. “This is strange talk for you! If you believe this strange theory,

do not let anyone know of it, for I fear that sinners would gather security from this belief and never desire to seek the Lord.”

“If this is sound Bible truth,” she replied, “instead of preventing the salvation of sinners, it will be the means of winning them to Christ. If the love of God will not induce the rebel to yield, the terrors of an eternal hell will not drive him to repentance.”—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 170, 171.

Some months later when she herself heard a sermon on the sleep of the dead, she believed it to be the truth. Of this she wrote:

From the time that light in regard to the sleep of the dead dawned upon my mind, the mystery that had enshrouded the resurrection vanished, and the great event itself assumed a new and sublime importance.—[Ibid.](#), 171.

Step by step Ellen was being led into an understanding of Bible truths, truths that would become the foundation stones of Seventh-day Adventism.

### **The Time of Expectation Passes**

Advent believers were now living in the terminal year of the 2300-year prophecy of [Daniel 8:14](#), the year of the expected Advent. This, according to the accepted form of Jewish reckoning, would terminate on April 21, 1844. In simple language Ellen has given an account of what took place:

Unity and peace now dwelt among our people who were looking forward toward the coming of the Lord. How carefully and tremblingly did we approach the time of expectation. We sought, as a people, with solemn earnestness to purify our lives that we might be ready to meet the Saviour at His coming. Notwithstanding the opposition of ministers and churches, Beethoven

Hall, in the city of Portland, was nightly crowded, and especially was there a large congregation on Sundays....

[47] Meetings were still held at private houses in different parts of the city with the best results. Believers were encouraged to work for their friends and relatives, and conversions were multiplying day by day.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 180.

Ellen White recalled that the rich and the poor, the high and the low, ministers and laymen, crowded into Beethoven Hall to hear the doctrine of the Second Advent. At each meeting a short, pointed discourse was given, and the way was opened for general exhortation. The spirit of opposition was held in check.

The presence of holy angels was felt, and Ellen White added, “The numbers were daily being added to the little band of believers.”—[Ibid.](#), 181. During the last few weeks leading up to April 21, 1844—the last day of the 2300-day prophecy, as they then understood it, thus closing the year during which they expected the return of their Lord—preparation for the event became paramount. She reports:

Worldly business was for the most part laid aside for a few weeks. We carefully scrutinized every thought and emotion of our hearts as if upon our deathbeds and in a few hours to close our eyes forever upon earthly scenes. There was no making “ascension robes” for the great event; we felt the need of internal evidence that we were prepared to meet Christ, and our white robes were purity of soul, character cleansed from sin by the atoning blood of our Saviour.

But the time of expectation passed. This was the first close test brought to bear upon those who believed and hoped that Jesus would come in the clouds of heaven.

The disappointment of God’s waiting people was great. The scoffers were triumphant and won the weak and cowardly to their ranks. Some who had appeared to possess true faith seemed to have been influenced

only by fear, and now their courage returned with the passing of time, and they boldly united with the scoffers declaring they had never been duped to really believe the doctrine of Miller, who was a mad fanatic. Others, naturally yielding or vacillating, quietly deserted the cause.—[Ibid.](#), 184, 185.

How the faithful looked upon the situation is explained by Ellen White:

We were perplexed and disappointed, yet did not renounce our faith. Many still clung to the hope that Jesus would not long delay His coming; the Word of the Lord was sure, it could not fail. We felt that we had done our duty, we had lived up to our precious faith; we were disappointed but not discouraged; the signs of the times denoted that the end of all things was near at hand; we must watch and hold ourselves in readiness for the coming of the Master at any time. We must wait with hope and trust, not neglecting the assembling of ourselves together for instruction, encouragement, and comfort, that our light might shine forth into the darkness of the world.—[Ibid.](#), 185.

[48]

### A Test of True Character

She added:

We fully believed that God, in His wisdom, designed that His people should meet with a disappointment, which was well calculated to reveal hearts and develop the true characters of those who had professed to look for and rejoice in the coming of the Lord. Those who embraced the first angel's message (see [Revelation 14:6, 7](#)) through fear of the wrath of God's judgments, not because they loved the truth and desired an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, now appeared in their true light.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 186.

An interesting point is that scholars, even those who had no confidence in the near advent of Christ, saw no flaw in the reckoning of the prophecy. Ellen White noted this:

The mistake made in reckoning the prophetic periods was not at once discovered even by learned men who opposed the views of those who were looking for Christ's coming. These profound scholars declared that Mr. Miller was right in his calculation of the time, though they disputed him in regard to the event that would crown that period. But they, and the waiting people of God, were in common error on the question of time.—*Ibid.*

[49] Ardently the believers had proclaimed what they understood to be the message of the first angel of Revelation: “The hour of his judgment is come” ([verse 7](#)). The Bible contained most assuring prophecies concerning the second advent of Christ, foremost of which was given by Jesus Himself: “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” ([John 14:2, 3](#)).

Some of these promises seemed linked with the judgment. Basic was the prophecy of [Daniel 8:14](#): “Unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” They thought this earth to be the sanctuary; it would be cleansed by fire at the second advent of Christ.

When April 21, 1844, passed—the time first thought to be the end of the 2300 days—and Jesus did not come, the believers checked and rechecked the basis of their reckoning. Ellen White explained this:

Calculation of the time was so simple and plain that even the children could understand it. From the date of the decree of the king of Persia, found in [Ezra 7](#), which was given in 457 before Christ, the 2300 years of [Daniel 8:14](#) must terminate with 1843. Accordingly we looked to the end of this year for the coming of the Lord. We

were sadly disappointed when the year entirely passed away and the Saviour had not come.

It was not at first perceived that if the decree did not go forth at the beginning of the year 457 B.C., the 2300 years would not be completed at the close of 1843. But it was ascertained that the decree was given near the close of the year 457 B.C., and therefore the prophetic period must reach to the fall of the year 1844. Therefore the vision of time did not tarry, though it had seemed to do so. We learned to rest upon the language of the prophet, “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 185, 186.

The surety of the Word of God, and the many evidences of the work of the Spirit of God through the proclamation of the coming Advent, provided compelling reasons for holding on to cherished and seemingly certain hopes.

The early Adventists who had been firmly established in the joyous message of the soon-coming Christ to this earth now saw that there was a “tarrying time” they had overlooked; this proved to be a “sad and unlooked-for surprise.”

[50]

### **The Second Angel’s Message**

We return to Ellen White’s vivid account of this crucial year with its rapidly transpiring events. She summarizes the happenings of a few months:

Our hopes now centered on the coming of the Lord in 1844. This was also the time for the message of the second angel, who, flying through the midst of heaven, cried, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city.” Many left the churches in obedience to the message of the second angel. Near its close the Midnight Cry was given: “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him”!

Light was being given concerning this message in every part of the land, and the cry aroused thousands. It went from city to city, from village to village, and into the remote country regions. It reached the learned and talented, as well as the obscure and humble.—[Ibid.](#), 187.

She wrote of this time as “the happiest year of my life. My heart was full of glad expectation; but I felt great pity and anxiety for those who were in discouragement and had no hope in Jesus.”

It was during this period of expectation and waiting that, as noted in her statement quoted above, the message of the second angel began to sound. Another who passed through the experience reported, “We all rushed out of Babylon.”—JW to L. W. Hastings, August 26, 1848. It was later in this period that eyes turned to October 22, which, according to the Karaite reckoning, would be the exact time for the fulfillment of the prophecy of [Daniel 8:14](#). It came about this way:

### **October 22, 1844, The Day of Expectation**

[51] A careful study of types and antitypes led to the observation that the crucifixion of Christ took place on the very day in the yearly round of ceremonies given to Israel when the Passover lamb was slain. Would not the cleansing of the sanctuary typified in the Day of Atonement—falling on the tenth day of the seventh month—likewise take place on the very day in the year celebrated in the type? (see [The Great Controversy](#), 399). This, according to the true Mosaic reckoning of time, would be October 22. Early in August, 1844, at a camp meeting at Exeter, New Hampshire, this view was introduced and it was accepted as the date for the fulfillment of the prophecy of the 2300 days. The parable of the ten virgins in [Matthew 25:1-13](#) took on particular significance—the tarrying of the bridegroom, the waiting and slumbering of those who awaited the marriage, the cry at midnight, the shutting of the door, et cetera. The message that Christ was coming on October 22 came to be known as the “midnight cry.” “The ‘midnight cry,’” wrote Ellen White, “was heralded by thousands of believers.” She added:

Like a tidal wave the [seventh-month] movement swept over the land. From city to city, from village to village, and into remote country places it went, until the waiting people of God were fully aroused.—[The Great Controversy](#), 400.

The rapidity with which the message spread is depicted by writers cited by L. E. Froom:

Bates left the record that the Exeter message “flew as it were upon the wings of the wind.” Men and women sped by rail and water, by stagecoach and horseback, with bundles of books and papers, distributing them as “profusely as the leaves of autumn.” White said, “The work before us was to fly to every part of that wide field, sound the alarm, and wake the slumbering ones.” And Wellcome adds that the movement broke forth like the released waters of a dam. Fields of ripened grain were left standing unharvested, and full-grown potatoes left undug in the ground. The coming of the Lord was nigh. There was no time now for such earthly things.—*The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. IV, p. 816.

As an eyewitness and participant in the movement, Ellen White described the character of the rapidly accelerating work:

Believers saw their doubt and perplexity removed, and hope and courage animated their hearts. The work was free from those extremes which are ever manifested when there is human excitement without the controlling influence of the word and Spirit of God.... It bore the characteristics that mark the work of God in every age. There was little ecstatic joy, but rather deep searching of heart, confession of sin, and forsaking of the world. A preparation to meet the Lord was the burden of agonizing spirits....

Of all the great religious movements since the days of the apostles, none have been more free from human

imperfection and the wiles of Satan than was that of the autumn of 1844. Even now, after the lapse of many years [1888], all who shared in that movement and who have stood firm upon the platform of truth still feel the holy influence of that blessed work and bear witness that it was of God.—*Ibid.*, 400, 401.

In spite of the evidences of a work sweeping across the land and drawing thousands into the fellowship of the Second Advent, and some two hundred ministers from various churches united in spreading the message, [See C. M. Maxwell, *Tell it to the world*, pp. 19, 20.] the Protestant churches as a whole spurned it and used every means at their command to prevent the belief in Christ's soon coming from spreading. No one dared to mention in a church service the hope of the soon coming of Jesus, but to those awaiting the event it was quite different.

Ellen White told what it was like:

Every moment seemed precious and of the utmost importance to me. I felt that we were doing work for eternity, and that the careless and uninterested were in the greatest peril. My faith was unclouded, and I appropriated the precious promises of Jesus to myself....

With diligent searching of hearts and humble confession we came prayerfully up to the time of expectation. Every morning we felt that it was our first business to secure the evidence that our lives were right before God. We realized that if we were not advancing in holiness we were sure to retrograde. Our interest for each other increased; we prayed much with and for one another.

[53]

We assembled in the orchards and groves to commune with God and to offer up our petitions to Him, feeling more clearly His presence when surrounded by His natural works. The joys of salvation were more necessary to us than our food and drink. If clouds obscured our minds we dared not rest or sleep till they

were swept away by the consciousness of our acceptance with the Lord.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 188, 189.

### **The Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844**

With bated breath the Adventists, no less than fifty thousand and probably nearer one hundred thousand scattered largely across the northeastern portion of North America, arose to greet the eventful day, Tuesday, October 22, 1844.

Some sought vantage points where they could peer into the clear heavens, hoping to catch a first glimpse of the coming of their returning Lord. When would Jesus come? The morning hours slowly passed and noon came, then midafternoon; finally darkness settled upon the earth. But it was still October 22, and it would be till midnight. At last that hour came, but Jesus did not come. The disappointment was almost beyond description. In later years some wrote of the experience. Hiram Edson gave a vivid account of how they looked for the coming of the Lord “until the clock tolled twelve at midnight. Then our disappointment became a certainty.” Of his experience in the depths of sorrow he wrote:

Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept and wept, till the day dawn.

I mused in my own heart, saying, “My advent experience has been the richest and brightest of all my Christian experience. If this had proved a failure, what was the rest of my Christian experience worth? Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God, no heaven, no golden home city, no Paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hope and expectation of these things?” And thus we had something to grieve and weep over, if all our fondest hopes were lost. And as I said, we wept, till the day dawn.—DF 588, Hiram Edson manuscript (see also [The](#)

[Review and Herald, June 23, 1921](#)).

Another Advent believer who passed through the painful experience in Vermont, Washington Morse, recounted: [See F. D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*, pp. 247-250, for other accounts.]

That day came and passed, and the darkness of another night closed in upon the world. But with that darkness came a pang of disappointment to the Advent believers that can find a parallel only in the sorrow of the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord.

The passing of the time was a bitter disappointment. True believers had given up all for Christ, and had shared His presence as never before. The love of Jesus filled every soul; and with inexpressible desire they prayed, “Come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly”: but He did not come.

And now, to turn again to the cares, perplexities, and dangers of life, in full view of jeering and reviling unbelievers who scoffed as never before, was a terrible trial of faith and patience. When Elder Himes visited Waterbury, Vermont, a short time after the passing of the time, and stated that the brethren should prepare for another cold winter, my feelings were almost uncontrollable. I left the place of meeting and wept like a child.—In [Ibid.](#), [May 7, 1901](#)

We turn again to Ellen White’s eyewitness account:

It was hard to take up the vexing cares of life that we thought had been laid down forever. It was a bitter disappointment that fell upon the little flock whose faith had been so strong and whose hope had been so high. But we were surprised that we felt so free in the Lord, and were so strongly sustained by His strength and grace....

We were disappointed but not disheartened. We resolved to submit patiently to the process of purifying that God deemed needful for us; to refrain from

murmuring at the trying ordeal by which the Lord was purging us from the dross and refining us like gold in the furnace. We resolved to wait with patient hope for the Saviour to redeem His tried and faithful ones.

We were firm in the belief that the preaching of the definite time was of God. It was this that led men to search the Bible diligently, discovering truths they had not before perceived....

[55]

Our disappointment was not so great as that of the disciples. When the Son of man rode triumphantly into Jerusalem they expected Him to be crowned king.... Yet in a few days these very disciples saw their beloved Master, whom they believed would reign on David's throne, stretched upon the cruel cross above the mocking, taunting Pharisees. Their high hopes were drowned in bitter disappointment, and the darkness of death closed about them. Yet Christ was true to His promises.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 189-192.](#)

### **The Failing Health of Ellen Harmon**

It was during this period of uncertainty and bitter disappointment that Ellen's health, already impaired, worsened rapidly. Tuberculosis, it seemed, would take her life. She could speak only in a whisper or broken voice. Her heart was seriously affected. She found it difficult to breathe lying down, and at night was often bolstered to almost a sitting position. She was frequently awakened from sleep by coughing and bleeding in her lungs.

While Ellen was in this condition she responded to an invitation from a close friend, Mrs. Elizabeth Haines, just a little older than she, to visit her in her home across the causeway in South Portland. It was now December, but even so Ellen went to spend a few days with her. Elizabeth also was perplexed because of the seeming failure of the fulfillment of prophecy in October. Ellen had given up confidence in the validity of the October date. For her and her close associates, October 22 seemed now to have no real significance.

They now looked for the events they had expected to take place on October 22 as yet in the future ([Letter 3, 1847](#); [A Word to the Little Flock, 22](#)).

### Ellen Harmon Given a Vision—Her First

Three other young women joined Mrs. Haines and Ellen for morning family worship. Tradition has it that this worship experience occurred in the second-floor room of the house at the corner of Ocean and C streets. The exact date is not known, but in 1847 Ellen White placed it in December, 1844.

[56] “It was not an exciting occasion,” Ellen later recalled. “While I was praying, the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I was wrapped in a vision of God’s glory, and seemed to be rising higher and higher from the earth, and was shown something of the travels of the Advent people to the Holy City.”—[Early Writings, 13](#) (see also *Experience and Views*, p. 5).

As she recounted the experience about a year later in a letter to Enoch Jacobs, editor of the *Day-Star*, [Up to this time the vision had been recounted only in oral form. She could not hold her hand steady enough to write at the time of the vision nor for several months following it.] she declared:

As God has shown me the travels of the Advent people to the Holy City, and the rich reward to be given those who wait the return of their Lord from the wedding, it may be my duty to give you a short sketch of what God has revealed to me. The dear saints have got many trials to pass through. But our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory—while we look not at the things which are seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

I have tried to bring back a good report, and a few grapes from the heavenly Canaan, for which many would stone me, as the congregation bade stone Caleb and Joshua for their report ([Numbers 14:10](#)). But I de-

clare to you, my brethren and sisters in the Lord, it is a goodly land, and we are well able to go up and possess it.—*Experience and Views*, pp. 9, 10.

### **The First Vision as Published in the Day-Star**

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

At this, I raised my eyes and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the Advent people were traveling to the City, which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the first end of the path, which an angel told me was the Midnight Cry. This light shone all along the path, and gave light for their feet so they might not stumble. And if they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the City, they were safe.

[57]

But soon some grew weary, and said the City was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before. Then Jesus would encourage them by raising His glorious right arm, and from His arm came a glorious light which waved over the Advent band, and they shouted, Hallelujah!

Others rashly denied the light behind them, and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, which left their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and got their eyes off the mark and lost sight of Jesus, and fell off the path down in the dark and wicked world below. It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the City, as all the wicked world which God had rejected. They fell all the way along the path one after another, until we heard the voice of God like many waters, which

gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spake the time, He poured on us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai.

By this time the 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name.

At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us in prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and the wicked would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us who could wash one another's feet and salute the holy brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet.

Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud [See the later expanded account in [The Great Controversy, 640-642.](#)] had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer, [and became] lighter, and brighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire, a rainbow was over it, around the cloud were ten thousand angels singing a most lovely song.

[58]

And on it sat the Son of man, on His head were crowns, His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders. His feet had the appearance of fire, in His right hand was a sharp sickle, in His left a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through.

Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless? Then

the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke, Those who have clean hands and a pure heart shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you. At this, our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sung again while the cloud drew still nearer the earth.

Then Jesus' silver trumpet sounded, as He descended on the cloud, wrapped in flames of fire. He gazed on the graves of the sleeping saints, then raised His eyes and hands to heaven and cried, Awake! Awake! Awake! ye that sleep in the dust, and arise. Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality. The 144,000 shouted, Hallelujah! as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death, and in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.

We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass.—[The Day-Star, January 24, 1846](#) (see also [Early Writings, 14-16](#)).

As Ellen in vision entered the New Jerusalem, she saw harps of gold and palms of victory given to the redeemed; she saw the tree of life and the throne of God, and she conversed with Brethren Fitch and Stockman, who had been laid in the grave a little before the October 22 disappointment. The account closes with all joining in the cry “Hallelujah, heaven is cheap enough!” and she relates, “We touched our glorious harps and made heaven’s arches ring.”—[Ibid.](#) (see also [Ibid., 16, 17](#)).

[59]

### **The Vision Answered Many Pressing Questions**

What a glorious and comprehensive revelation!

As the five women were praying that December morning in South Portland, one question was uppermost in their minds: Was the experience through which they had just passed in 1844 one in which God led? Was prophecy fulfilled on October 22, or was their

experience a delusion without sound scriptural support and without the leadings of the Spirit of God? In their hearts they cried out, “Why, oh, why were we disappointed?”

The vision answered the first question. God had led them in their past experience. The Midnight Cry was in the providence of God. It was pictured as “light”—light behind them that shone all about the path. Also she was shown that they were at the beginning of a path, rather than at the end of it, as they had supposed. The vision gave assurance that if they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus they would safely enter upon the heavenly reward. And they were given inklings of what the reward was like.

As to the second question, “Why were they disappointed?”—this could and would be answered from Bible study. How gracious of the Lord to give light in that dark and discouraging hour!

## Chapter 4—(1844-1845) Make It Known to Others [60]

Through the early-winter months of 1844-1845, the Advent believers in Portland, Maine—and, in fact, elsewhere—seldom smiled. On the streets they were taunted and ridiculed by former friends and acquaintances. They often had to meet the assertion “You were a set of fools and fanatics” or “I told you so.” The uniform testimony of those who passed through the experience was that only those who had endured it could realize the depth of disappointment and its reality.

During the last days of October and through November, many of the believers lived in constant expectancy. The Advent papers that survived carried word from the leaders in the movement confirming them in their confidence that prophecy had been fulfilled. Wrote William Miller in a letter dated November 18, 1844:

We have done our work in warning sinners, and in trying to awake a formal church. God in His providence has shut the door; we can only stir one another up to be *patient*, and be diligent to make our calling and election sure.—Letter published in *Advent Herald*, December 11, 1844.

They fully believed that probation had closed and Jesus would come at almost any moment. But as the days stretched into weeks and Jesus did not come, their faith began to waver. By December most of the believers in the Portland area had abandoned their confidence in the integrity of the October 22 date ([A Word to the Little Flock, 22](#)). Every passing day drove home the conviction that nothing had taken place at that time. James White reported in 1847:

When she [Ellen] received her first vision, December, 1844, she and all the band [the group of Advent believers] in Portland, Maine (where her parents then

[61]

resided) had given up the midnight cry, and shut door, as being in the past.—[Ibid.](#)

In other words, they assumed that the 2300 days *had not ended yet*. Writing to Joseph Bates on July 13, 1847, Ellen White declared:

At the time I had the vision of the midnight cry [December, 1844], I had given it up in the past and thought it future, as also most of the band had.—[Letter 3, 1847.](#)

This experience became quite general, and by April, 1845, the larger part of those who had been in the Advent movement and had not immediately repudiated their experience came to conclude that there had been a mistake in the date and that they must look for the fulfillment of the 2300-day prophecy at some time yet to come.

But that vision given to Ellen Harmon in December in the Haines home presented an entirely different picture. *God had led His people*. The Midnight Cry—a phrase that, as noted, grew out of the application of the parable of the ten virgins to October 22, 1844—shone as a light upon the pathway of the Advent believers who were making their way to the heavenly Canaan. If they trusted this light and kept their eyes fixed on Jesus they would safely enter into their reward.

### Ellen's Confrontation

What would this 17-year-old girl who had been given a vision do—a vision that presented information contrary to her own thinking and contrary to what was now held by the Advent believers generally in the Portland area? In recounting the experience two years later in her letter to Joseph Bates, she told of how God instructed her to deliver the message to the band. She also related her reaction:

I shrank from it. I was young, and I thought they would not receive it from me.—[Ibid.](#)

So instead of remaining at home, for she knew a meeting was to be held there that night, she got into a sleigh and rode three or four

miles to the home of a friend. There, hidden in seclusion, she felt she would avoid her responsibility. Knowing how the Adventists in the Portland area generally looked on the October 22 experience, she feared the prospects of setting before them any view that would be in conflict. [62]

At her friend's home she found Joseph Turner, leader of the Adventists in the Portland area and an important Millerite editor. He had recently reached the conclusion that the Bridegroom had come and prophecy was being fulfilled. Ellen knew nothing of Turner's position, which her vision actually supported.

As she later recalled, he inquired how she was and if she was in the way of her duty. She knew she was not. Ignoring the questions, she hastened upstairs to a bedroom where she secluded herself. A little later in the day Turner went to her room. She wrote:

When he came up, he asked if I was to be at the meeting [at her parents' home] [Prior to October 22 and for a time following, the harmon home at 44 Clark street was one of the meeting places for the advent believers.] that night.

I told him, "No."

He said he wanted to hear my vision and thought it duty for me to go home.

I told him I should not. He said no more, but went away. I thought, and told those around me, if I went I should have to come out against his views, thinking he believed with the rest. I had not told any of them what God had shown me.—*Ibid.*

How she suffered in body and mind that day! It seemed to her that God had forsaken her. Finally she promised the Lord that if He would give her strength to ride home that night she would at the first opportunity deliver the message He had given to her. He did give her strength. She did ride home that night, but it was late when she got there, and the meeting was over and the people were gone. Not a word was said to her by her family about the meeting or what was presented or how many attended. She later learned that only a few had been present.

[63] At the next meeting held in her parents' home she recounted in careful detail what had been shown to her in the vision. What a relief this brought to the Adventists in Portland! They knew Ellen; they knew her family. They had heard that a vision had been given to her, and when they heard it from her own lips they accepted what she told them as a message from God. It met a need in their experience. According to James White there were about sixty [As the harmon home in portland was small, it could accommodate less than half this number. Arrangements must have been made for a more commodious meeting place for her to relate her views. This is suggested in her account of a meeting where william foy, who had received two visions some three years before, heard her relate her first vision, as recounted by her in an interview in 1906. See appendix B for Foy's experience.] belonging to the Advent band in Portland who accepted the vision and through it regained their confidence in the fulfillment of prophecy concerning October 22, 1844 ([A Word to the Little Flock, 22](#)).

It would seem that the first telling of the vision in her parents' home in Portland took place within a few days of the vision itself, which she later pinpointed as having occurred in December, 1844. Events took place in rapid succession. In her biographical account she stated:

About one week after this the Lord gave me another view, and showed me the trials I must pass through; that I must go and relate to others what He had revealed to me; that I should meet with great opposition, and suffer anguish of spirit. Said the angel, "The grace of God is sufficient for you; He will sustain you."—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:35](#).

This vision troubled her much, for in it she was commissioned to go out among the people and present the truths that God had revealed to her. Her health was poor; she was in constant bodily suffering; tuberculosis ravaged her lungs and gave every appearance that she was "marked for the grave." Her family was without money; it was midwinter in Maine. She was timid and entertained serious

misgivings about traveling and coming before the people with the claim to have had visions.

For several days and far into the night Ellen prayed that God would remove the burden from her and place it upon someone more capable of bearing it. But constantly the words of the angel sounded in her ears: ““Make known to others what I have revealed to you.””—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 194. Recalling the experience, she wrote:

It seemed impossible for me to accomplish this work that was presented before me; to attempt it seemed certain failure. The trials attending it seemed more than I could endure. How could I, a child in years, go forth from place to place unfolding to the people the holy truths of God? My heart shrank in terror from the thought.—[Ibid.](#)

[64]

Oh, how welcome death would have been, for it would have released her from the responsibilities that were crowding in upon her! She talked with her father of her perplexities. He repeatedly assured her that if God had called her to labor in other places He would not fail to open the way for her. But to Ellen it seemed impossible to submit to the commission.

Soon the peace of God that she had enjoyed left her; for a time she even refused to attend the meetings held in her home. One evening she was persuaded to be present. John Pearson encouraged her to surrender her will to the will of God. In her distress she could not muster courage to bring her own will into play. But now her heart united with the petitions of her friends. She later recounted:

While prayer was offered for me, that the Lord would give me strength and courage to bear the message, the thick darkness that had encompassed me rolled back, and a sudden light came upon me. Something that seemed to me like a ball of fire struck me right over the heart. My strength was taken away, and I fell to the floor. I seemed to be in the presence of the angels. One of these holy beings again repeated the words, “Make known to others what I have revealed to you.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White](#), 71.

When Ellen regained her consciousness, Elder Pearson, who because of rheumatism could not kneel, stood and declared:

“I have seen a sight such as I never expected to see. A ball of fire came down from heaven, and struck Sister Ellen Harmon right on the heart. *I saw it! I saw it!* I can never forget it. It has changed my whole being. Sister Ellen, have courage in the Lord. After this night I will never doubt again.”—[Ibid.](#)

### Fear of Exaltation

[65] One reason Ellen shrank from the trying ordeal was that she recalled the experience of some entrusted by God with large responsibilities who became proud. She feared that this might be a danger to her. She in vision discussed it with the angel. “If I must go and relate what thou hast shown me,” she pleaded, “preserve me from undue exaltation.”

Replied the angel: “Your prayers are heard and shall be answered. If this evil that you dread threatens you, the hand of God will be stretched out to save you; by affliction He will draw you to Himself and preserve your humility.

“Deliver the message faithfully. Endure unto the end and you shall eat the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of life.”—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 196.](#)

With this assurance in her heart Ellen committed herself to the Lord, ready to do His bidding whatever that might be or whatever the cost.

This experience must have taken place in mid-January, 1845. How quickly Providence opened the way for her to enter into her work! Ellen had two married sisters living in Poland, Maine, about thirty miles north of Portland. One, Mary, was married to Samuel Foss. In late January he had business in Portland, and while he was in the city he called at the Harmon home. He told Ellen that Mary was eager that she should come and visit her. “I thought this was

an opening from the Lord,” she later wrote ([Letter 37, 1890](#)). She decided to go with him to Poland.

In the bitter cold and in spite of her feeble health, she made the thirty-mile journey with her brother-in-law—crouched on the bottom of the sleigh with a buffalo robe over her head. When she reached Poland she learned that there would soon be a meeting of the Adventists at the little chapel on McGuire’s Hill. Mary invited Ellen to attend. She consented, and at the meeting stood to relate what God had shown her in vision. For five minutes she spoke in only a whisper, then her voice broke clear and she addressed the audience for nearly two hours. This was the first occasion that she told of her first vision outside of Portland. She reported, “In this meeting the power of the Lord came upon me and on the people.”— [Ibid.](#) She stated:

When my message was ended my voice was gone until I stood before the people again, when the same singular restoration was repeated. I felt a constant assurance that I was doing the will of God, and saw marked results attending my efforts.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 197.](#)

[66]

### **Meeting Hazen Foss**

The next morning in her sister’s home she met Hazen Foss, who told Ellen his story:

Some time before the first vision was given to Ellen in December, the Lord had given just such a vision to Hazen. He had been instructed that he was to tell others what God had revealed to him. However, he felt he had been deceived in the disappointment of 1844. He knew, too, that ridicule and scorn would come to anyone who claimed to have a vision from God, so he refused to obey the promptings of God’s Spirit. Again the Lord came near to him in vision; he was instructed that if he refused to bear the message Heaven would have him give to the people, the Lord would reveal it to someone else, placing His Spirit on the weakest of the weak.

But Hazen still felt that he could not bear the burden and the reproach of standing before the people to present a vision from God.

He told the Lord that he would not do it. Then very strange feelings came over him, and “a voice said, ‘you have grieved away the Spirit of the Lord.’”—[Letter 37, 1890](#). This frightened Hazen. Horrified at his own stubbornness and rebellion, he told the Lord that he would now relate the vision. He called a meeting of the Adventists for the purpose. When the people came together he recounted his experience. Then he tried to tell what was shown to him, but he could not call it to mind. Even with the most concentrated effort he could not recall a word of it. He cried out in distress,

“It is gone from me; I can say nothing, and the Spirit of the Lord has left me.”—[Ibid.](#)

Those who were present described the meeting as the most terrible meeting they ever were in.

[67] As Hazen talked with Ellen that February morning in Poland, he told her that although he had not gone into the chapel where she had spoken the evening before, he had stood outside the door and heard every word that she had said. He declared that what the Lord had shown to her had first been shown to him. But, said he:

I was proud; I was unreconciled to the disappointment. I murmured against God, and wished myself dead. Then I felt a strange feeling come over me. I shall be henceforth as one dead to spiritual things.... I believe the visions are taken from me, and given to you.

“Do not refuse to obey God, for it will be at the peril of your soul. I am a lost man. You are chosen of God; be faithful in doing your work, and the crown I might have had, you will receive.”—[Ibid.](#)

This unusual experience made an indelible impression upon Ellen’s mind. The biddings of God’s Spirit were not to be trifled with.

### **Ellen Ventures Into the Field**

For nearly three months Ellen had been unable to speak above a whisper, but now she had the omens of God’s providence as she

might venture forth to tell of the visions God gave to her. Shortly the way opened for her to do so.

Fanaticism was breaking out. Under God's guidance and protection she must meet it—hardly a work religious leaders would today assign a young woman of 17 years. But the agent chosen by God was not only one through whom He could speak but also one whose message the people would know came from Him.

### **The Background of this Traumatic Experience**

To understand better what was happening, we should review a bit. The Adventists in their experience of expectation in 1844 had absolute confidence that Jesus would come on October 22. They allowed not one doubting thought. No mental reservation allowed for the question "What if Jesus does not come?" So certain were they that crops of hay, grain, and potatoes were left unharvested in the fields. There was a certainty that all things earthly would end sometime on Tuesday, October 22.

But Christ did not come. Wrote Ellen White:

The time again passed unmarked by the advent of Jesus. Mortality still clung to us, the effects of the curse were all around us. It was hard to take up the vexing cares of life that we thought had been laid down forever. It was a bitter disappointment that fell upon the little flock whose faith had been so strong and whose hope had been so high. But we were surprised that we felt so free in the Lord, and were so strongly sustained by His strength and grace.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 189.](#)

[68]

As the weeks stretched into months, a wedge began to separate the Adventists. Some continued to hold that prophecy was fulfilled on October 22. A much larger group took the position that they were mistaken in the date; the events that they had thought would transpire in the fall of 1844 they now felt were all in the future.

Adventists of the smaller group, having cut loose from church creeds and church discipline, avowed their purpose to find their

guidance in God's Word alone. The evidences of God's leading and providences in their experience for the past year or two had been too great to deny. The embryo of God's remnant church was in this group.

But in the vulnerable period in the early months of 1845, when they were reaching out to ascertain their position and responsibilities as sheep without a shepherd, Satan, the great adversary, made his inroads. Not yet perceived by the little flock, this had been clearly portrayed in the prophecy of [Revelation 12:17](#): "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed." Satan certainly did make war on the believers, intent to thwart, if possible, the very purposes of God by destroying at the outset the remnant church of prophecy.

Following what they interpreted to be the biddings of God's Word, but without proper leadership and lacking balance and a true understanding of what it meant to follow Christ, a relative few (but including some of the most trusted believers) became involved in strange and sometimes wild fanaticism. "These men and women," wrote Ellen White, who was personally acquainted with some, "were not bad, but they were deceived and deluded." She commented, "In the past they had been blessed with a consciousness that they had a knowledge of the truth, and they had accomplished much good; but [now] Satan was molding the work."—[Letter 132, 1900](#).

[69] These fanatical teachings and actions on the part of some divided the little group who were clinging to their confidence that prophecy had been fulfilled on October 22. There were those who patiently awaited the dawning of light that they might gain a true understanding of their position and their work. These became the spiritual forefathers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

But a few others found it hard to wait and were soon swept off their feet by the teaching that there was a spiritual coming of Christ. Christ came, they declared, on October 22, 1844. We are now in the kingdom, they asserted. Every tenet of belief and every activity of those involved was molded by this concept of the spiritual coming of Christ. In this were seeds that soon yielded a harvest of fanatical and shameful activities.

It was into this scene that 17-year-old Ellen Harmon was cast. The December vision revealed to her that God had led His people in

their October 22 experience, and that if they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus they would safely reach the heavenly reward.

It was this young woman who in midwinter was bidden by God to go into the field and present to the people the messages that He gave to her. The beginning made at Poland, Maine, assured her that God was leading and that she must trust fully, casting herself on the Lord, ready to follow His directions.

### **The Fruitful Journey to Eastern Maine**

After the few days in Poland at her sister's home, Ellen was back again in Portland, convinced that she must follow the intimations of God's will. She had promised to go if the Lord opened the way, and now she was invited by William Jordan and his sister Sarah to journey with them to eastern Maine. "I was urged to go with them," she wrote, "and relate my visions."—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:38](#). The Jordans were driving by sleigh the one hundred miles to Orrington, on the Penobscot River. Mr. Jordan had a horse that belonged to a young Adventist minister, James White. As he had business that would take him to certain parts of eastern Maine, he decided to return the horse and invited Miss Harmon to accompany them so that she might bear her witness in a wider circle. Little did Ellen realize what was before her. She had now assumed a confident trust in God. Financial resources for her journey did not concern her. Just where her itinerary might take her she did not know. As to the message that she should bear, she would depend wholly upon God.

[70]

### **Encouraging the Fainthearted and Meeting Fanaticism**

Ellen tells of her call to the unique situation and the assurances of God's protecting care:

I was shown that God had a work for me to do amid dangers and perils, but I must not shrink. I must go to the very places where fanaticism had done the most evil, and bear my messages of reproof to some of those who were influencing others; while I should give comfort and encouragement to those who were timid

and conscientious, but deceived by those they thought were more righteous than they. I saw that we would be in danger of imprisonment and abuse. Although I should have no sympathy with the deceived, fanatical ones, no difference would be made; for anyone bearing the name of Adventist would have no consideration shown them.

I was young and timid, and felt great sadness in regard to visiting the field where fanaticism had reigned. I pleaded with God to spare me from this—to send by some other one. The Spirit of the Lord again came upon me, and I was shown my faith would be tested, my courage and obedience tried. I must go. God would give me words to speak at the right time. And if I should wait upon Him, and have faith in His promises, I should escape both imprisonment and abuse; for He would restrain those who would do me harm....

I waited no longer, but went trusting in God. I saw most of the brethren and sisters. As I warned them of their dangers, some were rejoiced that God had sent me; others refused to listen to my testimony as soon as they learned that I was not in union with their spirit. They said I was going back to the world, that we must be so straight and so plain and so full of glory, as they called their shouting and hallooing, that the world would hate and persecute us.—[Letter 2, 1874](#).

[71] At Orrington, Jordan delivered the horse to James White. Ellen Harmon became acquainted with this youthful but most earnest Adventist minister, so firm in his confidence in the fulfillment of prophecy in the Adventist experience. [In the Summer of 1843 James White had visited portland and labored for a time with Elder John Pearson. It must have been in connection with this visit that he learned of Ellen Harmon and her personality. In his biographical Sketch he states: “I first met her in the City Of Portland, in the State Of Maine. She was then a Christian of the most devoted type. And although but 16, she was a laborer in the cause of Christ in public and from house to house.”—1LS, p. 126. Ellen Harmon remembered first meeting james white at orrington in connection with the trip just described.]

She began her work of encouraging the believers and meeting fanaticism, a work that was to continue through the next year or two. Reporting her experience of this period, she wrote: “The Spirit of God attended the message I bore, hearts were made glad in the truth, and the desponding ones were cheered and encouraged to renew their faith.”—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 197](#). In the early records we find the names of some who at some point were involved in fanaticism: Joseph Turner, Israel Damman, a Mr. Bennett, John Andrews, William Hyde.

Writing later of her dual work of encouraging the fainthearted and in meeting with those involved in the fanaticisms that broke out in Maine and New Hampshire, she explained:

The disappointment in 1844 had confused the minds of many, and they would not listen to any explanation of the matter. They were impatient and unbelieving, and many seemed rebellious, coming out in a most decided manner against their past Advent experience. Others dared not go to this length, and deny the way the Lord had led them. These were glad to hear arguments from the Word of God which would harmonize our position with prophetic history.

As they listened to an explanation of the disappointment which had been so bitter to them, they saw that God [had] indeed led them, and they rejoiced in the truth. This awakened the most bitter opposition on the part of those who denied our past experience.

But we had a still worse element to meet in a class who claimed that they were sanctified, that they could not sin, that they were sealed and holy, and that all their impressions and notions were the mind of God. Conscientious souls were deceived by the pretended piety of these fanatics.

As to the fruits of her labor she declared:

[72]

The Lord used us as instruments to rebuke these fanatics, and to open the eyes of His faithful people to

the true character of their work. Peace and joy came into the hearts of those who broke away from this deception of Satan, and they glorified God as they saw His unerring wisdom in setting before them the light of truth and its precious fruits in contrast with satanic heresies and delusions. The truth shone in contrast with these deceptions like clear gold amid the rubbish of earth.—[The Review and Herald, November 20, 1883](#).

Some were sorely repentant and, Ellen White explained at the General Conference in 1901, “were afterward among our most reliable men and women. But there were others who ever after walked in sadness. We could not at any time make them feel that they were worthy to work for the Master.”—[The General Conference Bulletin, April 23, 1901](#).

The reader should guard against reaching the conclusion that the group of believers as a whole were involved in fanaticism. Some who were involved have been named, but there were stalwart souls who never wavered: Otis Nichols, the Howland and Hastings families, Joseph Bates, and others. As Ellen White explained in her article in [The Review and Herald, November 20, 1883](#), “Many of the pioneers, who shared with us these trials and victories, remained true to the close of life.” Nevertheless, as she explained in her letter to Elder Loughborough in 1874, “a fearful stain was brought upon the cause of God which would cleave to the name Adventist like leprosy. Satan triumphed, for this reproach would cause many precious souls to fear to have any connection with Adventists. All that had been done wrong would be exaggerated, and would lose nothing by passing from one to the other. The cause of God was bleeding. Jesus was crucified afresh and put to open shame by His professed followers.”—[Letter 2, 1874](#).

Not alone as a matter of history is the fanaticism met in early years recounted here. Because on several occasions Ellen White was shown in vision that the history of the past would be repeated and God’s people would be called upon to meet elements of fanaticism before the end of time, we delineate in considerable detail the involvements of that first critical year in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## Chapter 5—(1845) The Messenger of the Lord at Work

[73]

During the late-winter and spring months of 1845 Ellen Harmon was traveling almost constantly, first in eastern Maine and then in New Hampshire. From late summer and through the winter of 1845 and 1846, she spent much of the time in Massachusetts; when there she resided at the home of the Otis Nichols family in Dorchester, just south of Boston. In April, 1846, Nichols wrote to William Miller of this and in so doing provided information very helpful in filling out the story of her activities for this period of the evolvement of the church.

Some years later, probably about 1860, in a statement of recollections, Nichols gave many helpful details concerning Ellen's early visits to the Boston area.

These statements not only provide a perspective to the records of Ellen Harmon's activities in those crucial weeks following the disappointment but also give glimpses of how some of the believers in those early days related to her unique experience. We quote at some length from these two statements of an eyewitness: First from Nichols' general statement:

The following are recollections of some remarkable manifestations of the Holy Spirit which attended Sister White's [Ellen Harmon is referred to as she was known in 1860. Her account of the first visit to Massachusetts opens with the words "I was then shown that I must visit Massachusetts, and there bear my testimony."—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:67.](#)] visions and their relation in Massachusetts in 1845 and 1846:

The first account of her vision in Maine we had from Elder John Pearson in February, 1845, at a meeting in Roseburg, which he believed was a light to the believers in the seventh-month movement, and a present truth.

[74]

Sister White's first visit to Massachusetts was in August, 1845, accompanied by her older sister and Brother James White. They met with the believers in Roxbury, where there was a large company assembled in a meeting. She told them they came from Maine to deliver a message from the Lord—a vision in which the Lord had shown her the travels of the Advent band, and being strangers, she was at first received rather coolly. As I was not present at the meeting, I give the account as I received it from the principal leader.

Soon after Sister White commenced the relation of her vision, the power of the Holy Ghost was so clearly manifested that all present became convinced that the message was from the Lord—that it was a light to the remnant and a present truth—and was unanimously received and acknowledged with rejoicing.

T. H. [Haskins], one of the principal leaders, confessed that they had no such reviving as the present since the time of the midnight cry in 1844, and that he could walk in the strength of the refreshing for forty days, as Elijah did....

The day following Sister White's visit to Roxbury they came to our house, which they made their home while traveling in Massachusetts.—DF 105, "Statement by Otis Nichols."

### **The Otis Nichols Letter of April 20, 1846**

On April 6, 1846, in Portland, Maine, James White and H. S. Gurney published Ellen's first vision on a large single sheet, known as a "broadside." On April 20 Otis Nichols hastened a copy off to William Miller; he accompanied it with a letter introducing Ellen's experience and setting forth arguments for its favorable reception. After reviewing briefly the distressing experience through which the Adventists had passed since October 22, 1844, he stated:

Within is a part [What is set forth in the broadside and later in books as Ellen White's first vision can be

read in a few minutes. It took her two hours to relate all that was shown to her to the believers in Poland. It seems clear that what we have today was, as Nichols wrote, but “a part” or possibly a condensation of the high points of the full account.] of the vision of E. G. H. of Portland. I fully believe them to be from heaven. The manner and circumstances attending is unlike anything I have seen or read of since the days of the apostles. I would ask you to lay aside prejudice and suspend judgment until you have read and compared them with the Scripture and present truth....

[75]

The first vision of E. G. H. was in the fall of 1844 which never [at the time] was published to the world. It was a view of the travels of the Advent company from the seventh month, 1844, and so far as fulfilled they have had as perfect a fulfillment as could possibly be, especially in most Advent bands, and individuals wherever we are acquainted.

Her calling was most remarkable, only 17 years of age, sick with dropsical consumption and confined to the house for most of the time for five years, and been given over by physicians to die. In this state God called her and told her to go out and tell the flock what He had revealed to her, that she should have grace and strength of God as she needed, that an angel should accompany her all the time and sometimes two in time of need, that no wicked power on earth should have dominion over her if she would obey the Lord.

### **Ellen's Experience in Delivering the Message**

At the time she first went out to deliver her message [February, 1845] she was scarcely able to walk across the room and could not speak with an audible voice, but she had perfect faith in God and was carried in this state a few miles to deliver her message, and when she came to speak, her voice was nearly gone, but God fulfilled His word, gave her strength of body and a clear, loud,

audible voice to talk nearly two hours with tremendous power and effect on the people and without fatigue of body, and from that time for many weeks she continued to travel day and night, talking almost every day until she had visited most of the Advent bands in Maine and the easterly parts of New Hampshire.

Her message was always attended with the Holy Ghost, and wherever it was received as from the Lord it broke down and melted their hearts like little children, fed, comforted, strengthened the weak, and encouraged them to hold on to the faith, and the seventh month movement; and that our work was done for the nominal church and the world, [This expression gives a knowledge of the concept of the “shut door” as nichols understood it on April 20, 1846. See chapter 16, “the shut and the open doors.”] and what remained to be done was for the household of faith.

[76]

Those that rejected her message very soon fell into the world and a nominal faith, and those that did receive her testimony as from the Lord and afterward denied it, calling it mesmerism or an unholy thing, are many of them like those that are given over to strong delusion and the working of Satan—a ship without a helm or anchor and driven by every wind, thus causing the way of truth to be evil spoken of. This class of persons are her greatest enemies, and have done what they could by calumny, and lies, to destroy her influence and character. But God has hitherto protected her in a remarkable manner from all harm; raised up benefactors for her wherever she goes, notwithstanding the malice of wicked spirits and fallen Adventists.

Through their influence there have been a number of warrants for her arrest, but God has signally protected her. At one time a sheriff and a number of men with him had no power over her person for an hour and an half, although they exerted all their bodily strength to move her, while she or no one else made any resistance. [It seems nichols has here confused Ellen Harmon’s

experience with that of Israel Damman, an experience Ellen had witnessed and reported to nichols. See the summary of her work in Eastern Maine on page 77.] What I have written I have a knowledge of and think I can judge correctly.—DF 105, Otis Nichols to William Miller, April 20, 1846.

### Early Arguments for the Spirit of Prophecy

Nichols then turns to arguments for the acceptance of the messages of Ellen Harmon:

Sister Ellen has been a resident of my family much of the time for about eight months. I have never seen the least impropriety of conduct in her since our first acquaintance. God has blessed our family abundantly with spiritual things as well as temporal since we received her into our family.

The Spirit of God is with her and has been in a remarkable manner in healing the sick through the answer to her prayers; some cases are as remarkable as any that are recorded in the New Testament.

[77]

But prejudiced and unbelieving persons find it just as convenient to call it mesmerism and ascribe the power to the devil, as the unbelieving Pharisees did. [Matthew 10:25](#); [12:24](#). Is not this the sin against the Holy Ghost? See [Mark 3:22, 29, 30](#). That power which is manifested in her, as far exceeds the power of mesmerism as Moses did the magicians of Egypt. The devil has as much power to imitate and counterfeit the work of God as he did in Moses' time, and the people can be deceived if they will.

“Try the spirits whether they are of God: because many *false prophets* are gone out into the world.” [1 John 4:1](#). “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” [Isaiah 8:20](#). “If the thing follow not, nor come to

pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken.”  
[Deuteronomy 18:22](#).— Ibid.

There is no record of a response from Miller.

### **Some High Points of her Work in Eastern Maine**

Having quoted from Nichols’ letter—a very enlightening statement—we now look at some of the high points of Ellen’s work in Maine in the late winter and spring of 1845. She labored for three months in eastern Maine, a period described by Otis Nichols as a time in which “she continued to travel day and night, talking almost every day until she had visited most of the Advent bands in Maine and the easterly part of New Hampshire.”

At Orrington, as noted, she met James White, and from that time he accompanied her and her woman traveling companion as they went from place to place seeking out the Advent believers. At Garland the blessing of the Lord was especially sensed as she felt an angel standing by her side to strengthen her ([Spiritual Gifts, 2:39](#)). At Exeter she contended with fanatical persons “exalted by the spirit of Satan.” At Atkinson officers of the law entered the meeting place and attempted for an hour and a half to arrest and remove Elder Damman, but were unable to do so. When the believers felt that the power of God had been demonstrated and that the time had come for him to submit, the officers carried him out with ease ([Ibid., 2:41](#)). At his hearing he was able to testify to his faith.

### **Vision of Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary**

Ellen had been in eastern Maine but a few days when, at Exeter, she was given the significant vision she described in two early letters. One, dated February 15, 1846, was to Enoch Jacobs; the other, dated July 13, 1847, was to Joseph Bates. Of this she wrote:

It was then I had a view of Jesus rising from His mediatorial throne and going to the holiest as Bridegroom to receive His kingdom.—[Letter 3, 1847](#).

I saw the Father rise from the throne and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and did

sit.... I saw a cloudy chariot with wheels like flaming fire. Angels were all about the chariot as it came where Jesus was; He stepped into it and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. Then I beheld Jesus as He was before the Father, a great high priest.—[Letter 1, 1846](#) (see also [The Day-Star, March 14, 1846](#)).

This historic vision, later included in her first book, *Experience and Views*, appears in *Early Writings* under the title “End of the 2300 Days.” Those present, she told Bates, “were all deeply interested in the view. They all said it was entirely new to them. The Lord worked in mighty power setting the truth home to their hearts.”—[Letter 3, 1847](#). The full significance of that “truth” with its presentation of activities in the heavenly sanctuary could with profit be dwelt upon at length.

She was to mention this vision from time to time, for it confirmed the results of Bible study—of which she knew nothing at the time—in western New York State on the part of Hiram Edson and O. R. L. Crosier, and is a key exhibit in the “shut door” matter. [See page 160 for more on this topic.] In a letter to J. N. Loughborough written August 24, 1874, she recounted:

It was on my first journey east to relate my visions that the precious light in regard to the heavenly sanctuary was opened before me and I was shown the open and shut door. We believed that the Lord was soon to come in the clouds of heaven.

[79]

I was shown that there was a great work to be done in the world for those who had not had the light and rejected it. Our brethren could not understand this with our faith in the immediate appearing of Christ. Some accused me of saying my Lord delayeth His coming, especially the fanatical ones.

I saw that in ‘44 God had opened a door and no man could shut it, and shut a door and no man could open it. Those who rejected the light which was brought to the world by the message of the second angel went into

darkness, and how great was that darkness.—[Letter 2, 1874.](#)

### Some Fanatical Positions She Met

Several phases of fanaticism had their roots in the teaching of some that Christ had actually come—that He had come to the world in a spiritual sense and was in the hearts of His believers. They were already in the kingdom of God, they claimed, and heaven was only in the hearts of God’s children. The only body Christ has is the church. The only advent of Christ we are to look for is in the bodies of His saints with the Spirit dwelling in them, shining out through the entire man. Then when Christ descends from heaven, it will only be descending into the hearts of Christians, the heaven where He now is. The holiest of all, even heaven itself, is only in our hearts. To look with natural eyes into heaven itself, it was declared, is antichrist. This teaching was carried to the point that some declared that there is no such thing as a literal body of Christ and a universal God. To look for the personal coming of Christ is carnal (see DF 158e, *The Morning Watch*, April 10, 1845; p. 117).

### Wrestling With the Views of the Spiritualizers

In eastern Maine Ellen was traveling and working in the atmosphere of the spiritualizers who had allegorized away heaven, God, Jesus, and the Advent hope. In the vision at Exeter in mid-February she seemed to be in the presence of Jesus, and she was eager to procure answers to some vital questions.

I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, “If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist.”—[Early Writings, 54.](#)

[80]

This was not the only occasion Ellen was to converse with Jesus and the angel about the person of Jesus and concerning God being a personal being. The answers satisfied her fully that the spiritualizers were in gross error.

But because the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church held that prophecy was fulfilled on October 22, 1844, and that an important work began in heaven in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary at that time, and because the Adventists who had become spiritualizers took the position that Christ had come into their hearts on October 22, 1844, and that His kingdom was in their hearts, the founders of the church, and notably Ellen White, were classed by the world generally, and also by those that SDAs have termed first-day Adventists, as one and the same group. Here again the great enemy cast aspersion upon the true, paralleling it with a false, spurious experience.

Ellen White was to speak of this matter again, particularly in the closing paragraphs of her first little book, *Experience and Views*, published in 1851. As one reads this he will note the use of the term *spiritualism*, which must be taken in the light of the work of the spiritualizers and not in the light of what today is understood to be spiritualism or spiritism, although both emanate from the same source.

We turn now to the statement written and published in 1851 as found in [Ibid.](#), 77, 78:

I have frequently been falsely charged with teaching views peculiar to Spiritualism. But before the editor of *The Day-Star* ran into that delusion, the Lord gave me a view of the sad and desolating effects that would be produced upon the flock by him and others in teaching the spiritual views.

I have often seen the lovely Jesus, that He is a *person*. I asked Him if His Father was a person and had a form like Himself. Said Jesus, "I am in the express *image* of My Father's *person*."

I have often seen that the spiritual view took away all the glory of heaven, and that in many minds the throne of David and the lovely person of Jesus have been burned up in the fire of Spiritualism. I have seen that some who have been deceived and led into this error will be brought out into the light of truth, but it will be almost impossible for them to get entirely rid of

the deceptive power of Spiritualism. Such should make thorough work in confessing their errors and leaving them forever.

The spiritualization of heaven, God, Christ, and the coming of Christ lay at the foundation of much of the fanatical teachings that 17-year-old Ellen Harmon was called upon by God to meet in those formative days. The visions firmly established the personality of God and Christ, the reality of heaven and the reward to the faithful, and the resurrection. This sound guidance saved the emerging church.

### **Ellen Leaves Suddenly for Home**

Having spent between two and three months traveling in eastern Maine, Ellen returned to Orrington, where she had begun her work. While her message was gratefully received on her first visit, in her absence the spiritualizers had come in with teachings that led many in Orrington to such wild fanaticism that the officers of the law refused to allow further meetings of the Adventists. Nonetheless, a small remnant who had held fast were able to avoid the vigilance of the jealous citizens and assembled for a meeting marked with “calm dignity,” which Ellen White reported to be “especially solemn.”

The poor souls who had not the privileges of meeting for a long time were greatly refreshed. While we were praying and weeping before God that night, I was taken off in vision and shown that I must return the next morning. I had not refused obedience to the Spirit of God, His hand had been with me, and His angel had accompanied us and hid us from the people so that they did not know we were in the place.

But our work was done; we could go; the emissaries of Satan were on our track, and we would fare no better than those who had been fanatical and wrong and suffered the consequences of their inconsistent, unreasonable course by abuse and imprisonment.—[Letter 2, 1874](#).

[82] Along with those who traveled with her in support, she was quick

to obey. “Early in the morning,” she recounted, “we were taken in a small rowboat to Belfast. We were there placed on board the steamer and were soon on our way to Portland.”—[Ibid.](#)

Letters received in Portland a few days later reported the fate of those who helped her to escape:

When these brethren returned they were met by a number of exasperated citizens, who had come early to find those who had dared to hold meetings in Orrington.... Our brethren informed the angry men that we were not in Orrington, but far away. They whipped and abused the men who had taken us to the boat. The house where we had tarried was searched in vain for us, and they were greatly disappointed because they could not find us.—[Ibid.](#)

Records are meager as to Ellen’s state of health, but the fact that she traveled, as Otis Nichols reported, “day and night, talking almost every day” suggests a remarkable sustaining power. Of great importance to her was the knowledge that she was experiencing the special blessing of God at every step ([Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 198](#)).

### **The Healing of Frances Howland and William Hyde**

Ellen was hardly back in Portland when she left again to travel north thirty miles to Topsham and the Howland home. Here “quite a number ... were assembled.” During this visit, Frances Howland, suffering from rheumatic fever, was healed in response to the prayer of faith, as recorded in [Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 74 and 75](#), followed shortly by the miraculous healing of William Hyde from dysentery ([Ibid., 75, 76](#)).

On this trip Ellen was again confronted with fanaticism, the result of the teaching of the spiritualizers, who claimed that as they were sanctified, they might have a spiritual wife (DF 733). They averred that if they loved one another as Christians, they were perfectly safe. Some took the matter a step further and taught that since they were perfectly sanctified, they could do whatever they wanted to without

sinning. A few attended meetings in the nude, and a few exchanged wives. They thought it right to show their love for one another and that what they did was perfectly innocent.

[83] When Ellen returned to her home, she was distressed to find that a number of those involved in fanaticism had come from eastern Maine and were influencing the company of believers in Portland. Of this she wrote:

We trembled for the church that was to be subjected to this spirit of fanaticism. My heart ached for God's people. Must they be deceived and led away by this false enthusiasm? I faithfully pronounced the warnings given me of the Lord; but they seemed to have little effect except to make these persons of extreme views jealous of me.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 201.](#)

She found that those she had trusted in January could not be trusted in April, among them Joseph Turner, who unfortunately had joined the spiritualizers.

### **Preserved from Fanaticism**

Writing of how she might have been swayed by these fanatics, she declared:

These false impressions of theirs might have turned me from my duty, had not the Lord previously showed me where to go and what to do. Although so young and inexperienced, I was preserved from falling into the snare of the enemy, through the mercy of God, in giving me special instructions whom to fear and whom to trust. Had it not been for this protection I now see many times when I might have been led from the path of duty.—[Ibid., 201, 202.](#)

The phrase “whom to fear and whom to trust” soon took on considerable significance. Joseph Turner was now one of those she should fear.

### Visit to New Hampshire

“About this time,” she continued in her account of her activities in late spring, 1845, “I was shown that it was my duty to visit our people in New Hampshire.”

Joseph Turner, learning that Ellen was planning such a journey, drove up with a beautiful conveyance and volunteered to take her wherever she wanted to go.

“No, sir,” Ellen replied. “You cannot do that.”

“But, Ellen,” he said, “the Lord has told me that I must.”

[84]

“No,” said Ellen. “He has not. I have had my special orders. I may trust Elder James White.”

As she recalled the incident she said, “This man wanted to get some power over me. But he did not get it because I would not ride a rod with him.”—DF 733c, Interview, August 13, 1906.

Earlier in her recounting of the experience she said, “I had had strict instruction that there were men who would come to me and have a great burden that I should go with them to some place, but I was not to go... But [it would be presented] that I could trust James White, he would guard me, and I was in no danger.”— Ibid. Late in life Ellen declared of James: “Although he is dead, I feel that he is the best man that ever trod shoe leather.”— Ibid. Of course, she did not travel alone with James before their marriage. Other young women accompanied her, and the couple was exceedingly careful to give no occasion for criticism. She wrote, “As for marriage, we never thought of it, because we thought the Lord would come right along.”— Ibid.

“My constant and faithful companion at this time was Sister Louisa Foss, the sister of my brother-in-law... We were also accompanied by Elder Files and his wife, who were old and valued friends of my family, Brother Ralph Haskins and Elder [James] White.” They were well received in New Hampshire ([Ibid., 202](#)). On this particular trip, Ellen failed to meet the challenge of her work; she later regretfully wrote of it:

There were wrongs existing in that field which burdened me much. We had to meet a spirit of self-righteousness that was very depressing. I had previously

been shown the pride and exaltation of certain ones whom we visited, but had not the courage to meet them with my testimony. Had I done so, the Lord would have sustained me in doing my duty.... I did not yet feel sufficiently strong to relieve my mind and place the oppressive burden upon those to whom it belonged.—[Ibid.](#)

The traveling group stopped at the home of Washington Morse. While there Ellen was very ill. As prayer was being offered in her behalf she was taken in vision. She later wrote:

[85]

While [I was] in this state, some things were shown me concerning the disappointment of 1844, in connection with the case of Elder Morse. He had been a firm and consistent believer that the Lord would come at that time. He was bitterly disappointed when the period passed without bringing the event that was expected. He was perplexed and unable to explain the delay.... When the time passed, he was despondent and did nothing to encourage the disappointed people, who were like sheep without a shepherd, left to be devoured by wolves.

The case of Jonah was presented before me.—[Ibid.](#), 202, 203.

She recounted Jonah's experience and disappointment when God gave the city a reprieve, and declared:

Elder Morse was in a similar condition to that of the disappointed prophet. He had proclaimed that the Lord would come in 1844. The time had passed. The check of fear that had partially held the people was removed, and they indulged in derision of those who had looked in vain for Jesus.

Elder Morse felt that he was a byword among his neighbors, an object of jest. He could not be reconciled to his position. He did not consider the mercy of God in granting the world a longer time to prepare for His coming, that the warning of His judgment might be heard

more widely, and the people tested with greater light. He only thought of the humiliation of God's servants.

I was shown that although the event so solemnly proclaimed did not occur, as in the case of Jonah, the message was none the less of God, and accomplished the purpose that He designed it should. Subsequent light upon the prophecies revealed the event which did take place, in the High Priest entering the most holy place of the sanctuary in heaven to finish the atonement for the sins of man. Nevertheless God willed for a wise purpose that His servants should proclaim the approaching end of time. Instead of being discouraged at his disappointment, as was Jonah, Elder Morse should gather up the rays of precious light that God had given His people and cast aside his selfish sorrow. He should rejoice that the world was granted a reprieve, and be ready to aid in carrying forward the great work yet to be done upon the earth, in bringing sinners to repentance and salvation....

[86]

The case of Elder Morse was presented to me as one that represented the condition of a large class of our people at that time. Their duty was plainly marked; it was to trust in the wisdom and mercy of God and patiently labor as His providence opened the way before them.—[Ibid.](#), 203-205.

Elder Morse gave heed to the counsel and became a strong minister in the developing church.

### **Contending with Spiritual Magnetism**

“In New Hampshire,” wrote Ellen White, “we had to contend with a species of spiritual magnetism, of a similar character with mesmerism. It was our first experience of this kind.... Arriving at Claremont, we were told there were two parties of Adventists; one holding fast their former faith, the other denying it.”—[Ibid.](#), 206. Pleased to learn of a group holding fast their faith, they were directed to Elders Bennett and Bellings, upon whom they called. Of the experience she wrote:

We soon learned that they professed sanctification, claiming they were above the possibility of sin, being entirely consecrated to God. Their clothing was excellent, and they had an air of ease and comfort.

Presently a little boy about eight years old entered, literally clad in dirty rags. We were surprised to find that this little specimen of neglect was the son of Elder Bennett. The mother looked exceedingly ashamed and annoyed; but the father, utterly unconcerned, continued talking of his high spiritual attainments without the slightest recognition of his little son.

But his sanctification had suddenly lost its charm in my eyes. Wrapped in prayer and meditation, throwing off all the toil and responsibilities of life, this man seemed too spiritually minded to notice the actual wants of his family.—[Ibid.](#), 207.

[87] Bennett claimed that the attainment of true holiness carried the mind above all earthly thoughts, but still, observed Ellen White, “he sat at the table and ate temporal food.”—[Ibid.](#)

But he declared his wife, who allowed worldly things to draw her mind from religious subjects, to be unsanctified. Needless to say, Ellen Harmon was not impressed. A few days later she was shown in vision that “those who followed their teachings were terribly deceived and led into the grossest errors.” She declared, “I was shown that the daily lives of these men were in direct contrast with their profession. Under the garb of sanctification they were practicing the worst sins and deceiving God’s people.”—[Ibid.](#), 210, 211.

### Called Back to Portland

A short time later, in a vision given during the night hours, she was shown the fanaticism that was now rampant in Portland, the fruitage of the spiritualizers, and that she must return home. Returning, she found the little flock in great discouragement and confusion. In the first meeting held in Portland, while praying she was taken off in vision and was shown the ungodly course of Joseph Turner, who had been swept off his feet by fanaticism. After the

vision she was told that while still in vision she “talked it out before him.” He declared that she was under a wrong influence; he opposed her testimony, which reproved him for sin not then widely known but confirmed by his wife in a conversation with Ellen (*Ibid.*, 213, 214). His work “led to corruption, instead of purity and holiness.”

Ellen’s parents, Robert and Eunice Harmon, in whose home the Adventists had frequently met for meetings, were disgusted with the fanaticism now rampant in Portland. They closed their home and went to Poland, Maine, to reside for a time with the two married daughters living there. Ellen White later wrote of the experience:

As I returned to Portland, evidences increased of the desolating effects of fanaticism in Maine. The fanatical ones seemed to think that religion consisted in great excitement and noise.... Joseph Turner labored with some success to turn my friends and even my relatives against me. Why did he do this? Because I had faithfully related that which was shown me respecting his unchristian course. He circulated falsehoods to destroy my influence and to justify himself. My lot seemed hard.—*Ibid.*, 215.

[88]

### **Vision of the New Earth**

But God was to bring hope and courage to young Ellen. “Discouragements pressed heavily upon me,” she wrote, “and the condition of God’s people so filled me with anguish that for two weeks I was prostrated with sickness.” She recalled:

But brethren and sisters who sympathized with me in this affliction met to pray for me. I soon realized that earnest, effectual prayer was being offered in my behalf. Prayer prevailed. The power of the strong foe was broken, and I was released, and immediately taken off in vision. In this view I saw that human influence should never afflict me again in like manner. If I felt a human influence affecting my testimony, no matter where I might be, I had only to cry to God, and an angel would be sent to my rescue.

I already had one guardian angel attending me continually, but when necessary, the Lord would send another to strengthen, and raise me above the power of every earthly influence.—[Ibid., 215, 216.](#)

“Then I saw for the first time the glory of the new earth” ([Ibid., 216](#)). It was in relating this vision that she used the familiar words “With Jesus at our head we all descended from the city down to this earth.” The thrilling description is found in [Testimonies for the Church, 1:67-70](#); [Spiritual Gifts, 2:52-55](#); and [Early Writings, 17-20](#). As she wrote out her “first vision” in a letter to Enoch Jacobs on December 20, 1845, she attached to it the account of this view of the new earth.

William Hyde, who had been healed only shortly before, was present when this vision was given and was led to use it as the basis of a poem, or hymn. The hymn was soon published in several Adventist papers; it was included by Joshua V. Himes in the *Advent Harp* and by James White in the hymnbook he compiled in 1849, *Hymns for God’s Peculiar People Who Keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus*.

As White published the vision in [The Present Truth, November, 1850](#), he also published the four-stanza poem and wrote of the experience:

[89]

In the spring of 1845, the author of the vision, published in this paper, was very sick, nigh unto death. The elders of the church were finally called, and the directions of the apostle ([James 5:14, 15](#)) were strictly followed. God heard, answered, and healed the sick. The Holy Spirit filled the room, and she had a vision of the “city,” “life’s pure river,” “green fields,” “roses of Sharon,” “songs” of “lovely birds,” the “harps,” “palms,” “robes,” “crowns,” the “Mount Zion,” the “tree of life,” and the “King of that country” mentioned in the hymn. A brother took up his pen, and in a very short time composed the hymn from the vision.

The familiar words are found as number 305 in *The Church Hymnal* and number 453 in *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*:

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

[90] **Chapter 6—(1845-1846) Sustained in a Continued Ministry**

As Ellen Harmon continued her work at the bidding of the Lord, she was ever confronted with new perplexities. There were some who attributed her visions to mesmerism:

About this time I was subjected to a severe trial. If the Spirit of God rested upon a brother or sister in meeting, and they glorified God by praising Him, some raised the cry of mesmerism. And if it pleased the Lord to give me a vision in meeting, some would say that it was excitement and mesmerism.

Grieved and desponding, I often went alone to some retired place to pour out my soul before Him who invites the weary and heavy laden to come and find rest. As my faith claimed the promises, Jesus seemed very near. The sweet light of heaven shone around me, I seemed to be encircled by the arms of Jesus, and there have I been taken off in vision. Then I would relate what God had revealed to me alone, where no earthly influence could affect me, but was grieved and astonished to hear some intimate that those who lived nearest to God were most liable to be deceived by Satan.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 219.](#)

It is little wonder that in the face of all the suggestions and accusations that were made that she was at times led to question her own experience. She wrote:

[91] All these things weighed heavily upon my spirits, and in the confusion I was sometimes tempted to doubt my own experience. While at family prayers one morning, the power of God began to rest upon me, and the

thought rushed into my mind that it was mesmerism, and I resisted it. Immediately I was struck dumb, and for a few moments was lost to everything around me. I then saw my sin in doubting the power of God, and that for so doing I was struck dumb, and that my tongue would be loosed in less than twenty-four hours.

A card was held up before me, on which were written in letters of gold the chapter and verse of fifty texts of Scripture. [References are listed.] After I came out of vision, I beckoned for the slate, and wrote upon it that I was dumb, also what I had seen, and that I wished the large Bible.

I took the Bible and readily turned to all the texts that I had seen upon the card. I was unable to speak all day. Early the next morning my soul was filled with joy, and my tongue was loosed to shout the high praises of God. After that I dared not doubt or for a moment resist the power of God, however others might think of me.—[Early Writings, 22, 23](#).

### **Enabled to Write**

This experience, apparently in her own home in Portland, Maine, in the late spring or early summer in 1845, marks a significant turn in Ellen's experience, for she observed as she related it:

Up to this time I could not write. My trembling hand was unable to hold my pen steadily. While in vision I was commanded by an angel to write the vision. I attempted it, and wrote readily. My nerves were strengthened, and my hand became steady.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:60](#).

Many years later she referred to her experience in beginning to write:

The Lord has said, "Write out the things which I shall give you." And I commenced when very young to do this work. My hand that was feeble and trembling

[92]

because of infirmities became steady as soon as I took the pen in my hand, and since those first writings I have been able to write. God has given me the ability to write.... That right hand scarcely ever has a disagreeable sensation. It never wearies. It seldom ever trembles.—[Manuscript 88a, 1900.](#)

As to her feelings and response when instructed, she wrote:

I wept, and said, “Impossible, impossible.” The words came, “Nothing is impossible with God.” The effort was made and my hand commenced to write the things that had been given me.—[Ibid.](#)

### **The Large Family Bible**

The “large” Bible Ellen called for after this vision in her home in Portland was, presumably, the “big Bible” now in the White Estate vault with the names of Robert and Eunice Harmon stamped in gold on the spine, or back—a Bible eighteen inches long, eleven inches wide, four inches thick, and weighing 18.5 pounds. It was printed in Boston by Joseph Teal in the year 1822 and is illustrated with twenty-six beautiful steel engravings. Between the Old and the New Testaments a sheet bears the family record, filled in by James White. It also contains, between the Testaments, the books of the Old Testament apocrypha.

### **The Bible Held in Vision**

It is also the large Bible held in vision in the Harmon home early in 1845. On that occasion, during family prayers, she stepped over to a bureau upon which this large volume rested, and picked it up. Placing it on her left hand, she easily held it at arm’s length for an estimated half hour. During the vision she referred, in short exclamations, to the value of the Word of God. Although in frail health, she was in no way fatigued by the experience.

The account of the experience has come down through the family from Robert and Eunice Harmon to James White, then William C. White. [In a letter written April 2, 1919, to an educator, Sarah Peck,

W. C. White declared, “my folks told the story to me.”—DF 732a. Loughborough recounted the incident at the general conference of 1891 ([The General Conference Bulletin, 1891, 145](#)) and at the 1893 session ([Ibid., 1893, 20](#)]. It was referred to by J. N. Loughborough, who reported that he got the story from Ellen’s parents, her older sister Sarah, and others (GSAM, p. 236). Ellen White made no reference to the experience, for as she was in vision she had no direct knowledge of what took place. At the time of the event she weighed about eighty pounds.

[93]

### The Unenviable Position of the Prophet

It was not easy to be the messenger of the Lord, for often the witness that must be borne cut across the path of others or pointed out a course of action that was not right. This was particularly so in meeting the inroads of fanaticism in 1845. Ellen White later wrote:

It was a great cross for me to relate to individuals what had been shown me concerning their wrongs. It caused me great distress to see others troubled or grieved. And when obliged to declare the messages, I often softened them down, and related them as favorably for the individual as I could, and then would go by myself and weep in agony of spirit. I looked upon those who had only their own souls to care for, and thought if I were in their condition I would not murmur.

It was hard to relate the plain, cutting testimonies given me of God. I anxiously watched the result, and if the individual reproof rose up against the reproof, and afterwards opposed the truth, these queries would arise in my mind: Did I deliver the message just as I should? Oh, God! could there not have been some way to save them? And then such distress hung upon my soul, that I often felt death would be a welcome messenger, and the grave a sweet resting place.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 222](#).

### A Symbolic Warning

Then in vision she was taken into the presence of Jesus. He looked upon her with a frown and turned His face from her. It was a terrifying experience; speechless, she fell helpless on her face. She wrote:

Then could I realize, in some degree, what the feelings of the lost will be when they cry, “Mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.”—[Ibid.](#), 223.

[94] An angel spoke to her, bidding her to arise. What she then saw made an unforgettable impression on her mind:

The sight that met my eyes can hardly be described. A company was presented before me whose hair and garments were torn, and whose countenances were the very picture of despair and horror. They came close to me, and took their garments, and rubbed them on mine. I looked at my garments, and saw that they were stained with blood.

Again I fell like one dead, at the feet of my accompanying angel. I could not plead one excuse, and longed to be away from such a holy place. Again the angel raised me up on my feet, and said, “This is not your case now, but this scene has passed before you to let you know what your situation must be if you neglect to declare to others what the Lord has revealed to you. But if you are faithful to the end, you shall eat of the tree of life, and shall drink of the river of the water of life. You will have to suffer much, but the grace of God is sufficient.”

I then felt willing to do all that the Lord might require me to do, that I might have His approbation, and not feel His dreadful frown.— [Ibid.](#)

**“Another Angel, Father!”**

Shortly after this she attended a meeting also attended by Joseph Turner. He was now boasting that he could mesmerize her and could prevent her from having or relating a vision. She described what took place:

I arose in the congregation. My visions came up fresh before me, and I commenced relating them, when I felt a human influence being exerted against me.... I then turned to this man [Turner], and related what the Lord had shown me in Portland; and, raising my hands to heaven, earnestly cried, “Another angel, Father! Another angel!”

I knew that my request was granted. I felt shielded by the strong Spirit of the Lord, and was borne above every earthly influence, and with freedom finished my testimony. The friends were comforted, and rejoiced in the Lord.

Joseph Turner was asked why he had not stopped my relating the vision. He answered, “Oh, some of you would have her talk.”—[Ibid.](#), 224. [95]

Ellen was shown that she should go to Paris, Maine, “for there was a meeting appointed” that she should attend. An Elder Stevens had appointed a meeting, where an important matter was to be brought out; he had urged all to attend. Ellen White wrote:

The next morning we went to the place appointed for meeting. When Elder Stevens came in and saw us present he seemed troubled. The meeting commenced with prayer. Then as I tried to pray, the blessing of the Lord rested upon me, and I was taken off in vision.

Elder Stevens had declared that he would listen to nothing but Bible. I was shown the teachings of the Bible in contrast with his errors. I then saw that the frown of God was upon Elder Stevens; that he was leading honest, conscientious souls astray.—[Ibid.](#), 225, 226.

Elder Stevens was one who had taken the position that it was a sin to work. Being a leader among the believers, he exerted a strong influence. Wrote Ellen White:

The Lord gave me a reproof for him, that he was going contrary to the Word of God in abstaining from labor, and urging his errors upon others, denouncing all who did not receive them. He rejected every evidence which the Lord gave to convince him of his error, and was firm to take nothing back in his course. He followed impressions and went weary journeys, walking great distances, where he would only receive abuse, and considered that he was suffering for Christ's sake. His reason and judgment were laid aside.... He denounced the visions as being of the devil, and continued to follow his impressions, until Satan seemed to take full control of his mind. His friends at length were obliged to confine him, where he made a rope of some of his bed clothing with which he hung himself.—[Ibid.](#), [225](#), [226](#).

### Who Could be Saved?

[96] Inseparably linked with the position held by the pioneers that something of significance had transpired on October 22, 1844, was the understanding that a “door” was shut in connection with the fulfilling of prophecy. The expression is found in the message to the church in Philadelphia as set forth in [Revelation 3:7, 8](#). There is described One who held the “key of David,” “he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth,” the One who declared, “I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” This message to the Philadelphia church had laid the foundation for rightfully advocating a “shut door” [See [Chapter 16](#), “the shut and the open doors.”] on October 22, 1844. The full significance of the expression was not immediately understood, but the term early became synonymous with confidence in the fulfillment of prophecy on October 22, and it was so used for about seven years after the

1844 disappointment. It was usually understood to be linked with a close of probation, but for whom?

Of the vision at Exeter in mid-February, 1845, Ellen White wrote in 1847:

Most of them received the vision, and were settled upon the shut door.—[Letter 3, 1847](#).

Did this mean that probation had closed for mankind on October 22? This was a question in the minds of not a few. That the shut door did not connote a close of probation for all the world is made clear by what took place in Paris, Maine, in connection with the visit referred to above some four or five months after the vision at Exeter.

While Ellen was in Paris she was approached by Marion C. Stowell with a question on this point. When the question of early holdings on the shut-door question was later revived and discussed, Marion wrote of this in a letter on August 17, 1875. Her report of what took place in 1845 was attested to by five other persons who were familiar with the circumstances. Here is what Marion Stowell (later Truesdail, then Crawford, after her first husband's death) wrote:

During Miss Harmon's (now Mrs. White's) visit to Paris, Maine, in the summer of 1845, I stated to her the particulars of a dear friend of mine whose father had prevented her attending our meetings; consequently she had not rejected light. She smilingly replied, "God never has shown me that there is no salvation for such persons. It is only those who have had the light of truth presented to them and knowingly rejected it."

Miss Harmon's reply coincided with my idea of a shut door, and in justice no other could be derived from it.—Quoted in an article by George I. Butler in [The Review and Herald, April 7, 1885](#).

[97]

Ellen returned to her home in Portland. Shortly she was shown that she must go to Portsmouth the next day and bear her testimony there. At this time her sister Sarah and James White accompanied her in her travels. She tells the story:

I had no means with which to pay my fare, but prepared to go, trusting in the Lord to open the way. The first car bell was ringing as I put on my bonnet. I looked out of the window, and saw a good brother driving very fast up to the gate. His horse was reeking with sweat. He quickly entered and asked, "Is there anyone here who needs means? I was impressed that someone here needed money."

We hastily related that we were going to Portsmouth at the Lord's bidding, and had nothing to go with, but resolved to start, trusting in the providence of God to open the way.

The brother handed us money enough to carry us to Portsmouth and back. Said he, "Take a seat in my wagon, and I will carry you to the depot" [some three or four short blocks away]. On the way to the cars he told us that while on the road to my father's, his horse would come with great speed the whole distance of twelve miles.

We had just taken our seats in the cars when the train started. Here the Lord tested and proved us, and strengthened our faith as we were brought into a very strait place, and were carried through by the manifestation of His providence. I had freedom in bearing my testimony in Portsmouth.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 226, 227.](#)

### **The First Visit to Massachusetts**

It was now August. Ellen was shown that she must visit Massachusetts and bear her testimony. On reaching Boston, she understood better the importance of her being there.

[98]

Joseph Turner, who opposed me in Maine, had arrived a few hours before. We considered that our being sent to Massachusetts just at that time was to save God's people from falling under his influence.—[Ibid., 227.](#)

Her first meeting was with the believers at Roxbury, where she found quite a large company of believers assembled in a private home. In his letter to William Miller, Otis Nichols mentioned this meeting and the favorable reception that was given to Ellen. Some years later she told the story:

It was arranged that I should go to Roxbury and there relate my message.... As I was speaking, a sister who had been opposed to me arose and interrupted me. She grasped my hand, saying, I said that the devil sent you, but I can doubt no longer, and she declared to those present that I was a child of God, and that He had sent me. All in the meeting were greatly blessed.— *Ibid.*

Nichols reported on how happy the leader of the company at Roxbury was to receive the message, but Joseph Turner, with his spiritual view of the Second Advent, soon unsettled those who heard Ellen, and fanaticism followed. It was at this time that she and her traveling companions were invited by Nichols to stay as guests in his home, as noted earlier. A little later she and her sister Sarah were back again in Massachusetts, and the Nichols home became the base of her operations for the next eight months, or until April, 1846. Because of the spiritual views brought to Massachusetts by Joseph Turner, Ellen's experience in visiting the companies of believers there was similar to what it had been in Maine. "We had to be on our guard," she wrote, "strengthened on every side with Scripture testimony concerning the literal, personal appearing of our Saviour."—*Ibid.*, 230.

Concerning her stay in the Nichols home Ellen White makes the following reference:

I made my home at the house of Brother O. Nichols. They were ever ready with words of encouragement to comfort me when in trial, and their prayers often ascended to heaven in my behalf, until the clouds were dispersed, and the light of heaven again cheered me. Nor did their kindness end here.

They were attentive to my wants, and generously

supplied me with means to travel. They were reproached because they believed me to be a child of God, chosen to bear a special testimony to His people, and on account of this they were obliged to be in almost constant conflict, for many left no means untried to turn them against me. A faithful record is kept of their acts of love and benevolence. They will not lose their reward. He that seeth in secret is acquainted with every kind and generous act, and will reward them openly.—[Ibid.](#), 228.

Gradually the way opened before Ellen, and she reported:

In many instances where the way had been previously closed up for me to bear my testimony, it was now opened, and I had more friends than I had before.— [Ibid.](#)

Her itinerary took her to Carver, New Bedford, and Dartmouth, and possibly to other points (such as Fairhaven, where Joseph Bates and H. S. Gurney resided), then back to Portland, Maine (DF 105, “Statement by Otis Nichols“: [Ibid.](#), 228). While she was still at Carver an important vision was given to her, a vision that prevented a disappointment related to the expected imminent second advent of Jesus.

### **The 1845 Expectancy of the Second Advent**

In view of the inevitable conclusion reached by the majority of the Adventists immediately after the Disappointment—that their message for the world closed on October 22, 1844—it was not strange that some should look forward to the autumn of 1845 as a time of importance. Not a few anticipated the jubilee year of deliverance at that time. Earnestly the Scriptures were searched for some clue. They found in [Luke 12](#) the parable of the servants waiting for the return of their Lord, and the words of [verse 38](#): “If he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so [waiting], blessed are those servants.” Could it be that Jesus would come in the “fourth watch,” or at the end of the year of expectancy? James White came to believe so, as presented in his article in [The Day-Star, September 20, 1845](#). In recounting the history in 1847, he declared:

It is well known that many were expecting the Lord to come at the seventh month, 1845. That Christ would then come we firmly believed.”—[A Word to the Little Flock, 22](#).

[100]

And then he revealed what averted another disappointment on the part of the believers:

A few days before the time passed, I was at Fairhaven, and Dartmouth, Massachusetts, with a message on this point of time. At this time Ellen was with the band at Carver, Massachusetts, where she saw in vision that we should be disappointed and that the saints must pass through the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” which was future. Her view of Jacob’s trouble was entirely new to us, as well as herself.— [Ibid.](#)

With a channel of communication now in the world, God in His mercy gave light that spared sincere Advent believers another disappointing blow.

Thus early in the experience of the emerging church, light new to herself and others, yet in full harmony with the Scriptures, was given by the Lord through His chosen messenger. The pioneers were conscious of this; a decade and a half later, when organizing the church, they refrained from the adoption of a creed, which could stand in the way of God giving new light through the visions.

Ellen and her sister Sarah returned to their home in Portland, Maine. But the battle continued in Massachusetts. Through the false representations of Turner, Haskins, Howell, and others, the believers were led to believe that the visions were of the devil, that James White mesmerized her, and that she could not have a vision if he was not present. Nichols, while visiting Portland, proposed what he hoped would check the opposition:

I proposed to Sister White [Harmon] and Sarah, her sister, who were then at their father’s house in Portland, to come up to Boston without Brother White accompanying them, to visit the bands in Boston, Roxbury,

[101]

and Randolph, and wherever the war against visions was manifest, to convince them if possible that they had been deceived by their teachers. They assented to this arrangement, and Sister White and Sarah accompanied me to Massachusetts, leaving Brother White in Portland, and made their home at our house.—DF 105, “Statement by Otis Nichols.”

### The Second Visit to Massachusetts

Ellen White writes of this:

By invitation of Brother and Sister Nichols, my sister and myself again went to Massachusetts, and made their house our home. There was in Boston and vicinity a company of fanatical persons, who held that it was a sin to labor. Their principal message was “Sell that ye have, and give alms.” They said they were in the jubilee, the land should rest, and the poor must be supported without labor. Sargent, Robbins, and some others were leaders. They denounced my visions as being of the devil, because I had been shown their errors. They were severe upon all who did not believe with them.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 231.

At this point we let Otis Nichols pick up the story:

A few days after their arrival, G. Sargent and Robbins, two of the principal leaders in Boston, and obstinate opposers to Sister White’s visions, came out to our house and talked to us and had prayers. I told them that we were glad of this opportunity with them, that Sister White and others were now with us, and we invited them to come in. But hearing of Sister White’s presence, they departed, and made other reasons for coming here.

Robbins then warned me against her visions, and said he knew they were of the devil, that he always felt a blessing whenever he declared they were from Satan.

I told him we judged their character by their fruits, their doctrine in accordance with Bible testimony, and the effect upon those who believed them, leading them to a more holy and devoted life and confirming their faith in the past experiences of the Advent doctrine of 1843 and the seventh month of 1844, and enlightening our understanding in the present truth, and that we were acquainted with her moral character; that Turner and others had maliciously calumniated her without any facts and evidence; that Turner once said that he believed her visions were as true as the apostle John's, and that the only reason Turner turned against Sister White's visions was because she saw his hypocrisy in vision; and that he was exposed; that Turner and others in union with him were doing all in their power to destroy all faith in her visions.—DF 105, "Statement by Otis Nichols."

[102]

Nichols told the two men that Ellen was desirous "to attend their meeting in Boston the next Sabbath," and he asked them if they had any opposition to hearing her testimony.

"None at all," replied Sargent. "Let her come next Sabbath."—[Ibid.](#)

Accordingly, it was arranged that Nichols would bring Ellen and Sarah Harmon to Boston, where they would meet with the believers. But in the evening before the proposed meeting Ellen Harmon was shown in vision the hypocrisy, and that there would be no meeting in Boston. She was shown that

Sargent, Robbins, and others opposed would meet with a large company in Randolph [thirteen miles south of Boston] on the Sabbath, and that we must meet the opposers at Randolph at their meeting on the Sabbath, and there she would have a message given her for them, which would convince the honest, the unprejudiced ones, whether her visions were of the Lord or from Satan.— [Ibid.](#)

So the next morning, instead of driving north into Boston, they drove south to Randolph, arriving rather late in the morning. They found Sargent and Robbins and a large roomful meeting in the Thayer home. “As we entered,” wrote Ellen White, “Robbins and Sargent looked at each other in surprise and began to groan. They had promised to meet me in Boston, but thought they would disappoint us by going to Randolph, and while we were in Boston, warn the brethren against us.”—*Ibid.*, 232. Closing the morning services rather early, Sargent announced that they would have a short intermission. Ellen Harmon learned during the intermission that one of the critics remarked that “good matter would be brought out in the afternoon.” Robbins told Sarah Harmon that Ellen could not have a vision where he was (*Ibid.*).

Assembling again at about one o’clock in the afternoon, several engaged in prayer, including Ellen Harmon. She reported what took place:

[103]

The blessing of the Lord rested upon me, and I was taken off in vision. I was again shown the errors of these wicked men and others united with them. I saw that they could not prosper, their errors would confuse and distract; some would be deceived by them; but that truth would triumph in the end, and error be brought down.

I was shown that they were not honest, and then I was carried into the future and shown that they would continue to despise the teachings of the Lord, to despise reproof, and that they would be left in total darkness, to resist God’s Spirit until their folly should be made manifest to all. A chain of truth was presented to me from the Scriptures, in contrast with their errors.

When I came out of vision, candles were burning. I had been in vision nearly four hours. As I was unconscious to all that transpired around me while in vision, I will copy from Brother Nichols’ description of that meeting.— *Ibid.*

In his statement written in 1859 or 1860, Otis Nichols described what took place while Ellen was in vision.

### **Otis Nichols' Eyewitness Account**

About one o'clock P.M. the meeting was opened by singing and praying by Sargent, Robbins, and French; then one of us prayed for the Lord to lead this meeting. Then Sister White commenced praying and was soon afterwards taken off in vision with extraordinary manifestations and continued talking in vision with a shrill voice which could be distinctly understood by all present, until about sundown.

Sargent, Robbins, and French were much exasperated as well as excited to hear Sister White talk in vision, which they declared was of the devil. They exhausted all their influence and bodily strength to destroy the effect of the vision. They would unite in singing very loud, and then alternately would talk and read from the Bible in a loud voice in order that Ellen might not be heard, until their strength was exhausted and their hands would shake, so they could not read from the Bible.

But amidst all this confusion and noise, Ellen's clear and shrill voice as she talked in vision was distinctly heard by all present. The opposition of these men continued as long as they could talk and sing, notwithstanding some of their own friends rebuked them and requested them to stop.

"But," said Robbins, "you are bowed to an idol. You are worshipping a golden calf."

Mr. Thayer, the owner of the house, was not fully satisfied that her vision was of the devil, as Robbins declared it to be. He wanted it tested in some way. He had heard that visions of satanic power were arrested by opening the Bible and laying it on the person in vision, and asked Sargent if he would test it in this way, which he declined to do.

[104]

Then Thayer took a heavy, large quarto family Bible which was lying on the table and seldom used, opened it, and laid it open upon the breast of Ellen while in vision, as she was then inclined backward against the wall in one corner of the room. Immediately after the Bible was laid upon her, she arose upon her feet and walked into the middle of the room, with the Bible open in one hand and lifted up as high as she could reach, and with her eyes steadily looking upward, declared in a solemn manner, "The inspired testimony of God," or words of the same import, and then she continued for a long time, while the Bible was extended in one hand and her eyes [were] looking upward and not on the Bible, to turn over the leaves with the other hand and place her finger upon certain passages and correctly utter their words with a solemn voice.

Many present looked at the passages where her finger was pointed to see if she spoke them correctly, for her eyes at the same time were looking upward. Some of the passages referred to were judgments against the wicked and blasphemous; and others were admonitions and instructions relative to our present condition.

In this state she continued all the afternoon until nearly sundown when she came out of vision.

When Ellen arose in vision upon her feet with the heavy open Bible upon her hand, and walked the room uttering the passages of Scripture, Sargent, Robbins, and French were silent. For the remainder of the time they were troubled, with many others, but they shut their eyes and braved it out without making any acknowledgment of their feelings.—DF 105, "Statement by Otis Nichols" (see also [Ibid.](#), 232-234; [Spiritual Gifts](#), 2:77-79).

[105]

As to the final outcome, Nichols has given us this:

Sister White visited Randolph a few weeks afterward for the last time, and as the principal members of the band still continued alienated from her, and the

visions, she told them that the curse of God would soon follow their course. This was soon afterwards literally fulfilled.

Satan took control of their minds and led them to confess publicly some of the most shameful acts of their lives, which had the effect to break up the meetings at Randolph and separate the honest souls from their unholy influence, and the principal leading ones united with Sargent, Robbins, and a company in Boston called the “No-work Party,” a shameful company of fanatics numbering some twenty individuals whose principal teachings were denouncing and cursing those who believed in Sister White’s visions, and all others, and also those who followed the exhortation of the apostle to be quiet and do your own business, to work with your own hands, and walk honestly toward those that are without, and that we may have lack in nothing. That with quietness they eat their own bread.

They continued together in this state of feeling some time, a year or more, when they made a wreck of all their faith in the doctrines taught in the Bible and then broke up and scattered, declaring themselves free from all sinning, enjoined upon them in the Scriptures.— [Ibid.](#)

### **Meeting Joseph Bates at New Bedford**

Joseph Bates had been an earnest worker in the Advent awakening of 1840-1844. A sea captain-turned-minister, he invested his property and his strength in heralding the soon coming of Christ. As Ellen and her sister were in New Bedford, Massachusetts, they became acquainted with him and his family. He, of course, learned of the visions given to Ellen, and this troubled him. He wrote of his experience two years later:

Although I could see nothing in them that militated against the Word, yet I felt alarmed and tried exceedingly, and for a long time unwilling to believe that it was anything more than that was produced by a protracted debilitated state of her body.

[106]

I therefore sought opportunities in presence of others, when her mind seemed freed from excitement (out of meeting), to question, and cross-question her, and her friends which accompanied her, especially her elder sister [Sarah], to get if possible at the truth.

During the number of visits she has made to New Bedford and Fairhaven since, while at our meetings, I have seen her in vision a number of times, and also in Topsham, Maine, and those who were present during some of these exciting scenes know well with what interest and intensity I listened to every word, and watched every move to detect deception, or mesmeric influence. I thank God for the opportunity I have had with others to witness these things.

As to the results of this close scrutiny and earnest investigation, he reported:

I can now confidently speak for myself. I believe the work is of God, and is given to comfort and strengthen His “scattered,” “torn,” and “pealed” people, since the closing up of our work for the world in October, 1844. The distracted state of lo, here! and lo, there! since that time has exceedingly perplexed God’s honest, willing people, and made it exceedingly difficult for such as were not able to expound the many conflicting texts that have been presented to their view.

I confess that I have received light and instruction on many passages that I could not before clearly distinguish. I believe her to be a self-sacrificing, honest, willing child of God.—[A Word to the Little Flock, 21](#).

She wrote of Elder Bates’s attitude toward her at this time:

I found him to be a true Christian gentleman, courteous and kind. He treated me as tenderly as though I were his own child.... Elder Bates was keeping the Sabbath, and urged its importance. I did not feel its

importance, and thought that Elder B. erred in dwelling upon the fourth commandment more than upon the other nine.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 236, 237.

[107]

### **The Publication of Her First Vision—January, 1846**

Shortly after her eighteenth birthday Ellen Harmon observed that Enoch Jacobs was wavering in his confidence in the fulfillment of prophecy on October 22. She wrote to him from Portland on December 20, 1845, recounting the highlights of her first vision. Although she stated that the letter was not written for publication, Jacobs printed it in the *Day-Star* issue of January 24, 1846. Through the next few years it was republished in various forms until it was carried into her first little book, *Christian Experience and Views*, published in 1851, and from there into *Early Writings*.

In his letter to William Miller, written on April 20, 1846, Otis Nichols stated that Ellen Harmon had been “a resident in my family much of the time for about eight months” (DF 105). It was while there that Ellen discovered that the editor of the *Day-Star* had published her letter, including her statement that it was not written for publication.

### **Publication of the Vision of the Heavenly Sanctuary**

Seeing this, on February 15, 1846, she wrote a second letter to Jacobs stating that had she known he was going to publish her first letter she would have written more fully of what God had revealed to her. “As the readers of the *Day-Star* have seen a part of what God has revealed to me, ... I humbly request you to publish this also in your paper.”—[The Day-Star, March 14, 1846](#). She presented the vision given to her at Exeter, Maine, “one year ago this month.” This was the vision in which she was shown the heavenly sanctuary and the transfer of the ministry of Christ from the holy place to the “Holy of Holies.”

### The Place of the Vision in Confirming the Sanctuary Truth

[108]

Significantly, [The Day-Star Extra, February 7, 1846](#), had been devoted to the Bible study of Hiram Edson and O.R.L. Crosier in which they set forth from the Scriptures the evidence for the understanding that the two phases of ministry in the earthly sanctuary service were a type of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Consequently, according to Edson and Crosier, events that were to come to pass, beginning on October 22, 1844, were events taking place in heaven.

The investigation supporting these conclusions had taken place at the Hiram Edson home in western New York State over a period of a number of months. The existence of this Bible study was unknown to Ellen Harmon when she was given the vision in Exeter in mid-February, 1845, nor had there been time for the February 7, 1846, issue of the *Day-Star* to reach her before she wrote of the vision for the readers of that journal. The vision, as published on March 14, gave unique confirmation to the conclusions of the Edson and Crosier Bible study. A year later, April 21, 1847, Ellen White wrote in a letter to Eli Curtis:

The Lord showed me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the sanctuary, et cetera, and that it was His will that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in the [Ibid., February 7, 1846](#). I feel fully authorized by the Lord to recommend that *Extra* to every saint.—[A Word to the Little Flock, 12](#).

### God's Leadings Clearly Manifest

Step by step, God was leading His children. The great Second Advent Awakening, so powerful, so free from extremes and fanaticism, was to the sincere believers the work of God. The disappointment of October 22 was a bitter experience, but they were confident that God had led them and would continue to lead those who kept their eyes on Jesus. Earnest, prayerful Bible study pointed the way to an understanding of the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. In vision Ellen Harmon witnessed Christ entering into the

Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary to begin another phase of ministry, closing one door and opening another, thus confirming the integrity of their 1844 experience. It also confirmed the conclusions reached in earnest Bible study. It would take time to grasp fully the various aspects of unfolding truth.

### **The Vision in a Sailboat**

On another visit to Massachusetts in the summer of 1846, at a time when some insisted that the visions could be accounted for by mesmeric power, a vision was given to Ellen under very unusual circumstances. We have her account of the experience and that of H. S. Gurney, a blacksmith and close friend of Joseph Bates. [109]

Ellen was impressed that she should visit an Adventist family—the Halls—on West Island, around the point from Fairhaven and to the north by sea. She requested Gurney to take her to the island. Accompanied by her sister Sarah and a Sister A., they started on what should have been a pleasant trip. In the introduction to her first book Ellen recounted the experience.

It was almost night when we got started. We had gone but a short distance when a storm suddenly arose. It thundered and lightened, and the rain came in torrents upon us. It seemed plain that we must be lost, unless God should deliver.

I knelt down in the boat and began to cry to God to deliver us. And there upon the tossing billows, while the water washed over the top of the boat upon us, the rain descended as I never saw it before, the lightnings flashed and the thunders rolled, I was taken off in vision and saw that sooner would every drop of water in the ocean be dried up than we should perish, for I saw that my work had ... just begun. After I came out of the vision all my fears were gone, and we sang and praised God, and our little boat was a floating Bethel...

Brother Gurney had more than he could well do, to manage the boat. He tried to anchor, but the anchor dragged. Our little boat was tossed upon the waves,

and driven by the wind, while it was so dark that we could not see from one end of the boat to the other.—*Experience and Views*, pp. 8, 9 (see also [Early Writings, 23, 24](#)).

Ellen White recounted the incident of the vision, a refutation that the visions were brought about by the influence of others. She asked: “What opportunity was there for mesmeric operations in such a time as that?”—[Ibid., 23](#).

As the storm subsided, the little craft drifted near land. Seeing a light, they called loudly for assistance. The keel of the sailboat prevented a close approach to the shore, but they were soon rescued by one of the residents of West Island. They rejoiced that, although lost in the storm, they had arrived safely at their destination.

## Chapter 7—(1846-1847) Entering Married Life

[110]

Although James White and Ellen Harmon were closely associated in travel and labor through much of 1845, it seems that neither gave thought to marriage. They and their associates were of the strong opinion that Christ's second coming was very close at hand; attention was again focused on the tenth day of the seventh month [October], this time in 1845 instead of 1844. It was the conviction held by most that because of the near Advent it would not be right to marry. Of their situation James White later wrote:

We both viewed the coming of Christ near, even at the doors, and when we first met had no idea of marriage at any future time. But God had a great work for both of us to do, and He saw that we could greatly assist each other in that work. As she should come before the public she needed a lawful protector, and God having chosen her as a channel of light and truth to the people in a special sense, she could be of great help to me.

But it was not until the matter of marriage was taken to the Lord by both, and we obtained an experience that placed the matter beyond the reach of doubt, that we took this important step. Most of our brethren who believed with us that the Second Advent movement was the work of God were opposed to marriage in the sense that as time was very short it was a denial of faith, as such a union contemplated long years of married life.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 126.

Elaborating on this, White explained that Ellen was feeble and it seemed that consumption would take her life. She weighed about eighty pounds. Frequently on the steamboats or on the train she would faint and remain breathless for minutes. He wrote:

[111]

It was necessary that she should have one or more attendants. Either her sister Sarah or Sister Foss traveled with her. And as neither her aged father nor feeble brother were suitable persons to travel with one so feeble, and introduce her and her mission to the people, the writer, fully believing that her wonderful experience and work was of God, became satisfied that it was his duty to accompany them.

And as our thus traveling subjected us to the reproaches of the enemies of the Lord and His truth, duty seemed very clear that the one who had so important a message to the world should have a legal protector, and that we should unite our labors.—*Ibid.*, 238.

So although their courtship lacked some of the typical elements, Providence led them on to love and affection and fixed their eyes on marriage. It was now 1846, and the end of August seemed to be an appropriate time to unite their lives. Ellen had great admiration for James, “the best man that ever trod shoeleather” (DF 733c, “Interview with Mrs. E. G. White”). There is a note of excitement in a letter James wrote to Brother Collins while in Falmouth, Massachusetts, on Wednesday, August 26. James was there to conduct a funeral:

I have a chance to get to Fairhaven tonight by sailboat, and shall take the cars tomorrow morning for Boston, and the express train of cars for Portland at four-thirty. Shall be in Portland tomorrow night at six o’clock.... Sister Ellen says that the way is made plain. We are published; we shall be married perhaps Monday.— JW to Brother Collins, August 26, 1846.

He stated that Nichols, who had visited Portland while he, James, was in Massachusetts, was concerned when he first heard of their marriage plans, “but he was now satisfied that God was in it.” James added:

I have visited Holms Hall, Brother Chase, and the sisters.... They have no objections now to our marriage.

But it tried them at first.... From what Ellen said in her letter, I judge that she thinks of coming west as soon as we are married.— [Ibid.](#)

### The Wedding

We would like to picture in our minds James White, 25 years of age, and his bride, Ellen Harmon, 18, with a bouquet in hand, standing in a little white New England chapel surrounded by parents, brothers, sisters, and close friends, as they listened to appropriate admonitions and exchanged their wedding vows. But it was not so.

Sometime on Sunday, August 30, James Springer White and Miss Ellen Gould Harmon stood before Charles Harding, justice of the peace, in Portland, Maine, and were married. The marriage certificate, preserved through the years, is just a small slip of paper carrying a brief form and the signature of the one who officiated. While both recognized the importance of the event, they could not, with their concept of the imminent Second Advent, foresee that this was the beginning of thirty-five years of united lives laboring incessantly in building up the cause of God.

Of their experience James White later wrote:

We were married August 30, 1846, and from that hour to the present she has been my crown of rejoicing.... It has been in the good providence of God that both of us had enjoyed a deep experience in the Advent movement.... This experience was now needed as we should join our forces and, united, labor extensively from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific....

We entered upon this work penniless, with few friends, and broken in health. Mrs. White has suffered ill health from a child, ... and although I had inherited a powerful constitution, imprudence in study at school, and in lecturing ... had made me a dyspeptic.

In this condition, without means, with very few who sympathized with us in our views, without a paper, and without books, we entered upon our work. We had no houses of worship at that time, and the idea of using

[113]

a tent had not then occurred to us. Most of our meetings were held in private houses. Our congregations were small. It was seldom that any came into our meetings, excepting Adventists, unless they were attracted by curiosity to hear a woman speak.—[Ibid.](#), 126, 127.

### **Their First Home**

The Harmon home in Gorham became the place of residence for the newlyweds. We know very little of the early weeks of their married life. But in November they attended a conference in Topsham some thirty-five miles to the north, at the home of Brother Curtis. Joseph Bates had come up from New Bedford and was present. Ellen White wrote:

The Spirit of God rested upon us in Brother C.'s humble dwelling, and I was wrapt in a vision of God's glory, and for the first time had a view of other planets. After I came out of vision I related what I had seen.—[Ibid.](#), 239.

Actually, during the vision, wholly unbeknown to her, she spoke of what was passing before her. J. N. Loughborough recounted in print the description of the meeting as Bates told it to him:

Mrs. White, while in vision, began to talk about the stars, giving a glowing description of rosy-tinted belts which she saw across the surface of some planet, and added, "I see four moons."

"Oh," said Elder Bates, "she is viewing Jupiter!" Then having made motions as though traveling through space, she began giving a description of belts and rings in their ever-varying beauty, and said, "I see seven moons."

Elder Bates exclaimed, "She is describing Saturn."

Next came the description of Uranus, with its six moons; then a wonderful description of the "opening

heavens,” with its glory, calling it an opening into a region more enlightened. Elder Bates said that her description far surpassed any account of the opening heavens he had ever read from any author.

While she was talking and still in vision, he arose to his feet, and exclaimed, “O how I wish Lord John Rosse was here tonight!” Elder White inquired, “Who is Lord John Rosse?”

“Oh,” said Elder Bates, “he is the great English astronomer. I wish he was here to hear that woman talk astronomy, and to hear that description of the ‘opening heavens.’ It is ahead of anything I ever read on the subject.”—GSAM, p. 258.

[114]

Ellen White reported of this experience in the Curtis home:

After I came out of vision I related what I had seen. Elder Bates then asked if I had studied astronomy. I told him I had no recollection of ever looking into an astronomy.

Said he, “This is of the Lord.”

I never saw him as free and happy before. His countenance shone with the light of heaven, and he exhorted the church with power.—[Ibid.](#), 239.

A few months later James White wrote:

At our conference in Topsham, Maine, last November, Ellen had a vision of the handiworks of God. She was guided to the planets Jupiter, Saturn, and I think one more. [Ellen White, neither in vision nor afterward, gave the names of the planets she saw. From her descriptions bates identified them and James White made use of his identification.] After she came out of vision, she could give a clear description of their moons, et

cetera. It is well known that she knew nothing of astronomy, and could not answer one question in relation to the planets, before she had this vision.—[A Word to the Little Flock, 22.](#)

Bates had been troubled with serious doubts as to the visions, but the evidence in the experience at Topsham was such that he accepted them wholeheartedly from that time forth. Ellen White never wrote out in detail what she was shown. It is evident that God's purpose in giving this vision was to establish confidence in the heart of Joseph Bates. It should be borne in mind that the number of moons she was shown was what Bates, up to that time, had seen through the telescope. Stronger, more modern telescopes have brought into view additional moons circling the planets described. Nevertheless, had Ellen been shown what stronger telescopes now reveal, Bates's doubts would have been confirmed, rather than alleviated.

[115]

### **Stricken with Severe Illness**

But more than other planets was shown to Ellen White in the vision at Topsham. Of this she wrote:

I was shown that I would be much afflicted, and that we would have a trial of our faith on our return to Gorham.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 239.](#)

Fulfillment was rapid. Ellen was taken desperately ill. Earnest prayers in her behalf brought no relief. For three weeks James White's bride suffered until in her intense agony she requested that no more prayers be offered in her behalf, for she was convinced that "their prayers were protracting" her life and thus her sufferings. Every breath came with a groan. Otis Nichols, in Massachusetts, sent his son Henry to bring some things for her comfort, and while he was there he joined in the earnest prayers for her recovery. Ellen White tells of what followed:

After others had prayed, Brother Henry commenced praying, and seemed much burdened, and with the

power of God resting upon him, rose from his knees, came across the room, and laid his hands upon my head, saying, "Sister Ellen, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," and fell back prostrated by the power of God. [On several occasions in the years 1840 to 1851—and even later—there were experiences in which the power of God was manifested in physical prostration. The circumstances, and the high character of the individuals involved, would lead to the conclusion that such experiences were genuine and not the fruit of fanaticism.] I believed the work was of God, and the pain left me. My soul was filled with gratitude and peace.—*Ibid.*, 239, 240.

Ellen was completely restored to normal health and soon with her husband was off by boat to Boston. But this trip was anything but a restful one for the newlyweds, for a storm overtook them. She described the trip:

The boat rolled fearfully, and the waves dashed into the cabin windows. The large chandelier fell to the floor with a crash. The tables were set for breakfast, but the dishes were thrown upon the floor.

There was great fear in the ladies' cabin. Many were confessing their sins, and crying to God for mercy. Some were calling upon the virgin Mary to keep them, while others were making solemn vows to God that if they reached land they would devote their lives to His service. [116]

It was a scene of terror and confusion. As the boat rocked, one lady above me fell out of her berth to the floor, crying out at the top of her voice. Another turned to me and asked, "Are you not terrified? I suppose it is a fact that we may never reach land."

I told her I made Christ my refuge, and if my work was done, I might as well lie in the bottom of the ocean as in any other place; but if my work was not done, all

the waters of the ocean could not drown me. My trust was in God, that He would bring us safe to land if it was for His glory.—[Ibid.](#), 240.

He did!

### Acceptance of the Seventh Day as the Sabbath

For a few weeks prior to this trip to Massachusetts, James and Ellen had been observing the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. Of this she wrote:

In the autumn of 1846 we began to observe the Bible Sabbath, and to teach and defend it.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:75](#).

Reference has been made to her negative reaction when earlier in the year, Joseph Bates introduced the Sabbath to her. Bates had taken his stand in 1845, having had his attention called to it through an article in *The Hope of Israel*, written by T. M. Preble. A man of conviction and action, Bates in turn prepared a forty-eight-page pamphlet, which he published in August, 1846, under the title *The Seventh-day Sabbath a Perpetual Sign From the Beginning to the Entering Into the Gates of the Holy City According to the Commandment*. James White took a copy home with him after the funeral service he conducted at Falmouth. As he and Ellen studied the Biblical evidences for the sacredness of the seventh day, they took their stand and began to teach it as they met with their fellow Adventists. At this time there were about fifty Sabbathkeepers in New England and New York State ([Ibid.](#), 1:77). Years later Ellen White recalled what taking this step meant:

[117]

The light upon the fourth commandment, which was new and unpopular and generally rejected by our Adventist brethren and sisters, we had accepted. If we had trials and difficulties before this in accepting the message that the Lord would soon come the second time to our world with power and great glory, we found that

accepting new and advanced truth brought us into positions of still greater difficulty. It brought down upon us not only the opposition of the Christian world who refused to believe in the Lord's soon coming, but opposition unexpectedly came upon us from those with whom we had been united in the faith and glorious hope of the second advent of our Saviour. In the place of closely investigating the Scriptures as did the noble Bereans to see if these things were so, there were those with whom we had taken sweet counsel together who denounced the third angel's message as heresy.—[Manuscript 76, 1886](#).

As James and Ellen White made their trip to Massachusetts they undoubtedly spent time with Bates, reviewing their experience and the sound basis for the step they had so recently taken.

### **The Profitable Time in Massachusetts**

We have reported Ellen's desperate sickness and healing just before the Whites left for Massachusetts. They were gone for nearly seven weeks. Two days after their return home to Gorham, James wrote of the trip and of his wife's health, she was now pregnant with her first child.

Ellen has enjoyed the best state of health for six weeks past that she has for so long a time for six years. We are both enjoying good health.—JW to S. Howland, March 14, 1847.

Of their united labors on this extended tour, White reported in his letter to Stockbridge Howland:

Since we left Topsham we have had some trying times. We have also had many glorious heavenly refreshing seasons. On the whole it has been one of the best visits we ever had to Massachusetts. Our brethren at [New] Bedford and Fairhaven were mightily strengthened and confirmed in the truth and power of God. Brethren in other places were also much blessed.

[118] This included the Otis Nichols family, with whom James reported they had a “very free time,” finding them “all devoted and strong in the faith as ever” (*Ibid.*). The picture begins to develop, revealing four strong families with whom they were in close touch and at whose homes they were always welcome, sometimes for extended visits:

The Stockbridge Howland family residing in Topsham, Maine. Howland was a successful civil engineer, but still suffering from being discredited for his Adventist faith and experience.

The Otis Nichols family living in Dorchester, Massachusetts, a suburb south of Boston. Nichols was a lithographer, in the printing and engraving business. He was a successful businessman.

The Joseph Bates family in Fairhaven, across the Acushnet River from New Bedford, the whaling seaport center. A sea captain who had retired with some means, Bates was a strong supporter of the Advent movement. He had chaired one of the large conferences in Boston in 1842. In 1844 he had sold everything to spread the Advent message, and now he was of necessity living frugally.

A fourth group would soon enlarge the circle. The Hastings family resided in New Ipswich, New Hampshire, some sixty miles north and west of Boston. At the point of which we write, the Whites and Hastings had not yet met but were in touch through occasional letters. Hastings was a farmer, engaged in fattening cattle for the market. He was one of the earnest Adventists who left his potatoes in the field unharvested in the autumn of 1844 as a witness to his faith. He had been well rewarded financially, as his potatoes did not rot and brought a good price on the market the next spring. On May 21, James White, addressing Mrs. Hastings, introduced his letter, “All I know of you is from what I have seen in the *Day-Dawn* from your pen.” He had just received from Fairhaven the copies of the broadside Bates had published for him carrying Ellen White’s vision confirming the Sabbath truth. This he put with the 1846 broadside carrying Ellen White’s first visions, saying:

When I get anything good I have a desire that all the faithful should share a slice. This is my apology for addressing you at this time and enclosing these two visions to you.—JW to Elvira Hastings, May 21, 1847.

The Harmons, Ellen's parents, with whom they lived in Gorham, had not yet accepted the Sabbath, and did not until a year later, which caused some problems. James mentioned this in his letter to Howland at Topsham: [119]

You have a number to meet with at your place, but here is not one soul that we can meet with or unite in serving the Lord.—JW to S. Howland, March 14, 1847.

We gain a sense of the uncomfortable and unstable situation in which James and Ellen lived and moved as James continued his letter to Howland, recounting circumstances and tactfully throwing out some suggestions and hints:

We have been thinking much of home as well as of you at Topsham and Brunswick for two weeks. I think it will be the Lord's will for us to visit you soon. It seems a long time since we saw you last.

We should be glad to see you and Sister Howland here. Will you come up and see us? If you will we will return with you to Topsham. If you cannot come, send Brother Cobb or some other of the brethren. Let not the want of money prevent you from coming if you feel free to come, for I have \$8 and can pay a part, or can and will gladly and freely pay the whole if necessary. I want you to write as soon as you receive this and tell me of your prosperity unless some of you can come and see us immediately.

If you do not conclude to visit us, please inform me by letter as soon as you can so that we may make some other arrangement. We should be very glad to see you here. I think it might prove a blessing to you and the folks here....

It may be a duty to come up to Gorham and cheer us with your words of comfort. How good it would be if Gorham were only about five miles from Topsham so that we could spend our holy Sabbaths together.

Oh, I am sick of our ungodly, hypocritical, dishonest, cheating neighbors. What a wicked world we are

living in! I love to think of the kingdom. Take away our hope, and we are perfectly miserable. What a deathly degrading thought, to think of spending a life in this horribly unchristian world and then lay down in the dust. But it won't be so. No! No! No!— Ibid.

[120] Just what the immediate response was, and whether the Howlands visited Gorham at the time, is not known, but we do know that in April, James and Ellen White were residing in Topsham, staying with the Howlands in their well-constructed home. On Sabbath, April 3, Ellen White was given a significant vision. The following Wednesday, April 7, she wrote of it in a letter to Joseph Bates:

### **Vision Confirming the Sabbath**

*Dear Brother Bates,*

Last Sabbath we met with the dear brethren and sisters here, who meet at Brother Howland's. We felt an unusual spirit of prayer. And as we prayed, the Holy Ghost fell upon us. We were very happy. Soon I was lost to earthly things, and was wrapped up in a vision of God's glory. I saw an angel swiftly flying to me. He quickly carried me from the earth to the Holy City.

In the city I saw a temple, which I entered. I passed through a door before I came to the first veil. This veil was raised, and I passed into the holy place. I saw the altar of incense, the candlestick with seven lamps, and the table on which was the shewbread, et cetera. After viewing the glory of the holy, Jesus raised the second veil, and I passed into the Holy of Holies.

In the Holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it was purest gold. On each end of the ark was a lovely cherub, with their wings spread over it. Their faces were turned towards each other, and they looked downwards. Between the angels was a golden censer. Above the ark, where the angels stood, was an exceeding bright glory, that appeared like a throne where God dwelt. Jesus

stood by the ark.—[A Word to the Little Flock, 18](#) (see also [Early Writings, 32-35](#)).

In the vision she saw Jesus ministering in the Most Holy Place in behalf of the saints, and then the ark was opened to enable her to see its contents. Here is what she saw:

In the ark was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of stone which folded together like a book. Jesus opened them, and I saw the Ten Commandments written on them with the finger of God. On one table was four, and on the other six. The four on the first table shone brighter than the other six. But the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God's holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it.— [Ibid.](#) see also [Early Writings, 32-35](#))

[121]

In successive scenes she was carried through a review of the factors that give validity to the Sabbath and its observance. She was shown that the Sabbath is the point at which all mankind must make a decision to serve God or an apostate power. The vision was climaxed with a view of the second coming of Christ and the ascension of the redeemed to the Holy City, where Jesus opens the gates to welcome those who have “kept *the ‘commandments of God,’*” and have a ““right to the tree of life”” ([Ibid.](#), 20).

A letter containing this message was sent to Joseph Bates. James White suggested to Bates that he have one thousand copies printed on a broadside and send him the bill. This Bates did. When James received the bill of \$7.50, he borrowed the money to pay it. Writing to Elvira Hastings, of New Ipswich, New Hampshire, he stated that he would “trust in the Lord for the money to be sent in” (JW to Elvira Hastings, May 21, 1847).

James and Ellen White had accepted the Sabbath solely on the evidence of Scripture called to their attention by the Joseph Bates tract. The vision of April 3 impressed upon them the singular importance of the Sabbath, and the mention made in the vision of

“the mark of the beast and his image” helped them put some things together, adding to their understanding of the significance of that message.

### **Rebaptism of Ellen White**

Soon after accepting the Sabbath truth, Ellen White requested rebaptism—undoubtedly into the third angel’s message. James White writes of this in *Life Incidents*, page 273, in connection with his presentation of Ellen White’s visions:

On receiving baptism at my hands, at an early period of her experience, as I raised her up out of the water, immediately she was in vision.

[122] This is the only reference to this step in her experience; the date of the rebaptism is not known.

### **The Visions of Ellen White**

Frequent mention has been made in this narrative to the visions Ellen White received, but little has been said of the physical phenomena that accompanied these visions and provided those who witnessed them with strong evidence of the work being of God. As she herself was totally unconscious during a vision, we must turn to others who were eyewitnesses of the unusual and thrilling experience. Several who had long acquaintance with her from early years have provided us with vivid descriptions. One such is J. N. Loughborough, who first saw her in vision in 1852 and declared that he had seen her in vision fifty times. He wrote:

In passing into vision, she gives three enrapturing shouts of “Glory!” which echo and re-echo, the second, and especially the third, fainter but more thrilling than the first, the voice resembling that of one quite a distance from you, and just going out of hearing.

For about four or five seconds she seems to drop down like a person in a swoon, or one having lost his

strength; she then seems to be instantly filled with superhuman strength, sometimes rising at once to her feet and walking about the room. There are frequent movements of the hands and arms, pointing to the right or left as her head turns. All these movements are made in a most graceful manner. In whatever position the hand or arm may be placed, it is impossible for anyone to move it.

Her eyes are always open, but she does not wink; her head is raised, and she is looking upward, not with a vacant stare, but with a pleasant expression, only differing from the normal in that she appears to be looking intently at some distant object.

She does not breathe, yet her pulse beats regularly. Her countenance is pleasant, and the color of her face as florid as in her natural state.—GSAM, pp. 204, 205.

Mrs. Martha Amadon, also acquainted with Ellen White from early years, after giving a similar description of what took place in connection with the visions, declared:

There was never an excitement among those present during a vision; nothing caused fear. It was a solemn, quiet scene, sometimes lasting an hour...

[123]

When the vision was ended, and she lost sight of the heavenly light, as it were, coming back to the earth once more, she would exclaim with a long-drawn sigh, as she took her first natural breath, “D-a-r-k.” She was then limp and strengthless.—DF 373, Martha Amadon, “Mrs. E. G. White in Vision.”

Individual visions were marked by various characteristics, some of which will be noted as the stories in which they are involved are told. James White, in introducing Ellen White’s experience in his *Life Incidents* in 1868, described the visions under four numbered points:

1. She is utterly unconscious of everything transpiring around her, as has been proved by the most rigid

tests, but views herself as removed from this world, and in the presence of heavenly beings.

2. She does not breathe. During the entire period of her continuance in vision, which has at different times ranged from fifteen minutes to three hours, there is no breath, as has been repeatedly proved by pressing upon the chest, and by closing the mouth and nostrils.

3. Immediately on entering vision, her muscles become rigid, and joints fixed, so far as any external force can influence them. At the same time her movements and gestures, which are frequent, are free and graceful, and cannot be hindered nor controlled by the strongest person.

4. On coming out of vision, whether in the daytime or a well-lighted room at night, all is total darkness. Her power to distinguish even the most brilliant objects, held within a few inches of the eyes, returns but gradually....

She has probably had, during the past twenty-three years, between one and two hundred visions. These have been given under almost every variety of circumstance, yet maintaining a wonderful similarity.—Page 272.

[124] In the earlier years of Ellen White's experience the visions were almost always accompanied by physical phenomena similar to that described in the Scriptures in connection with the respective prophets. In the later years, her work having been established and accepted, the visions were usually given during the hours of the night, as the one described by Daniel in the opening verse of [chapter 7](#): "a dream and visions of his head upon his bed." Such night visions were briefer, more frequent, but of equal importance and value as the visions given during the hours of the day, accompanied by the physical phenomena.

### Ellen White's Letter to Eli Curtis

On April 21, 1847, Ellen White penned a letter to Eli Curtis, of New York City, in which she referred to light given to her on a number of points. She wrote:

*Dear Brother,*

In the *Day-Dawn*, volume 1, Nos. 10 and 11, you kindly invite me to address you a communication.

My only apology I have to offer for not writing before is I have not had a clear duty to write till now. You will, I doubt not, excuse me for addressing you so publicly, at this time. I have been much interested in your writings in the *Dawn*, and *Extra*, and fully agree with you on some points, but on others we widely differ.—[A Word to the Little Flock, 11](#).

Then Ellen enters into a discussion of a number of points, some of them theological, based on the spectrum of visions given to her during the past two years. Note the careful, positive way she comes before the public as she writes of these matters:

Your *Extra* is now on the stand before me; and I beg leave to state to you, and the scattered flock of God, what I have seen in vision relative to these things on which you have written.

I fully agree with you, that there will be two literal resurrections, one thousand years apart. I also agree with you that the new earth will not appear till after the wicked dead are raised, and destroyed, at the end of the thousand years.

I saw that Satan was “loosed out of his prison” at the end of the thousand years, just at the time the wicked dead were raised; and that Satan deceived them by making them believe that they could take the Holy City from the saints. The wicked all marched up around the “camp of the saints,” with Satan at their head; and when they were ready to make an effort to take the city, the Almighty breathed from His high throne, on the city,

a breath of devouring fire, which came down on them, and burnt them up, “root and branch.”

And I saw that as Christ is the vine, and His children the branches, so Satan is the “root” and his children are the “branches”: and at the final destruction of “Gog and Magog,” the whole wicked host will be burnt up, “root and branch,” and cease to exist. Then will appear the new heaven and the new earth. Then will the saints “build houses,” and “plant vineyards.”

I saw that all the righteous dead were raised by the voice of the Son of God, at the first resurrection; and all that were raised at the second resurrection were burnt up, and ceased to exist.—[Ibid.](#), 11, 12

After laying this affirmative foundation, revealing a clear-cut concept of the order and nature of some future events—a part of the great controversy story—she takes up points with which she differed, on the basis of the visions, from Eli Curtis:

You think that those who worship before the saints’ feet ([Revelation 3:9](#)) will at last be saved. Here I must differ with you; for God showed me that this class were professed Adventists, who had fallen away, and “crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” And in the “hour of temptation,” which is yet to come, to show out everyone’s true character, they will know that they are forever lost, and overwhelmed with anguish of spirit, they will bow at the saints’ feet.

You also think that Michael stood up, and the time of trouble commenced, in the spring of 1844.

The Lord has shown me in vision that Jesus rose up, and shut the door, and entered the holy of holies, at the seventh month, 1844; but Michael’s standing up ([Daniel 12:1](#)) to deliver His people is in the future. This will not take place until Jesus has finished His priestly office in the heavenly sanctuary, and lays off His priestly attire, and puts on His most kingly robes, and crown, to

ride forth on a cloudy chariot, to “thresh the heathen in anger,” and deliver His people.—[A Word to the Little Flock, 12.](#)

[126]

The grasp that 19-year-old Ellen White had, at this early time, of future events and their sequence is significant. She continued her presentation of the events to transpire as Jesus closes up His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary:

Then Jesus will have His sharp sickle in His hand ([Revelation 14:14](#)), and then the saints will cry day and night to Jesus on the cloud to thrust in His sharp sickle and reap.

This will be the time of Jacob’s trouble ([Jeremiah 30:5-8](#)), out of which the saints will be delivered by the voice of God....

The Lord showed me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light on the cleansing of the sanctuary, et cetera, and that it was His will that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in [The Day-Star Extra, February 7, 1846](#). I feel fully authorized by the Lord to recommend that Extra to every saint.—[Ibid.](#)

She closed this presentation with the words: “I pray that these lines may prove a blessing to you, and all the dear children who may read them. E. G. White.”

The message, presented so simply, quoting Scripture often, and putting many future events in an understandable sequence, was a great blessing to the “little flock” who were weighing various concepts that were being projected here and there. God was gently but firmly guiding His somewhat bewildered people.

## Chapter 8—(1847-1848) Laying the Foundations

The month of April, 1847, marked James White’s first major publishing accomplishment—the issuance of a twenty-four-page pamphlet that he titled *A Word to the “Little Flock.”* The type was small and the margins narrow, yielding a page with twice the normal content of a book page of today.

Just a year earlier, on April 6, 1846, he had arranged for the broadside publication of Ellen’s first vision—a single large sheet printed on one side only. Two hundred and fifty copies were struck off in Portland, Maine. H. S. Gurney, blacksmith of Fairhaven, Massachusetts, shared the printing costs. It carried the significant title “To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad.” A little more than two of the three columns were given to Ellen’s first vision. Half of the third column was devoted to the vision of mid-February, 1845, concerning the heavenly sanctuary and the events at the end of the 2300 days ([Early Writings, 54-56](#)).

Very clearly, *A Word to the “Little Flock”* represented the joint ministry of both James and Ellen. James had written several articles for publication in Crosier’s short-lived *Day-Dawn*, but by the time they were ready, that paper had ceased publication. So after talking with the Howlands and some others, he decided to present the materials in pamphlet form. In his opening paragraph he explained:

I wish to call the attention of the “little flock” to those things which will very soon take place on this earth.—[A Word to the Little Flock, 1](#).

[128] He quoted Bible prophecy and then called attention to distressing world conditions, particularly famine and financial distress. He declared, “we cannot doubt ... that the ‘time of trouble, such as never was’ is fast coming upon the nations of the earth.”—[Ibid.](#)

The pamphlet is Bible-based, with copious Scripture references and quotations. It seems clear that the visions given to Ellen helped

James to sort things out and clarify the order of events. It will be remembered that in 1845 a move toward time setting had been averted when Ellen was shown that before Christ would come, “the saints must pass through the ‘time of Jacob’s trouble,’ which was future.”—*Ibid.*, 22

The pamphlet opens with an extended article on the seven last plagues. After quoting [Revelation 15:1](#), James White asserts: “By the light of the brightly shining light (the Bible), we can see the events of our past experience distinctly; while future events may not be seen in their order so clearly.” Then he proceeds to suggest the order in which certain future events may be expected to take place, including the “marking or sealing of the saints” ([A Word to the Little Flock](#), 3). Articles that follow carry the titles “The Voice of God,” “The Time of Trouble,” “The Time of Jacob’s Trouble,” and “Thoughts on [Revelation 14](#).” Thus, as Ellen White indicated in the early 1880s ([Testimonies for the Church](#), 1:78, 79), the early believers understood clearly the intent of the first and second angels’ messages, but as to the third, which mentions the “commandments of God” and makes references to “the beast” and “his image,” there seemed to be considerable haziness. However, James wrote, “It is plain that we live in the time of the third angel’s message.”—[A Word to the Little Flock](#), 11. At this point he introduced Ellen’s letter to Eli Curtis, referred to in [chapter 7](#), a communication in which the visions given to her dealt with doctrinal points and clarified the relationship of events to come.

### James White on the Prophetic Gift

Having introduced the visions given to Ellen, James devoted a page to the subject of a prophetic voice in earth’s last days, opening with words from [Acts 2](#):

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants, and on my handmaidens I will pour

out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy” [verses 17, 18].—[A Word to the Little Flock, 13.](#)

White pointed out:

As the signs of that day have been, and still are fulfilling, it must be clear to every unprejudiced mind that the time has fully come when the children of God may expect dreams and visions from the Lord.—[Ibid.](#)

He acknowledged that “even among Adventists,” “this is a very unpopular position to hold on this subject ...; but I choose to believe the word of the Lord on this point, rather than the teachings of men.” He continued:

I know that it is a very popular opinion among Adventists that there was nothing more to be revealed by visions, after John closed up the revelation in A.D. 96. But if this opinion is correct, then the last days ended while John was on the isle of Patmos.—[Ibid.](#)

James White’s next statement sets forth a position he stood by throughout his ministry:

The Bible is a perfect and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice. But this is no reason why God may not show the past, present, and future fulfillment of His Word, in these *last days*, by dreams and visions, according to Peter’s testimony. True visions are given to lead us to God, and His Written Word; but those that are given for a new rule of faith and practice, separate from the Bible, cannot be from God, and should be rejected.—[Ibid.](#)

In this forthright declaration may be seen an allusion to Joseph Smith, leader of the Mormons, who, because of some of his teachings and actions, had been murdered in 1844. As for James White, the Bible was the guide and rule of practice. He republished the first vision, followed by two others, stating:

The following vision was published in the *Day-Star*, more than a year ago. By the request of friends, it is republished in this little work, with Scripture references, for the benefit of the little flock.—[Ibid.](#)

[130]

He then added a word of admonition: “I hope that all who may read it will take the wise and safe course pointed out to us by the following passages of Scripture. ‘Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good’ [1 [Thessalonians 5:20, 21](#)]. ‘To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them’ [[Isaiah 8:20](#)].”—[A Word to the Little Flock, 13, 14.](#)

Throughout the republished visions he included more than eighty references to Bible passages and seven references to 2 Esdras and the Wisdom of Solomon, of the Old Testament Apocrypha. All these were used to compare his wife’s visions with similar matters in the Bible. Only in this printing did such keyed footnote references appear, linked to the E. G. White visions. The visions thus published included the first to which Ellen White in her first writing added the vision of the new earth; and the vision of the heavenly sanctuary in which she was shown the law of God, as first published in the broadside by Joseph Bates.

There followed two pages of arguments in support of the visions, first Joseph Bates’s remarks giving his experience in accepting the visions, as described in Bates’s 1847 broadside, and then a very brief review by James White on “the experience and calling of the author of these visions” ([Ibid., 22](#)). The pamphlet closed with two James White articles, “The Temple of God” and “The Judgment.” In the latter he dealt with the “executive judgment,” giving a description of God finally cleansing the universe as “the devil and his angels, and all the wicked, will be burnt up, ‘root and branch.’”—[Ibid., 24](#)

This pamphlet, *A Word to the “Little Flock,”* was republished in 1945 and is available at Adventist Book Centers.

The Whites were in Topsham through much of April and May while James was getting his pamphlet published in nearby Brunswick. They then returned to Gorham, where, through the summer, awaiting the birth of their first child, James engaged in such

labor as he could find, determined not to be dependent on others for their livelihood.

[131] From Gorham, Ellen, on July 13, wrote a letter to Joseph Bates. Its opening paragraphs provide some glimpses into her heart and life:

*Dear Brother Bates,*

As James is at work and sisters are from home, thought I would employ myself in writing a line to you. My health is quite good for me. My faith is still strong that that very same Jesus that ascended up into heaven will so come in like manner as He went up, and that very, very soon.

I have had many trials of late, discouragement at times has laid so fast hold upon me it seemed impossible to shake it off. But thank God, Satan has not got the victory over me yet, and by the grace of God he never shall. I know and feel my weakness, but I have laid hold upon the strong arm of Jehovah, and I can say today I know that my Redeemer liveth, and if He lives I shall live also.

O how good it would be to meet with a few of like precious faith to exhort and comfort one another with words of holy cheer from the Word of God. The sheep are now scattered, but thank God they are about to be gathered to a good pasture. O how sweet it will be to meet all the blood-washed throng in the city of our God—[Letter 3, 1847](#).

Bates had written asking about some of the early visions. Ellen took up his questions and wrote a number of pages in the earliest handwritten letter we have today from her pen. It provides helpful documentation of her and her husband's work and travels:

Brother Bates, you write in a letter to James something about the Bridegroom's coming, as stated in the first published visions. By the letter you would like to know whether I had light on the Bridegroom's coming

before I saw it in vision. I can readily answer, No. The Lord showed me the travel of the Advent band and the midnight cry in December, but He did not show me the Bridegroom's coming until February following. Perhaps you would like to have me give a statement in relation to both visions.—[Ibid.](#)

As it is a review of earlier history, this letter has been drawn upon in other chapters. Five weeks later, just a few days before their first son was born, James White wrote from Gorham to Elvira Hastings, of New Ipswich, New Hampshire, telling of his family's situation: [132]

When I first wrote to you and sent the visions [in broadside form] I was lame, in debt, and burdened with the duty of publishing for the "little flock." Since that [time] I have been able to publish my humble pamphlet, and am now free from debt, and have enough for our present wants. God has abundantly blessed me with health to labor with my hands. My lameness has not troubled me but little this summer. I have been able to earn about \$25 the past six weeks; and my health is very much improved....

When we have no special work to do in visiting the scattered saints, I feel it my duty to labor with my hands, so as not to be chargeable to others. This is a privilege to me.—JW to Elvira Hastings, August 22, 1847.

Looking into the immediate future, he commented:

We can lay no certain plans for the future; but we expect to go west [this would be in the confines of the New England States and New York] this fall. When it is our duty to go, God will make it very plain, and provide friends and means. At present we must remain at Gorham. Ellen has seen in vision that we should go west before the Lord comes; therefore I believe we shall go, but whether it will be in September or at a later period we cannot now decide. We leave all this in the

hands of God, and by His grace will try to attend to present duty.— Ibid.

He picked the letter up again on Wednesday, August 25, and added:

The above was written Sunday eve. I had to go to work Monday and Tuesday, and therefore could not finish. I haste to write a few lines more so as to mail this tomorrow morning.

I have felt like offering an apology for inviting you (a stranger in the flesh) to assist me in paying for the publication of the last vision, as I did in my other letter. At that time I was lame, some in debt, and knew not how to clear myself from the small debt of about \$10 and obtain a living. But the Lord has been better to me than my fears, praise His dear name.— Ibid.

[133]

Several postscripts were added. He made reference to Ellen, just on the verge of giving birth to her first child, whom they named Henry. He stated:

I should choose that Ellen fill this sheet, but she is not able. She has been out of health for years, and suffers much at this time; still her faith in God is firm. Your letter was of much comfort to her. She joins with me in much love to all the precious, scattered “little flock” with you or with whom you may meet; also to yourself. Pray for us. And we may keep the commandments of God that we may “enter into life.”

O! I want to see Jesus and the angels, I want to see that golden city. I want to see all the saints clothed with immortality, dwelling in the light.— Ibid.

In another postscript he noted:

In your letter you say, “Sister W. mentions God spoke the day and hour of Jesus’ coming,” and you

inquired, "I should like to know if it is to be spoken before we all hear it."

To this question, I answer by writing Ellen's words that she has just spoken while lying on the bed beside my writing stand. "Tell her that none hear the voice until all hear it. Then every living child of God will hear and know the voice of God as He gives us the day and hour. Then joy and glory will fill every heart."— Ibid.

Still the letter was not mailed. On September 1 James White added, writing in Topsham:

This letter was laid in the drawer and I intended to mail it last Thursday.... But while packing up to come to this place [the Howland home], I found this letter.

Here I shall take the liberty to state to you that my wife has a young son, a week old tomorrow. Why I state this is that I learn from Brother Bates that you are a full believer in Ellen's visions, therefore interested for her. She is very well, also the babe. God has been with her in power. For years Ellen has been subject to fainting spells. She has had many the year (last Monday) that we have been married. It was the opinion of our unbelieving neighbors that she would die in one of her faint spells, but to the astonishment of all she has not had a faint spell for two weeks. For myself, I had not a fear. I as little expected her death as I expected the sun to fall to the earth. I knew she would live, for God had shown her in vision that her work was not done up for the little flock....

[134]

Here is a strong band of thirteen bold soldiers in this place, in union and in the spirit and power of the truth and love of Christ.— Ibid.

### **New Responsibilities**

From this point on, James and Ellen White must take into account the fact that they were a family. The Howlands soon invited the

couple to set up housekeeping in the upstairs rooms of their home in Topsham. Of this Ellen White wrote:

In October, Brother and Sister Howland kindly offered us a part of their dwelling, which we gladly accepted, and commenced housekeeping with borrowed furniture. We were poor and saw close times.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 241, 242.](#)

Many incidents might be cited illustrating their poverty. The young people were determined to be independent financially, so James engaged in daily labor. He secured work in hauling stone as a railroad cut was thrust through close to Brunswick. He wore the skin on his hands to the bleeding point in many places, and then had difficulty in collecting his wages. Freely the Howlands divided what they had with the young couple in the economically depressed times. James then cut cordwood in a nearby forest, working from early till late, and earned 50 cents a day. Severe pain in his side made for sleepless nights. But the young couple resolved to live within their means—and to suffer want rather than to run into debt. On their very limited budget Ellen could afford only one pint of milk a day for her child and herself. Then came a day when she had to cut out the nine-cent allowance for the milk supply for three days to have enough money to buy a bit of cloth for a simple garment for the baby. “I gave up the milk,” she wrote, “and purchased the cloth for an apron to cover the bare arms of my child.”—[Ibid., 243.](#)

[135]

### **Ellen Hits an All-Time Low in Discouragement**

She wrote of their experience:

We endeavored to keep up good courage and trust in the Lord. I did not murmur.... One day when our provisions were gone, husband went to his employer to get money or provisions. It was a stormy day, and he walked three miles and back in the rain, passing through the village of Brunswick, where he had often lectured,

carrying a bag of provisions on his back, tied in different apartments.

As he entered the house very weary my heart sank within me. My first feelings were that God had forsaken us. I said to my husband, "Have we come to this? Has the Lord left us?" I could not restrain my tears, and wept aloud for hours until I fainted.—[Ibid.](#), 242.

The young mother had reached an all-time low. Why, oh, why were their lives so hard when they had been dedicated to the cause of God? Regaining consciousness, she felt the cheering influence of the Spirit of God and regretted that she had sunk so low under discouragement. Recounting the experience, she wrote that "we desire to follow Christ and be like Him; but we sometimes faint beneath trials and remain at a distance from Him. Suffering and trials bring us nigh to Jesus. The furnace consumes the dross and brightens the gold."—[Ibid.](#), 243.

For six months they maintained their home in the Howland residence, but it was indeed a trying time. According to James, he suffered more in mind and body than he could show with pen and paper (JW to Leonard and Elvira Hastings, April 27, 1848).

Then James and Ellen discovered a true understanding of what their difficult time was all about. She had thought that now that they had a child it would be impossible for her to travel and a change must come about in their program. A vision from God revealed the purpose of the trials they were facing:

I was shown that the Lord had been trying us for our good, and to prepare us to labor for others; that He had been stirring up our nest, lest we should settle down in ease, and that our work was to labor for souls; that if we had been prospered, home would be so pleasant that we would be unwilling to leave it to travel, and that we had been suffering trial to prepare us for still greater conflicts that we would suffer in our travels.—[Ibid.](#), 243.

[136]

A heart-rending experience enforced the message of the vision. Henry was taken very ill and soon lapsed into unconsciousness.

Nothing they or their friends could do brought relief. Recognizing that they had made their little Henry “an excuse for not traveling and laboring for the good of others,” they feared that God was about to remove the basis for their excuses. With the agonizing prayer of faith they pledged God that if the child’s life were spared they would go forth trusting in Him wherever He might send them. By faith they claimed the promises of God. From the hour of this resolution and consecration the fever turned, and Henry began to recover. Wrote Ellen White:

Light from heaven was breaking through the clouds,  
and shining upon us again. Hope revived. Our prayers  
were graciously answered.—*Ibid.*, 244.

### **Careers Changed**

James and Ellen White could now see that regardless of home comforts, pleasures, and responsibilities, their life was to be a life of dedicated service involving travel, suffering, and earnest labor for others.

They soon received an earnest invitation to attend a conference of the Sabbathkeeping Adventists in Connecticut. They would go, taking their 7-month-old Henry with them in their arms. James White had received \$10 in settlement for his work in cutting wood. They used half of the money in preparation for the trip south and kept the other half for transportation. With all their earthly possessions half filling a trunk, they went to Boston, where they stayed with the Nichols family. They did not make known their penniless plight to the family, but as they left, Mrs. Nichols handed James \$5. With all but 50 cents of this they purchased tickets to Middletown, Connecticut, the closest rail point to Rocky Hill and the Albert Belden home, where the conference was to begin on Thursday night, April 20.

### **The First “General Conference” of Sabbathkeeping Adventists**

[137] While up to this time little companies of believers met together to study in meetings loosely termed as conferences, it was this meeting

in the unfinished chamber of Albert Belden's home at Rocky Hill that Ellen White later referred to as "the first conference that was ever held among Seventh-day Adventists" ([Manuscript 76, 1886](#)). James White spoke of it as "the first under the message" ([The Review and Herald, September 29, 1863](#)).

The meeting had been called by E.L.H. Chamberlain, of Middletown, Connecticut, and was to be held at Rocky Hill, some eight miles north. Thursday evening, when the meeting opened, fifteen people had come together. Ellen White described what took place as the conference got under way:

Friday morning the brethren came in until we numbered about fifty. These were not all fully in the truth. Our meeting that day was very interesting. Brother Bates presented the commandments in a clear light, and their importance was urged home by powerful testimonies. The word had effect to establish those already in the truth and to awaken those who were not fully decided.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 245.

Exuberant in his report of the meeting, James White declared:

God gave His servants the truth in a clear light, and they spoke it with solemn power. Brother Bates's principal subject was the commandments. He was able to make the case plain that the only entrance to "life" was by keeping the commandments, and to break them was sure "death" (eternal)... Ellen spoke with considerable power of what God showed her in vision concerning the Sabbath.—JW to Leonard and Elvira Hastings, April 27, 1848.

Of this general meeting of those united in the Sabbath truth, White wrote:

Our conference which closed Monday morning was deeply interesting. I never attended a better meeting.... There are many things of deep interest which occurred

[138]

during the meeting, but I have not time to state all. The dear children parted with great love for each other. All had a better meeting than they expected. All were blessed.— Ibid.

James and Ellen White had come to the conference with no settled conviction as to what their next step might be. They thought that they might stay in Connecticut or Massachusetts a few weeks and then return to Maine, although there was nothing to call them to Maine more than to any other place. He declared:

We have nothing else to do but to serve God and go where God opens the way for us.... I hope to be able to do all my duty to God and my dear brethren.— Ibid.

## Chapter 9—(1848) The Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences and the Development of Doctrines

[139]

Following Rocky Hill, other conferences were held in a number of places, but not all have been pinpointed by name. Of several, James or Ellen White, or both, have written. Two were held in western New York State. After describing the conference held at Rocky Hill in the “unfinished chamber” in the Belden home, Ellen White wrote: “Soon after this we were invited to attend a conference at Volney, New York, in August, 1848. Two years before this I had been shown that we should visit New York at some future time.”—[Ibid.](#), 245. Hiram Edson, who extended the invitation, stated that the believers in his area were generally poor and could help but little with travel expenses. James and Ellen White had no means to travel with, so James was glad to find an opportunity to earn some money cutting hay on nearby farms. To Stockbridge Howland at Topsham he wrote on July 2:

I mow five days for unbelievers and Sunday for believers and rest on the seventh day, therefore I have but very little time to write. My health is good, God gives me strength to labor hard all day. I have mowed eight days right off and felt hardly a pain. Brother Holt, Brother John Belden, and I have taken 100 acres of grass to mow at 87 1/2 cents per acre and board ourselves. Praise the Lord. I hope to get a few dollars here to use in the cause of God.—JW to S. Howland, July 2, 1848.

As Ellen White wrote of the experience, she gave some insights into the source of her husband’s strength:

My husband was suffering with dyspepsia. His diet was very spare. But the way opened for him to go into the field to mow grass. It seemed then that we must

[140]

live by faith. When we arose in the morning we bowed beside our bed, and asked God to give strength to labor through the day. We would not be satisfied unless we had the assurance that the Lord heard us pray.

He then went forth to his labor, not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord, to swing the scythe. At night when he came home, we would again plead with God for strength to earn means to spread His truth. We were often greatly blessed.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:94](#).

That summer James White earned \$40 in the hayfield. Part of the money he used to buy needed clothing for the family and part in traveling to western New York State. They reluctantly left Henry in Middletown in the care of Clarissa Bonfoey. With E.L.H. Chamberlain accompanying them, they took the steamboat for New York City en route to Volney, where the conference was to be held in David Arnold's barn.

### **The Volney Conference**

The conference was called to begin on Friday, August 18. Leading workers present were Bates, Chamberlain, Gurney, Edson, and James and Ellen White. A few days later James White reported to their friends:

Friday p.m. the brethren came in to our meeting in Volney. There were thirty or forty who met with us. Brother Bates preached the Sabbath to them with strong argument, much boldness and power. My principal message was on [Matthew 25:1-11](#) [the parable of the ten virgins]. The brethren are strong on the Sabbath and the shut door. Almost all confessed that they had gained much strength from the meeting. Ellen had two visions at that meeting. She spoke to them with power to their comfort.—JW to Leonard and Elvira Hastings, August 26, 1848.

This important conference was reported by Ellen White in some detail:

Our first conference was at Volney in Brother Arnold's barn. There were about thirty-five present, all that could be collected in that part of the State. There were hardly two agreed. Each was strenuous for his views, declaring that they were according to the Bible.

[141]

All were anxious for an opportunity to advance their sentiments, or to preach to us. They were told that we had not come so great a distance to hear them, but had come to teach them the truth.

Brother Arnold held that the thousand years of [Revelation 20](#) were in the past; and that the 144,000 were those raised at Christ's resurrection. And as we had the emblem of our dying Lord before us, and were about to commemorate His sufferings, Brother A. arose and said he had no faith in what we were about to do, that the Sacrament was a continuation of the Passover, to be observed but once a year.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:97](#).

Some of these points of view were in conflict with what had been previously shown to Ellen White in vision. She wrote of her reactions and of subsequent happenings.

These strange differences of opinion rolled a heavy weight upon me, especially as Brother A. spoke of the thousand years being in the past. I knew that he was in error, and great grief pressed my spirits, for it seemed to me that God was dishonored. I fainted under the burden. Brethren Bates, Chamberlain, Gurney, Edson, and my husband prayed for me.... I was soon lost to earthly things.

My accompanying angel presented before me some of the errors of those present, and also the truth in contrast with their errors. That these discordant views, which they claimed to be according to the Bible, were only according to their opinion of the Bible, and that

their errors must be yielded, and they unite upon the third angel's message.—[Ibid.](#), 2:98, 99.

Ellen White summed up the outcome in two sentences: “Our meeting ended victoriously. Truth gained the victory.”—[Ibid.](#), 2:99.

[142] But there was more to it than that. To these people with divergent views—people who had not seen Ellen White before—the Lord gave very convincing evidences beyond the fact that she was shown by the angel “the truth in contrast with their errors.” Just a few years later, J. N. Loughborough visited with David Arnold and some others who were present at the conference in 1848, and some interesting sidelights emerged. Loughborough wrote:

As the circumstance was related to me, Sister White, while in vision, arose to her feet and took the family Bible upon her left arm, the book being an ordinary-sized one. While holding it thus, her eyes looking upward and in an opposite direction from the Bible, with her right hand she would turn from text to text, placing her finger on the text, and would repeat the same.

Brother Ross looked at many of the texts to see if she was repeating the one to which she pointed. He or some of the company looked at them all. In every case she not only repeated the texts to which she pointed, but she did so while her eyes were fastened upward and in an opposite direction from the Bible. It was these scriptures quoted in this wonderful manner which overthrew the false theories of the Sabbathkeepers assembled at Volney, in August, 1848, and caused them to unite upon the truth.—JNL, in [The Review and Herald, March 3, 1885](#).

He commented:

The tendency of the visions is to accomplish just what Paul said would be the effect of true manifestations of the Spirit of God; viz., to bring the church “*in the unity of the faith.*” [Ephesians 4:12-15](#). The reason

these persons gave up their differences was not simply because Sister White said they must give them up, but because in the same vision they were pointed to plain statements of Scripture that refuted their false theories, and had presented before them in contrast a straight and harmonious track of Bible truth....

This company of Sabbathkeepers in Oswego County after their errors had been thus corrected, and they had become united upon the truth, went forth from that meeting to spread the light to others.— *Ibid.*

### **The Conference at Port Gibson, New York**

While at Volney, the leaders thought it best to have another conference at Port Gibson, some sixty miles further west, on Sunday and Monday, August 27 and 28. This would be held in Hiram Edson's barn. On their way they made a stopover in Hannibal, where there were eight or ten believers. The Snow family entertained Bates, Hiram Edson and his wife, and Brother Simmons. The records do not indicate where the Whites stayed. Before they continued their journey in the morning, they held a meeting in the Snow home. In his August 26 letter James White wrote of the interesting occasion:

[143]

In the morning Ellen was taken off in vision and while she was in vision, all the brethren came in. It was a powerful time.... Ellen rose up in vision, took the large Bible, held it up before the Lord, talked from it, then carried it to this humble brother who was not on the Sabbath and put it in his arms. He took it while tears were rolling down his bosom. Then Ellen came and sat down by me. She was in vision one and a half hours, in which time she did not breathe at all. It was an affecting time. All wept much for joy.—JW to Leonard and Elvira Hastings, August 26, 1848.

The rather meager information concerning the conference held at Port Gibson comes from Ellen White:

From Volney we went to Port Gibson. The meeting there was held in Brother Edson's barn. There were those present who loved the truth, and those who were listening to and cherishing error, and were opposed to the truth. But the Lord wrought for us in power before the close of that meeting. I was again shown in vision the importance of brethren in western New York laying their differences aside, and uniting upon Bible truth.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:99](#).

Wrote James White to Brother and Sister Hastings:

[144]

Our visit to New York was attended all the way by the goodness and power of God.... On our return we stated in conversation among ourselves that we found the cause in New York twofold better than we expected and that three times as much was accomplished in our visit as we expected. Praise the Lord. We came home with light hearts. Ellen's health while journeying was much better than it has been for years.—JW to Leonard and Elvira Hastings, October 2, 1848.

More conferences followed in this year of development, clarifying and binding together the basic doctrines held by Seventh-day Adventists. The early records speak of meetings at Rocky Hill; Topsham, Maine; and Dorchester, Massachusetts, in November. The basic team of workers from conference to conference was much the same: James and Ellen White, Joseph Bates, H. S. Gurney. At times, Hiram Edson, E.L.H. Chamberlain, and Otis Nichols joined forces with the basic group.

### **The Development of the Doctrines**

Concerning what was accomplished at the conferences held in those early years, and particularly the Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences of 1848, Ellen White later wrote:

Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder

Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, [A term used in respect and love.] Elder Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word.

Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, “We can do nothing more,” the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.—[Manuscript 46, 1904](#) (see also [Selected Messages 1:206, 207](#)).

[145]

She referred to this experience on several occasions, and each time introduced some significant points. In 1903 she wrote:

The leading points of our faith as we hold them today were firmly established. Point after point was clearly defined, and all the brethren came into harmony. The whole company of believers were united in the truth. There were those who came in with strange doctrines, but we were never afraid to meet them. Our experience was wonderfully established by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.—[Manuscript 135, 1903](#).

In a *Review* article published in 1906 she traced the establishment of doctrines, declaring:

These experiences were repeated over and over and over again. Thus many truths of the third angel's message were established, point by point.—[The Review and Herald, June 14, 1906.](#)

### **Ellen White's Mind Locked for a Few Years**

But this is not the full story. The Lord manifested Himself in a manner that made it forever clear that what took place was beyond human manipulation. Ellen White explained:

During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God. The brethren knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given.—[Manuscript 46, 1904](#) (see also [Selected Messages 1:207](#)).

In 1906 she recounted it this way:

[146] In the early days of the message, when our numbers were few, we studied diligently to understand the meaning of many scriptures. At times it seemed as if no explanation could be given. My mind seemed to be locked to an understanding of the Word; but when our brethren who had assembled for study came to a point where they could go no farther, and had recourse to earnest prayer, the Spirit of God would rest upon me, and I would be taken off in vision, and be instructed in regard to the relation of scripture to scripture.—[The Review and Herald, June 14, 1906.](#)

In a statement penned in 1903 she told of the opening of her mind to an understanding of the Scriptures:

For two or three years my mind continued to be locked to the Scriptures.... It was some time after my second son was born [July, 1849] that we were in great perplexity regarding certain points of doctrine. I was asking the Lord to unlock my mind, that I might understand His Word. Suddenly I seemed to be enshrouded in clear, beautiful light, and ever since, the Scriptures have been an open book to me.—[Manuscript 135, 1903](#).

Ellen White related that soon after James White had started to publish the *Review and Herald* in Paris, Maine, in December, 1850, the father of J. N. Andrews was very sick with inflammatory rheumatism. The brethren prayed for his healing. Ellen White laid her hands on his head and declared: “Father Andrews, the Lord Jesus maketh thee whole.” He was instantly healed. It was at that time, as Ellen White stated, that “light seemed to shine all through the house, and an angel’s hand was laid upon my head. From that time to this, I have been enabled to understand the Word of God.”— [Ibid.](#)

In the experience of Seventh-day Adventists the visions were not given to take the place of Bible study. They were, however, a definite aid in Bible study, correcting erroneous interpretations and pointing to what was truth. “He [God] wants us to go to the Bible,” she wrote in 1888, “and get the Scripture evidence.”—[Manuscript 9, 1888](#).

This was easily done with the first angel’s message of [Revelation 14](#), the second angel’s message, and with the Sabbath truth as seen in the fourth commandment. But with the third angel’s message, the process was a little more involved; time was needed to grasp it all. Ellen White wrote of this some years later:

When we began to present the light on the Sabbath question, we had no clearly defined idea of the third angel’s message of [Revelation 14:9-12](#). The burden of our testimony as we came before the people was that the great Second Advent movement was of God, that the first and second messages had gone forth, and that the third was to be given. We saw that the third message closed with the words: “Here is the patience of

[147]

the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” And we as clearly saw as we now see that these prophetic words suggested a Sabbath reform; but as to what the worship of the beast mentioned in the message was, or what the image and mark of the beast were, we had no defined position.

God by His Holy Spirit let light shine forth upon His servants, and the subject gradually opened to their minds. It required much study and anxious care to search it out, link after link. By care, anxiety, and incessant labor has the work moved on until the great truths of our message, a clear, connected, perfect whole, have been given to the world.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:78, 79.](#)

### **A Glimpse of the Activities at the Conferences**

In a retrospective statement Ellen White drew a picture of the spirit in which the foundations of truth were laid in those periods of concerted study and prayer:

We would come together burdened in soul, praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine; for we knew that Christ is not divided. One point at a time was made the subject of investigation. The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth. After earnest prayer, if any point was not understood it was discussed, and each one expressed his opinion freely; then we would again bow in prayer, and earnest supplications went up to heaven that God would help us to see eye to eye, that we might be one as Christ and the Father are one. Many tears were shed.

We spent many hours in this way. Sometimes the entire night was spent in solemn investigation of the Scriptures, that we might understand the truth for our time. On some occasions the Spirit of God would come upon me, and difficult portions were made clear through

God's appointed way, and then there was perfect harmony. We were all of one mind and one spirit.

We sought most earnestly that the Scriptures should not be wrested to suit any man's opinions. We tried to make our differences as slight as possible by not dwelling on points that were of minor importance, upon which there were varying opinions. But the burden of every soul was to bring about a condition among the brethren which would answer the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one as He and the Father are one.—[Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 24, 25.](#)

But the meetings were not all peaceful, with everyone in harmony. She mentioned what took place when there was a stubborn holding out for cherished personal views:

Sometimes one or two of the brethren would stubbornly set themselves against the view presented, and would act out the natural feelings of the heart; but when this disposition appeared, we suspended our investigations and adjourned our meeting, that each one might have an opportunity to go to God in prayer, and, without conversation with others, study the point of difference, seeking light from heaven. With expressions of friendliness we parted, to meet again as soon as possible for further investigation.

At times the power of God came upon us in a marked manner, and when clear light revealed the points of truth, we would weep and rejoice together. We loved Jesus; we loved one another.—[Ibid., 25, 26.](#)

### **Established by the Lord God of Heaven**

As Ellen White had occasion to look back to the laying of the foundations of doctrinal positions held by the church, she was led to write:

Those who passed over the ground step by step in the past history of our experience, seeing the chain of truth in the prophecies, were prepared to accept and obey every ray of light. They were praying, fasting, searching, digging for the truth as for hidden treasures, and the Holy Spirit, we know, was teaching and guiding us.

[149]

Many theories were advanced, bearing a semblance of truth, but so mingled with misinterpreted and misapplied scriptures, that they led to dangerous errors. Very well do we know how every point of truth was established, and the seal set upon it by the Holy Spirit of God. And all the time voices were heard, "Here is the truth," "I have the truth; follow me." But the warnings came, "Go not ye after them. I have not sent them, but they ran." (See [Jeremiah 23:21](#).)

The leadings of the Lord were marked, and most wonderful were His revelations of what is truth. Point after point was established by the Lord God of heaven. That which was truth *then*, is truth today.—[Manuscript 31, 1896](#) (see also [Selected Messages 2:103, 104](#)).

In 1896 she reinforced this concept of God's definite leadings in the establishment of the distinctive truths dug out in those early days:

The great waymarks of truth, showing us our bearings in prophetic history, are to be carefully guarded, lest they be torn down, and replaced with theories that would bring confusion rather than genuine light....

The burden of the warning now to come to the people of God, nigh and afar off, is the third angel's message. And those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make an application of the Word that will undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today. The truths that

have been unfolding in their order, as we have advanced along the line of prophecy revealed in the Word of God, are truth, sacred, eternal truth today.— *Ibid.* (see also *Ibid.*, 2:101-103).

Nine years later, when the sanctuary truth was being undermined through a misapplication of Scripture by a Seventh-day Adventist minister, Ellen White declared:

This poor man has been working decidedly against the truth that the Holy Spirit has confirmed. When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth.—*Letter 329, 1905* (see also *Selected Messages 1:160, 161*).

At the Sabbath Conference held at Topsham at the Howland home over the weekend of October 20-22, 1848, the subject of publishing the truths thus far studied out, particularly the Sabbath message, was prayerfully considered. But the way did not seem clear (GSAM, p. 273). [150]

### **Commissioned to Print a “Little Paper”**

A few weeks later, at a conference of rather limited attendance held at the Otis Nichols home in Dorchester, Massachusetts, God made it clear that the time had come to publish. In a pamphlet titled *A Seal of the Living God*, Bates included his account of the meeting and of a vision given to Ellen on November 18.

A small company of brethren and sisters were assembled in a meeting in Dorchester, near Boston, Massachusetts. Before the meeting commenced, some of us were examining some of the points in the sealing message. Some difference of opinion existed about the correctness of the view of the word *ascending*, et cetera....

After some time spent in earnest prayer for light and instruction, God gave Sister White the following

in vision.—DF 323, Joseph Bates, [To Those who are receiving the seal of the living God, 24](#).

At times Ellen White, while in vision, spoke in short exclamations of what she was viewing. These gave clues to her companions as to the scenes passing before her. It was so in this case, and Joseph Bates, with pencil and paper in hand, noted the words as she spoke. Here are significant portions of Bates's notes:

Where did the light break out?----- Let thine angel teach us where the light broke out!----- It commenced from a little, when Thou didst give one light after another.----- The testimony and commandments are linked together; they cannot be separated.----- That comes first, the ten commandments by God....

He was well pleased when His law began to come up in strength, and the waste places began to be built up.----- Out of weakness it has become strong from searching His Word.----- The test upon it has been but a short time.... It's the seal!----- It's coming up! It arises, commencing from the rising of the sun. Like the sun, first cold, grows warmer and sends its rays.----- When that truth arose, there was but little light in it, but it has been increasing.----- O the power of these rays!

[151]

It grows in strength.----- The greatest weight and light is on that truth,----- for it lasts forever, when the Bible is not needed.----- It arose there in the east.

It began with a small light, but its beams are healing.----- O how mighty is that truth;----- it's the highest after they enter the goodly land,----- but it will increase till they are made immortal.----- It commenced from the rising of the sun,----- keeps on its course like the sun,----- but it never sets."—[Ibid., 24, 25](#).

In Europe at this time there was confusion among the nations, and war seemed inevitable. There had been considerable discussion among the early believers as to the significance of the turmoil. With that background, these exclamations were significant:

The angels are holding the four winds.----- It is God that restrains the powers.----- The angels have *not* let go, for the saints are not all sealed....----- When Michael stands up, this trouble will be all over the earth. Why,--- they are just ready to blow.----- There's a check put on because the saints are not 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.—[Ibid.](#) (Italics supplied.)

Ellen White later wrote about the sequel to the vision:

After coming out of vision, I said to my 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.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 125.](#)

But how could he? From where would he get financial and moral support? Nonetheless, James White pondered the words spoken in the commission. From Dorchester, Massachusetts, he and Ellen returned to the Belden home at Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

[152] **Chapter 10—(1848-1849) Heaven-directed Travels  
and Important Visions**

While attending the conference at Topsham in October, Ellen White realized she would have to make a very special sacrifice in giving up the company of her child. With the rigors of travel, it just was not feasible to take a 14-month-old child with them. The mother told of the excruciating experience:

Again I was called to deny self for the good of souls. We must sacrifice the company of our little Henry, and go forth to give ourselves unreservedly to the work. My health was poor, and he would necessarily occupy a great share of my time. It was a severe trial, yet I dared not let my child stand in the way of our duty. I believed that the Lord had spared him to us when he was very sick, and that if I should let him hinder me from doing my duty, God would remove him from me.

Alone before the Lord, with most painful feelings and many tears, I made the sacrifice, and gave up my only child for another to have a mother's care and feelings. We left him in Brother Howland's family, in whom we had utmost confidence. They were willing to bear burdens to leave us as free as possible to labor in the cause of God. We knew that they could take better care of Henry than we could while journeying with him, and it was for his good that he should have a steady home and good discipline, that his sweet temper be not injured.

[153] It was hard parting with my child. His little sad face, as I left him, was before me night and day; yet in the strength of the Lord I put him out of my mind, and sought to do others good.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 255.](#)

The Whites arranged for the Howlands to keep Henry for \$1 a week, which Otis Nichols promised to supply. But after a few weeks all pay was refused, and Henry lived with the Howlands for five years. They provided not only a good home but clothing as well, except for a little garment that Ellen brought each year, as did Hannah of old.

### Troubles in Europe and Their Supposed Significance

Quite naturally, those expecting the near advent of Christ, being students of prophecy, kept a close eye on world events. This was particularly so through 1848 as troubles involving many nations suddenly broke out in Europe. The sweeping, prophetic review given by Jesus on the Mount of Olives, recorded in [Matthew 24](#), [Mark 13](#), and [Luke 21](#), led to an interpretation of the troubles in Europe as an immediate precursor of the Second Advent. The words recorded in [Matthew 24:29, 30](#), with reference to the shaking of the powers in heaven, seemed coercive:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.

J. N. Loughborough, who was 16 in 1848, was an Adventist but not a part of the Sabbathkeeping group. He later wrote:

Many of the Adventist ministers who had not as yet heard the third angel's message saw this confusion [in Europe], and supposed it must be the rallying of the nations for "the battle of that great day of God Almighty."—GSAM, p. 272.

But the Adventists who had clung to their confidence in the fulfillment of prophecy on October 22 and who were now accepting the Sabbath of the fourth commandment as the sign or seal of the living God were devising ways and means of presenting their message to the world. "You are *too late* with your *sealing message*," their fellow

believers of earlier days asserted, “for the battle of the great day and the Lord’s actual coming are right upon us.”— *Ibid.*

In the vision in Dorchester on November 18 there was a call for publishing the third angel’s message. Now three weeks later, on the evening of the Sabbath, at Rocky Hill, Connecticut, Ellen White was again in vision. This one clarified an interpretation of [Matthew 24:29, 30](#).

December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of the shaking of the powers of the heavens. I saw that when the Lord said “heaven,” in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said “earth” he meant earth. The powers of the heavens are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of the earth are those that rule on the earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. The sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God.

Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The Holy City will come down through that open space.

I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken and that events come in order. War, and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also. I saw that the shaking of the powers in Europe is not, as some teach, the shaking of the powers of heaven, but it is the shaking of the angry nations.—[Letter 2, 1848](#), addressed to “The Scattered Remnant” (see also [Early Writings, 41](#)).

Ellen White was pregnant again. Through the winter months she and her husband traveled among the believers, bringing courage to their hearts and urging them to hold fast their faith. On Friday

evening, January 5, Ellen was given a view of the “sealing” of God’s people. She wrote:

At the commencement of the holy Sabbath, January 5, 1849, we engaged in prayer with Brother Belden’s family at Rocky Hill, Connecticut, and the Holy Ghost fell upon us. I was taken off in vision to the most holy place, where I saw Jesus still interceding for Israel.... Then I saw that Jesus would not leave the most holy place until every case was decided either for salvation or destruction.—[Ibid.](#), 36.

[155]

In quick succession last-day events were reviewed before her—the seven last plagues, the death decree, the deliverance at the voice of God, and then a scene she did not understand.

I asked my attending angel for an explanation of what I saw. He told me that I could see no more then, but he would shortly show me what those things that I then saw meant.—[Ibid.](#), 27.

The explanation came the next afternoon in another vision.

I saw four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and were on their way to accomplish it. Jesus was clothed with priestly garments. He gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised His hands, and with a voice of deep pity cried, “*My blood, Father, My blood, My blood, My blood!*”

Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand, and crying with a loud voice, “*Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold!* until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.”—[Ibid.](#), 38.

Still perplexed as to the full significance of what was passing before her, she again made inquiry:

[156] I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. He said to me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on earth; that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and they were about to let them go; but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the Father and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels and bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads.—[Ibid.](#)

### **View of Heaven and Other Worlds**

The visions clarifying certain points and confirming others were at this time quite frequent. In 1851 as Ellen White assembled the materials for her first book, she placed immediately following the vision that was just quoted an article titled “God’s Love for His People,” relating a vision that carries no date but is filled with encouragement and information:

I have seen the tender love that God has for His people, and it is very great. I saw angels over the saints with their wings spread about them. Each saint had an attending angel. If the saints wept through discouragement, or were in danger, the angels that ever attended them would fly quickly upward to carry the tidings, and the angels in the city would cease to sing. Then Jesus would commission another angel to descend to encourage, watch over, and try to keep them from going out of the narrow path.—[Ibid.](#), 39.

After being shown the order there is in heaven, she was given a view of other worlds. She wrote of the experience:

Wings were given me, and an angel attended me from the city to a place that was bright and glorious. The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song.

The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes; they were noble, majestic, and lovely. They bore the express image of Jesus, and their countenances beamed with holy joy, expressive of the freedom and happiness of the place. I asked one of them why they were so much more lovely than those on the earth. The reply was, “We have lived in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and have not fallen by disobedience, like those on the earth.”—[Ibid.](#), 39, 40.

She observed much of interest and significance on this seeming visit to another planet:

Then I saw two trees, one looked much like the tree of life in the city. The fruit of both looked beautiful, but of one they could not eat. They had power to eat of both, but were forbidden to eat of one. Then my attending angel said to me, “None in this place have tasted of the forbidden tree; but if they should eat, they would fall.”—[Ibid.](#), 40.

[157]

There she met “good old Enoch.” In conversation with him she asked if this was the place to which he was taken from the earth. He replied, “It is not; the city is my home, and I have come to visit this place.” Ellen observed that he moved about as if perfectly at home. Entranced with the planet she was visiting, she made a most natural request of her accompanying angel:

I begged of my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, “You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the

144,000, [Note: the wording is “you *with* the 144,000,” not “you as one of the 144,000.”] shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God.”— [Ibid.](#)

### Was It Ellen White or the Spirit of God?

There were some who grumbled about the visions given to Ellen White; of course, the visions were openly opposed by many of their former brethren in the Advent movement. As she made a record of what was shown to her in early January, 1849, she made a statement relating to attitudes toward the visions that is rather startling:

I saw the state of some who stood on present truth, but disregarded the visions—the way God had chosen to teach in some cases, those who erred from Bible truth. I saw that in striking against the visions they did not strike against the worm—the feeble instrument that God spake through—but against the Holy Ghost. I saw it was a small thing to speak against the instrument, but it was dangerous to slight the words of God.

[158] I saw if they were in error and God chose to show them their errors through visions, and they disregarded the teachings of God through visions, they would be left to take their own way, and run in the way of error, and think they were right, until they would find it out too late. Then in the time of trouble I heard them cry to God in agony, “Why didst Thou not show us our wrong, that we might have got right and been ready for this time?”

Then an angel pointed to them and said, “My Father taught, but you would not be taught. He spoke through visions, but you disregarded His voice, and He gave you up to your own ways, to be filled with your own doings.”—[Manuscript 2, 1849](#) (see also [Selected Messages 1:40](#)).

## Travels and Labors in Early 1849

January, February, and March of 1849 found James and Ellen White traveling among the groups of believers. Ellen's health was good, and she stood the strain well. The visions were quite frequent, some giving them directions as to the couple's labors, and others opening up important lines of instruction for the emerging church. In the latter part of January the Whites were in Topsham, Maine. On Thursday, January 18, Ellen was given the vision recorded in [Early Writings, 56-58](#), "Duty in View of the Time of Trouble." One morning in early February, during family prayers in the Howland home, she was given a vision in which she was shown that it was their duty to visit Dartmouth, Massachusetts. She later explained why:

Soon after, my husband went to the post office, and brought a letter from Brother Philip Collins, urging us to come to Dartmouth, for their son was very sick.—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 121](#).

When they reached Dartmouth they found 13-year-old Gilbert near death with whooping cough. He had suffered for nine weeks. As they prayed for the recovery of the boy, James White picked him up and held him in his arms, exclaiming, "You will not die, but live!" They believed that God would be glorified in his recovery. Eight days later when the Whites came again to the home, Gilbert was completely well and had gained four pounds ([Ibid.](#)). Also on this trip Sister Temple in Boston was healed, and Sister Hastings in New Ipswich, as recorded in [Ibid., 121-123](#). Both Mr. and Mrs. Hastings were sensitive in nature but fine Christians, and Ellen White wrote that her heart was knit with that of Sister Hastings as was the heart of David with Jonathan. [159]

James and Ellen White were back in Topsham on Wednesday, March 21, and were delighted to find little Henry well, happy, and growing. Journeying as they were called to do was sometimes far from pleasant. A little picture of conditions under which they sometimes traveled is provided in a letter written by James White on Thursday, March 22. To Brother and Sister Hastings, whose home they had just left, he reported:

We came to Boston in Brother Nichols' carriage, took the cars at 7:00 A.M., arrived in Portland at 12:30 P.M. Passed through the city to the other depot, took cars at 2:30 P.M. for North Yarmouth (eleven miles), then got into an old stage to ride sixteen miles more. This was our best route, as the boats do not run until April.

Ellen [nearly five months pregnant] stood it all well until we got into the stage. Here we were shook up and down, to and fro, for three hours in snowbanks and mud sloughs. I began to pray to God for help, and He gave us help.

On Friday, March 23, Ellen wrote to Leonard and Elvira Hastings:

I can write but little now, as I am weak, but the Lord is very good to poor, unworthy me. While riding in the stage Wednesday, I thought I should have to stop at a private house and go no farther, but James and I united in faith together that God would give me strength, and suddenly I felt a visible change for the better and arrived here without accident or harm. Praise the name of the Lord. Yesterday I was unable to sit up; today I am free from pain, though weak.

My faith is strong in God. I am ready to go anywhere He shall send me, knowing He will give me strength.—[Letter 4, 1849](#).

### **Another Important Vision**

Sabbath, March 24, was an interesting day for all who worshiped at the Howland home. Ellen White described it as: “a glorious meeting.” She wrote:

[160]

The first Sabbath we spent in Topsham was a sweet, interesting time. It seemed that Jesus Himself passed through our midst and shed His light and glory upon us. We all had a rich draught from the well of Bethlehem.

The Spirit came upon me and I was taken off in vision. I saw many important things, some of which I will write you before I close this letter. [See [Early Writings, 42-45](#).] I saw Brother Stowell of Paris was wavering upon the shut door. [The term shut door finds its origin in [Revelation 3:7 and 8](#) as related to the sanctuary in heaven, and in [Matthew 25:10](#) as used in the parable of the ten virgins. In the critical years 1844 to 1851, the term was employed by the pioneers of the Sda church at first in referring to the close of probation but soon in the broader sense as signifying the integrity of the advent awakening that reached its climax on October 22, 1844, as “a move of God.” (See JW Letter, July 21, 1850, on page 179 of this book, and chapter 16, “the shut and the open doors.”)] I felt that I must visit them, although it was fifty miles off and very bad going; I believed God would strengthen me to perform the journey.—[Letter 5, 1849](#).

Responding to the light received in the vision, they went at once to Paris and found things in a deplorable state. Paris was isolated, off the beaten path of travel. Discouragement and some fanaticism had set in. The believers had not met together to worship for more than two years ([Ibid.](#)). Ellen White reported:

We went and found they needed strengthening.... We spent one week with them. Our meetings were very interesting. They were hungry for present truth. We had free, powerful meetings with them. God gave me two visions while there, much to the comfort and strength of the brethren and sisters. Brother Stowell was established in the shut door and all the present truth he had doubted. Strength was given me from on high so that my journey wearied me not at all and my health has been better ever since.— [Ibid.](#)

There is no record of the two visions given to Ellen while on this visit to Paris, but before closing her letter to Brother and Sister

Hastings she wrote out what was shown her in the vision given March 24 in Topsham, and it was included in her first little book, *Experience and Views*. Today it may be found in *Early Writings* under the chapter title “The Open and the Shut Door,” from which we quote:

[161] Sabbath, March 24, 1849, we had a sweet and very interesting meeting with the brethren at Topsham, Maine. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us, and I was taken off in the Spirit to the city of the living God.

Then I was shown that the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ relating to the shut door could not be separated, and that the time for the commandments of God to shine out with all their importance, and for God’s people to be tried on the Sabbath truth, was when the door was opened in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary, where the ark is, in which are contained the ten commandments. This door was not opened until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the holy place of the sanctuary in 1844.

Then Jesus rose up and shut the door of the holy place, and opened the door into the most holy, and passed within the second veil, where He now stands by the ark, and where the faith of Israel now reaches.

I saw that Jesus had shut the door of the holy place, and no man can open it; and that He had opened the door into the most holy, and no man can shut it ([Revelation 3:7, 8](#)); and that since Jesus has opened the door into the most holy place, which contains the ark, the commandments have been shining out to God’s people, and they are being tested on the Sabbath question.—[Early Writings, 42](#).

The vision touched on many points, including “the mysterious knocking” near Rochester, New York. Spiritualism was emerging, and various other devices of Satan to mislead the people supposedly serving the Lord.

### Quandary over the Next Move

Returning from Paris to Topsham, James and Ellen were perplexed to know how to plan for the work during the coming summer. Wrote Ellen, “We had been expecting God to teach in such a way that we could not mistake duty, but we were disappointed, and as we had no light to go elsewhere, concluded to go to New York [State].” James wrote a letter to brethren in Utica requesting someone to meet them on their arrival there, and both James and Ellen signed the letter. In the experience immediately ensuing, we discover the unique way God then led them:

Soon I began to feel distressed and burdened. It seemed that I should be driven to distraction. I found relief by weeping when in my distress. James was afraid I would die and he threw the letter in the stove, as he told me afterwards, then knelt down by my bedside and prayed God to roll off the burden, and I was relieved.

[162]

The next morning I awoke perfectly free and clear; all my distress was gone and I felt assured God would open the way before us. James went to the [post] office and brought in a letter from Brother Belden, of Rocky Hill, Connecticut, giving us a strong invitation to come there and live with them; [they] said they should consider it a privilege to administer to our wants. We felt clear to go and felt that it was the way the Lord had opened.—[Letter 5, 1849](#).

The invitation was backed up with money to buy tickets, so leaving little Henry with the Howlands, they were soon on their way to Middletown, Connecticut, en route to Rocky Hill. They stopped off in Dorchester at the Nichols home, and while there Ellen continued her letter to Leonard and Elvira Hastings, joyfully declaring to them that the brethren in the Boston area were “steadfast in the faith, and strong in all the present truth” ([Ibid.](#)). She also learned that “the work is still going on in Connecticut.” She added, “The Lord has shown me in vision He was at work there and that what He was doing for His people was only a few drops before a more plentiful shower.”

James White added a postscript that gives a bit of atmosphere:

Here we are on our way to Connecticut. Ellen is very well or she could not have written so much. Brother Bates has returned from Vermont. He had a hard time, but God was with him and much good was done. He found or left quite a number in the Sabbath.

Now I want you to have a conference in New Hampshire as soon as June. I think there will be one in Paris, Maine, in June, and I think Brother Bates and I could attend both, and then another in Vermont. The people must have line upon line. The cause requires an effort by all of us in this way.— *Ibid.*

## Chapter 11—(1849) Beginning to Publish

[163]

Responding to the cordial invitation of Albert Belden, James and Ellen White went to Connecticut to live. Ellen was within two months of giving birth to her second child, and it seemed well to reside in Rocky Hill for a season. Of God's providence she wrote:

Sister Clarissa M. Bonfoey proposed to live with us. Her parents had recently died, and a division of furniture at the homestead had given her everything necessary for a small family to commence housekeeping. She cheerfully gave us the use of these things, and did our work. We occupied a part of Brother Belden's house at Rocky Hill. Sister Bonfoey was a precious child of God. She possessed a cheerful and happy disposition, never gloomy, yet not light and trifling.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 258.](#)

James was soon called to make a quick trip to New Hampshire and Maine to attend the conferences he had called to meet in June. He came back to Rocky Hill convinced that the time had come to publish the "truth" in a little paper. Had not the vision at Dorchester in November called for this? Had not Ellen after the vision turned to her husband and declared, "You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people" ([Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 125](#))? There was also the promise "As the people read, they will send you means with which to print."—[Ibid.](#) But where was the means?

Ellen White wrote of James's reaction to his feelings and to circumstances:

My husband was impressed that it was his duty to write and publish the present truth. He was greatly encouraged and blessed as he decided thus to do. But again he would be in doubt and perplexity as he was penniless. There were those who had means, but they

[164]

chose to keep it.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 259.](#)

The year before, he had gone into the field to mow hay to earn money on which to live and to travel to the Sabbath Conferences. Perhaps, he thought, he should again go into the field to earn money with which to print. He started out in search of work. But God had other plans, of which Ellen wrote:

As he left the house, a burden was rolled upon me, and I fainted. Prayer was offered for me, and I was blessed, and taken off in vision. I saw that the Lord had blessed and strengthened my husband to labor in the field one year before; that he had made a right disposition of the means he there earned; and that he would have a hundredfold in this life, and, if faithful, a rich reward in the kingdom of God; but that the Lord would not now give him strength to labor in the field, for He had another work for him; that if he ventured into the field he would be cut down by sickness; but that he must write, write, write, and walk out by faith.—[Ibid., 259, 260.](#)

### Writing for the Press

In harmony with the vision, James White took up not a scythe but a pen. It required faith, as he later recalled:

We sat down to prepare the matter for that little sheet, and wrote every word of it, our entire library comprising a three-shilling pocket Bible, *Cruden's Condensed Concordance*, and Walker's old dictionary, minus one of its covers. [We were] destitute of means; our hope of success was in God.—[The Review and Herald, June 17, 1880.](#)

Ellen was close by his side. She recalled: “When he came to some difficult passage we would call upon the Lord to give us the true meaning of His word.”—[Life Sketches of James White and](#)

Ellen G. White (1880), 260. While preparing copy for the new publication, James White sought out a printer in Middletown, one who would print an eight-page paper for a total stranger and wait for his pay until the prospective readers would send the editor donations to cover printing costs. On the third floor of a brick building in the heart of Middletown, James found such a man—Charles Pelton—and walked back to Rocky Hill to finish preparing copy. Its subject matter would be the Sabbath truth. He decided to name the paper *The Present Truth*, and introduced his first-page editorial with words quoted from [2 Peter 1:12](#):

[165]

“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the Present Truth.”

It was the Sabbath truth that burned in James White’s heart, and his writing related to various aspects of the integrity and importance of the seventh-day Sabbath. He had in mind quite a wide spectrum of articles that would be printed at first in eight-page sheets issued and sent out semimonthly. Then he would bind them in pamphlets of more permanent nature ([The Present Truth, July, 1849](#)). Printing in installments would make it possible to begin getting the truth out before he had time and means to complete all he wished to publish. The readers would be Adventists—those who had been through the first and second angels’ messages—and it would carry to them the Sabbath truth of the third angel’s message. Back and forth between Rocky Hill and Middletown, James White trudged the eight miles, limping at each step, first with copy and then with proofs. When the sheets were finally printed he borrowed Albert Belden’s buggy to transport the thousand copies of the precious document to the Belden home.

#### **Ellen White described its reception:**

When he brought the first number from the printing office, we all bowed around it, asking the Lord, with humble hearts and many tears, to let His blessing rest upon the feeble effort of His servant.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 260.](#)

Then there was the task of folding the papers and preparing them for mailing. White “directed the paper to all he thought would read it” and then, in a carpetbag, carried the copies to the post office.

### **The Proclamation of the Third Angel’s Message**

[166] What feelings must have arisen in the hearts of the little group of penniless Advent believers. They had been a part of a movement in which thousands sounded the first angel’s message, and they had witnessed unanimous support across the land in giving the second angel’s message. Now they were but a handful who saw the significance and urgency of the third message but felt commissioned to send it forth. The visions had given assurance that God’s blessing would attend James White as he wrote; that money would come in as the papers were sent out and read. It would be a success from the first, but most staggering of all—from this small beginning, it would be like “streams of light that went clear round the world” ([Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 125](#)). But perhaps this was not all remembered as James trudged the eight miles to the Middletown post office with the carpetbag full of papers.

### **The Content of the Paper**

The articles following White’s opening editorial explanation carried such titles as “The Weekly Sabbath Instituted at Creation, and Not at Sinai“: “The Sabbath a Perpetual Weekly Memorial“: “The Law of God, or the Ten Commandments“: “Scriptures Usually Quoted to Prove the Abolition of the Sabbath Examined.”

Two pages from the end of the first issue, he explained his motives, objectives, and sense of urgency in a one-column message addressed “Dear Brethren and Sisters.” Still building on the theme “present truth,” he explained and admonished:

I hope 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 present truth, or you will not be able to stand “in the battle in the day of the Lord” ([Ezekiel 13:5](#)).

The time has come when we must be wholehearted in the truth. Everything is to be shaken that can be; therefore those whose feet are not planted on the rock will be shaken all to pieces. Those only will be able to stand in the day of slaughter who shall be found keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.— [The Present Truth, July, 1849.](#)

There was a commendable balance in White's position. He was careful to explain:

The keeping of the fourth commandment is all-important present truth; but this alone will not save anyone. We must keep all ten of the commandments, and strictly follow all the directions of the New Testament, and have living, active faith in Jesus. Those who would be found ready to enter the saints' rest, at the appearing of Christ, must live wholly, **wholly** for Jesus now.— [Ibid.](#)

[167]

He declared that the little sheet was free to all, and added, "Those who are interested in *Present Truth*, and esteem it a privilege, are invited to help pay the expense." To swell the mailing list, he asked:

Will some brother or sister in each place where this sheet is received send me in plain writing the names and post office address of all who are seeking present truth. Write soon. My post office address is Middletown, Connecticut.—[Ibid.](#)

### **Birth of a Second Son, James Edson White**

The precise date when the *Present Truth* was brought home, prayed over, folded, addressed, and mailed is not recorded. It was late July, 1849. Almost simultaneously there was an important event in the White family, and that does carry a date. Ellen White wrote: "July 28, 1849, my second child, James Edson White, was born."—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 260.](#)

Reflected in the names that James and Ellen gave to their children is the high esteem in which they held certain of the stalwart Adventist families. The first son, Henry, also carried the name of Nichols, the loyal family in Dorchester, Massachusetts; the second son was named for Hiram Edson.

The six weeks of August and the first half of September James devoted to the publication of numbers 2, 3, and 4 of *Present Truth*, which gave the new mother a little time to make a good recovery.

Numbers 2 and 3 were sent out in August; by the time the September issue was being made up, James had one letter of response he could publish. It came from a J. C. Bowles, of Jackson, Michigan, and opens:

*Dear Brother White,*

Your first and second numbers of the *Present Truth* are received, and we are thankful to our heavenly Father for the light of the truth.

[168]

I would say, for your encouragement, that the little band here have received the truth on the Sabbath without an exception. And we thank the Lord for ever inclining Brother Bates's mind to come to Jackson. O sound the alarm, and let the message fly! I think it is the last one to the remnant.

We herein send you ten dollars for the spread of the truth. If you need it all, use it; if not, let Brother Bates have a part of it to travel with.— [The Present Truth, September, 1849.](#)

Bowles declared that he believed James White was doing the Lord's work. He added that if means would allow, he hoped the paper could be enlarged to include extracts of letters from readers.

The second August issue and the September issue carried several communications from Ellen White. These included her report of the vision of March 24, 1849, given at Topsham, Maine, dealing with the view of the heavenly sanctuary and the doors that were open and shut. She introduced this by the following note:

The Lord has shown me that it is my duty to relate to you, what He has revealed to me relating to the present truth, our present tried, scattered, and tempted state, and our duty in view of the coming judgments of God.—[Ibid., August, 1849.](#)

The September number included the vision given Ellen on Sabbath, January 5, 1849, with the commission to the angel to hold the four winds of strife, and a letter addressed “Brethren and Sisters.” This opens with the words “In this time of trial, we need to be encouraged.” The letter was intended to do just that.

As to financing this publishing effort, James White, in the fifth issue, published in December, wrote:

While publishing the four first numbers in Connecticut, the brethren sent in more means than was necessary to sustain the paper, which I have since used in traveling to visit the scattered flock.—[The Present Truth, December, 1849.](#)

The receipt for \$64.50 given by Charles Pelton, the printer in Middletown, stating that payment had been made in full for printing four issues, testifies to the fulfillment of the promise God gave to Ellen in the vision.

With the four numbers James White had planned now published and in the field, he, his wife, and their six-week-old son traveled to Paris, Maine, to attend a conference called to open on Friday, September 14. The little company of believers there had been devastated by some who manifested wild fanaticism. [169]

### **The Paris, Maine, Conference**

Besides James and Ellen White, Bates, Chamberlain, and Ralph were present at the conference; there were also friends from Topsham, including Stockbridge Howland. Ellen White later described the rather unusual meeting:

One F. T. Howland, a notable fanatic, was present. He had long troubled God’s children with his errors

and harsh spirit. Honest souls whom the Lord loved, but who had long been in error, were at the meeting. While [he was] engaged in prayer the Spirit of the Lord rested upon Brother Stockbridge Howland. His face was white, and a light seemed to rest upon it. He went towards F. T. Howland, and in the name of the Lord bid him leave the assembly of the saints. Said he, "You have torn the hearts of God's children and made them bleed. Leave the house, or God will smite you."

That rebellious spirit, never before known to fear or to yield, sprang for his hat and in terror left the house. The power of God descended something as it did on the day of Pentecost, and five or six who had been deceived and led into error and fanaticism fell prostrate to the floor. Parents confessed to their children, and children to their parents, and to one another.

Brother J. N. Andrews with deep feeling exclaimed, "I would exchange a thousand errors for one truth." Such a scene of confessing and pleading with God for forgiveness we have seldom witnessed. That meeting was the beginning of better days to the children of God in Paris, to them a green spot in the desert.

The Lord was bringing out Brother Andrews to fit him for future usefulness, and was giving him an experience that would be of great value to him in his future labors. He was teaching him that he should not be influenced by the experience of others, but decide for himself concerning the work of God.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 260, 261.

[170]

John Andrews was 20 years of age.

### **Among the Believers in Maine and New York State**

The next eight or ten weeks were spent visiting believers in Maine and New York State. The records are filled with accounts of God's providences as they traveled, beginning with the instant healing of Ellen's mother, who was threatened with tetanus from

stepping on a rusty nail, to the deliverance of Edson two months later, when it seemed that “an angel of God touched him.” Ellen White wrote about their working for a time in New York:

We then decided that it was our duty to labor in the State of New York. My husband felt a burden upon him to write and publish. We rented a house in Oswego, borrowed furniture from our brethren, and commenced housekeeping. There my husband wrote, published, and preached.—[Ibid.](#), 265.

He was able to arrange with R. Oliphant to print continuing numbers of the *Present Truth*—numbers 5 and 6, which came from the press in December, 1849.

### **A Hymnbook for the Sabbathkeeping Adventists**

The issue of the *Present Truth* that came out from Oswego in late December, 1849 (volume 1, No. 6), carried a note introducing a new publication in preparation—a hymnbook. It read:

*Hymns for God’s Peculiar People That Keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus.*

This is the title of a small collection of hymns of forty-eight pages now in the press, but will be out in a few weeks. It will contain a choice selection of hymns applicable to our faith and hope at this time. Those who have choice hymns that are appropriate to the present time will please forward them immediately to my address; and also, send in their orders for the hymnbook. As but a small edition will be wanted, they will come high. Price, twelve for one dollar—12 1/2 cents single copy.—[The Present Truth, December, 1849.](#)

Although the little hymnbook carried an 1849 date, it was not actually printed until early 1850 and was advertised in late March as “now ready.”

[171]

### The Little Paper Almost Died

A note from James White in this December issue of the *Present Truth*, published in Oswego, suggested the need of financial help. There was also a letter to Joseph Bates, emphasizing the point. These items triggered a crisis that almost killed the little paper. Here is the statement:

At the present time I am destitute of means, and am some in debt. Dear brethren, I know that you are ready and anxious to sustain the cause of truth. Therefore, I state the above to inform you of the present condition of the paper as to means. I hope that all who may esteem it a privilege, and are able, will send in their donations immediately.—[Ibid.](#)

During the past four years Joseph Bates, the older member of the pioneer group, highly esteemed and much loved by James and Ellen White, had written and published six helpful pamphlets of forty-eight to eighty pages each. He was convinced this, rather than a regular periodical, was the way to reach the people with the message. He wrote along this line to James White. Bates's letter led White to the depths of discouragement. On Thursday, January 3, he wrote to Leonard and Elvira Hastings:

As for the poor little paper, it has so little sympathy, and (I fear) so few prayers that I think it will die. I am in deep trial. The poor scattered sheep who do not see God's servants face to face once a year beg for the paper, but those who are verily glutted with the truth seem to have little or no interest in it. I received a letter from Michigan today, and as I walked and read, I wept to see how they were refreshed with No. 5, and O, my God, what shall I do? I want to work for God, but to publish is an uphill work unless there are many prayers ascending, and an interest to sustain a paper.

Just a week later he wrote to them again:

I had been in a hot furnace for some time on account of the burden I felt for the little paper. In this time of trial Brother Bates wrote me a letter that threw me down as low as I ever was, and remained so until last evening.

Brother Bates discouraged me about the paper, and I gave it up forever, but still the burden grew heavier and heavier on me. These texts kept ringing, Let your light so shine, et cetera. No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel, or bed, et cetera. Ye are the light of the world, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. In this depressed, miserable state of mind I came here last night with Ellen and Brother Holt.—JW to L. Hastings, January 10, 1850.

That evening Ellen was given a vision in regard to the *Present Truth*:

I saw the paper, and that it was needed. That souls were hungry for the truth that must be written in the paper. I saw that if the paper stopped for want of means, and those hungry sheep died for want of the paper, it would not be James's fault, but it would be the fault of those to whom God lent His money to be faithful stewards over, and let it lie idle; and the blood of souls would be upon their garments.

I saw that the paper should go; and if they let it die they would weep in anguish soon. I saw that God did not want James to stop yet; but he must *write, write, write, write*, and speed the message and let it go. I saw that it would go where God's servants cannot go.—Ibid. (see also [Manuscript 2, 1850](#)).

Rather triumphantly James could now write: "My way now seems to be made plain, and I hope all my brethren will do their duty, and no more, nor less." He declared:

I do not doubt for a moment Brother Bates's good will and kindness toward us; still he does not see everything correctly at one glance. I shall write him this

vision, which will, no doubt, make him see a little differently on some things.—[Ibid.](#)

He added, “I hope to be humble and faithful in my work. I need all your advice and prayers.” The account of the vision did change Bates’s mind.

[173] Concerning the home situation James wrote, “Ellen is well. She would write if she could, but has not time. She has some writing of her visions to do, and the babe is teething, and is troublesome.”—[Ibid.](#)

James went on with his writing for the paper. They continued to reside in Oswego; numbers 7 and 8 were published in March, number 9 in April, and number 10 in May. While he kept the emphasis on the Sabbath, the little paper was now, through letters from the readers, becoming an organ of general communication and exchange among the growing group of believers.

### **Death Invades the Camp**

While residing at Oswego, James and Ellen White received word of the sudden death of Mrs. Elvira Hastings, wife of Leonard Hastings, of New Ipswich, New Hampshire, on February 28. She was 42, the mother of four children, and a very devoted believer in the Sabbath and the Second Advent. Her death, caused by a ruptured appendix, called from James and Ellen letters of sympathy, written on March 18. Ellen opened her letter to the bereaved husband and father:

I hardly know what to say to you. The news of your wife’s death was to me overwhelming. I could hardly believe it and can hardly believe it now. God gave me a view last Sabbath night which I will write....

I saw that she was sealed and would come up at the voice of God and stand upon the earth, and would be with the 144,000. [The wording was similar to that spoken by the angel to Ellen White in the vision in which she seemed to be visiting another planet. She was reluctant to return to the earth, and the angel said

to her, “you must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds.”—[Early Writings, 40](#). There is no tension between this and Ellen White’s clear statement in *The Great Controversy* That this special company were those translated without seeing death (see [The Great Controversy, 648, 649](#).)] I saw we need not mourn for her; she would rest in the time of trouble, and all that we could mourn for was our loss in being deprived of her company. I saw her death would result in good.—[Letter 10, 1850](#).

Then she turned attention to the children. Addressing Arabella, the oldest, she urged her and the others to prepare to meet Jesus; then they would meet their dear mother, never to be separated from her. “Get ready to meet Jesus,” she urged. [174]

James, in his letter, pointed to the bright prospect of the Christian when “death will lose its iron grasp, and Elvira, who has been a faithful wife and mother, ... will join in the victor’s shout of triumph.... To that bright, overwhelming prospect I can point you for solid and enduring consolation.”—JW to L. Hastings, March 18, 1850. He then alluded to some problems, one of which touched the Hastings family, that only some sort of organization could remedy. He declared:

I hope the church will soon get right—when they can move in gospel order. Our conference here was excellent. The brethren all feel the importance of speeding the truth. Brother [G. W.] Holt is a powerful laborer in the vineyard. Brother Rhodes is strong in God....God has chosen men to write and preach His Word, and nothing has a lasting effect but the Word of God. It is true that God may occasionally call on those who have other gifts, but they are not messengers. “A messenger has a message,” said Ellen in vision.— *Ibid.*

### Fruitage of Public Ministry in Oswego

In describing their stay in Oswego, New York, Ellen White stated: “My husband wrote, published, and *preached*” ([Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 265](#); italics supplied). While there is little recorded concerning his preaching, one incident of significance has been reported.

As James White held meetings in Oswego he presented particularly the third angel’s message, emphasizing the Sabbath truth. Ellen White told the story in *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume II; and J. N. Loughborough, who heard it recounted by members of the Oswego church, told the story in detail in his book *The Great Second Advent Movement*. We quote from both, first from Ellen White:

[175]

At this time there was quite an excitement among the Methodists in Oswego. They held many meetings, and their leaders were very zealous, praying for and exhorting sinners to be converted.... The question was often asked, “What do you think of Brother M. [the county treasurer serving as Methodist lay preacher]? The Lord works through him in a special manner. He and his wife visit from house to house conversing with sinners, and praying for them, and Brother M. was engaged so zealously in prayer last night for the mourners who came forward to the anxious-seats, that he broke a blood vessel, and was carried to his home in a feeble condition.” They triumphed over the believers in present truth.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:123](#).

Two who asked the Whites what they thought of the county treasurer were 21-year-old Hiram Patch and his fiancée. They had attended the meetings of the lay evangelist, had listened to James White, and were undecided as to which group to join. Ellen White was given a vision that they witnessed. After the vision she told the young couple, “Wait and see the result of the matter.” She referred them to Scripture texts presented to her in vision, which read: “They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord: for they have begotten

strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions” ([Hosea 5:6, 7](#)).

Then, according to Loughborough, she said to Mr. Patch:

“I was told to say to you that in this case the statement of the text will be literally fulfilled. Wait a month, and you will know for yourself the character of the persons who are engaged in this revival, and who profess to have such a great burden for sinners.” Mr. Patch said, “I will wait.”—GSAM, p. 231 (see also JNL, in [The Review and Herald, February 24, 1885](#)).

During the next two weeks the treasurer broke a blood vessel in his stomach and was confined to his bed at home. The sheriff and constable took over the county finances and found a shortage in funds of an even \$1,000. On inquiry of the treasurer at his home, he declared he knew nothing of the money. At this point the deputy, who had gone to the back of the house and hid in a shed, brought in a money bag containing the missing \$1,000, which he had seen the treasurer’s wife hide in a snowbank. The treasurer’s evangelistic revival suddenly collapsed, and Hiram Patch and his fiancée, on the strong evidence they had witnessed, made their choice to join the Sabbathkeeping Adventists; they remained loyal members till their death. Significantly, as Loughborough pointed out, they had not been in the 1844 movement. [176]

### Vision of Future Events

The April issue of *Present Truth*, published in Oswego, carried in it an Ellen White letter addressed “To the ‘Little Flock.’” It presented a number of points of special interest opened up to her in vision on January 26, 1850 (see [Early Writings, 48-52](#)). The account closes with a glimpse of some phases of the great controversy story, related by an angel.

I then beheld the beauty and loveliness of Jesus. His robe was whiter than the whitest white. No language can describe His glory and exalted loveliness. All, all who keep the commandments of God, will enter in through

the gates into the city and have right to the tree of life and ever be in the presence of the lovely Jesus, whose countenance shines brighter than the sun at noonday....

“The saints will rest in the Holy City and reign as kings and priests one thousand years; then Jesus will descend with the saints upon the Mount of Olives, and the mount will part asunder and become a mighty plain for the Paradise of God to rest upon.

“The rest of the earth will not be cleansed until the end of the one thousand years, when the wicked dead are raised, and gather up around the city. The feet of the wicked will never desecrate the earth made new. Fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them—burn them up root and branch. Satan is the root, and his children are the branches. The same fire that will devour the wicked will purify the earth.”—[Ibid.](#), 51, 52.

### The Visit to Vermont and Maine

[177] Number 10 of *Present Truth*, published in May, 1850, carried on its last page a James White note that stated: “We now expect to leave this State in a few days, [They left May 15 (*Advent Review*, August, 1850.).] to spend some weeks visiting the dear brethren in the east; therefore the brethren may not expect to receive the *Present Truth* for a short time at least.”—[Ibid.](#) Ellen White put it this way: “We decided to visit Vermont and Maine. I left my little Edson, then nine months old, in the care of Sister [Clarissa] Bonfoey.” Henry was at Topsham with the Howlands. They ventured forth, labored hard, and suffered “many privations.” Of this she wrote:

We found the brethren and sisters in a scattered and confused state. Almost everyone was affected by some error, and all seemed zealous for their own opinions. We often suffered intense anguish of mind in meeting with so few who were ready to listen to Bible truth, while they eagerly cherished error and fanaticism.—[Life](#)

Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White (1880),  
268.

### The Gift of a Horse and Carriage

The journey to Sutton, Vermont, was climaxed by a forty-mile stagecoach trip that was very painful to Ellen. Her husband whispered words of courage and every ten miles, while the horses were being changed, she would slip into a hotel for a few minutes' rest lying down. Thinking of her children, one in Maine and the other in New York, Ellen reached a low point of discouragement. She especially thought of one woman who had said to her a few days before that it must be very pleasant to be riding through the country without anything to trouble her. The woman felt that it was just such a life as she should delight in (*Ibid.*, 269).

A night or two later she found herself saying, "It won't pay! So much labor to accomplish so little." She fell asleep and was soon dreaming:

I ... dreamed that a tall angel stood by my side, and asked me why I was sad. I related to him the thoughts that had troubled me, and said, "I can do so little good; why may we not be with our children, and enjoy their society?"

Said he, "You have given to the Lord two beautiful flowers, the fragrance of which is as sweet incense before Him, and is more precious in His sight than gold or silver, for it is a heart gift. It draws upon every fiber of the heart as no other sacrifice can. You should not look upon present appearances, but keep the eye single to your duty, single to God's glory, and follow in His opening providences, and the path will brighten before you. Every self-denial, every sacrifice, is faithfully recorded, and will bring its reward."—*Ibid.*, 269, 270.

[178]

The believers at Sutton saw the difficulties that attended James and Ellen White in their journeys, and united in making up a purse of \$175 with which to provide a horse and carriage to aid them in

their journeys. James and Ellen were given the choice of several horses brought for their inspection. The process of selecting one did not take long, for in vision the night before Ellen seemed to be at the crossroads appointed, and as horses were led before them the angel had given counsel.

The first was a high-spirited, rather nervous sorrel, and the angel said, "No." "Not that one" was the reply to the second, a large gray horse. Then, as a beautiful dapple chestnut, somewhat swaybacked, was led before them, the angel said, "That is the one for you." His name was Charlie, and he lightened their journey to Canada and through a period of many years (WCW, "Sketches and Memories of James and Ellen G. White," [The Review and Herald, April 25, 1935](#)). The labors of James and Ellen White in Melbourne, Canada East (Quebec), and Vermont, were hard but accompanied with the blessing of God evidenced in many ways. James White reported on July 21: "I saw tenfold more accomplished than I looked for in Vermont and Canada East."—JW to "Dear Brother," July 21, 1850.

## Chapter 12—(1850) The Summer the Tide Turned [179]

Present Truth, in ten issues published over a period of eleven months, heralded the third angel's message, with the Sabbath truth as the focal point. But the eye of the Lord saw a need extending beyond this—something that would bring men and women who had been in the great advent awakening to see that experience in its true light as the work of God. Ellen White wrote of this on August 4, 1850:

The Lord showed me that he, James, must take the testimonies that the leading Adventists published in 1844 and republish them and make them ashamed.—[Letter 8, 1850](#).

A few days before this James wrote of the instruction:

The Lord has shown Ellen that I must publish the testimonies of those who acknowledged the work done and the Advent move of God after 1844. Now this is my first work. I expect to get out a paper called the *Advent Review*, sixteen pages, the size of the *Present Truth*.

I shall, if I have means, put in a slice of Cook's *Testimony* and [Bates's] *Way Marks*, et cetera, et cetera. The cause calls for it. I hope to get out six numbers, three thousand copies each, [which] will cost \$250. I shall move as the means come in....

My way is onward. Men of Israel, help. Now is the time to work for God. For your encouragement I will state one case where the papers did much good. Someone requested me to send the paper to Betsey Benson. I sent two copies. She read one and sent the other to Sister Thomas. Both came into the truth. At the Johnson, Vermont, conference, Sister Thomas gave me \$25 to

[180]

publish with. So you see the cause will move on.—JW to “Dear Brother,” July 21, 1850.

In early August, James and Ellen White moved to the home of Brother Harris at Port Byron, New York. There he undertook to publish the journal reviewing the experiences called for through the vision. He could get it printed at nearby Auburn. He explained the object of the paper in an opening editorial statement:

Our design in this review is to cheer and refresh the true believer, by showing the fulfillment of prophecy in the past wonderful work of God, in calling out, and separating from the world and the nominal church, a people who are looking for the second advent of the dear Saviour.

Those who claim to be Adventists should, to be consistent, acknowledge the means that God in mercy has employed to bring them to the light of the Advent truth, and which has made them what they are. No one will deny the fact that it was the proclamation of the time, 1843, as it was written on the chart, that aroused the Advent people to look for the Lord.

If that alarm had not been given, none would have been waked up to see the true light, and those who rejoice in the “blessed hope” would now, doubtless, be covered up in the mist and darkness of the nominal church. We cannot, therefore, see the least consistency in the position of those who call themselves Adventists, and at the same time call the very means that has brought them to this scriptural faith and hope “a mistake,” “fanaticism,” “mesmerism,” and, as some have said, “of the devil.”

What! shall we rejoice in the “blessed hope,” and then turn round and curse the means that heaven has employed to bring us to its light and glory? God forbid it. Such a course, ... such a position, is not only inconsistent in the extreme, but blasphemous.—AR, August, 1850.

He declared his intention to republish the writings of the leaders in the Advent cause and to “show that they once boldly advocated, and published to the world, the same position, ... that we now occupy.” This he declared would show “who have Left the Original Faith.” [181]

As the content was to be largely a reprinting of earlier published materials, he was able to pull things together rather quickly, with four numbers put out in August and September. Added to this was an Extra in September bearing the same theme but carrying the signature of Hiram Edson in nearby Port Gibson.

### **Satan’s Vicious Attacks**

The great adversary did all within his power to block this move that would enlighten and inform perplexed Adventists who had not clearly seen their way since the October 22 disappointment. Correspondence of the time portrays the story vividly. First there were the warnings provided by the vision of July 29, 1850:

I saw the powers of darkness were rising. Satan has come down in great power knowing his time is short. Said the angel as he pointed to Israel, “Art thou rising? Thou art upon enchanted ground; dost thou not see it? Awake and arise and put on the strength of the Lord.” ...

I saw we must be constantly rising and keep the ascendancy above the powers of darkness. I saw singing to the glory of God often drove the enemy, and shouting would beat him back and give us the victory. I saw there was too little glorifying God in Israel and too little childlike simplicity.

I asked the angel why there was not more power in Israel. Said he, “Ye let go of the promises of God too quickly; press your petitions to the throne and hold on by faith. Believe ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them.”—[Letter 8, 1850](#).

What took place in rather quick sequence as James began to publish again, although soul-rending and faith-testing, came as no

surprise, for in addition to this general warning Ellen White was given specific advance warning. She wrote on August 15 to Stockbridge Howland and his wife:

[182]

The Lord showed me some weeks ago that as James would begin to republish what the leaders had written in '44 upon the truth, Satan would try to hinder us, but we must struggle for the victory and go on.—[Letter 12, 1850](#).

Here is what the great adversary did in attempting to hinder the work he hated, as portrayed by Ellen White in the August 15 letter:

Tuesday p.m. [August 6] James and I went to Port Byron with Brother Rhodes; he was to take the canal boat and go on his way to Michigan. It seemed as though we could hardly let him go. We knew not why we felt so. On our way home it seemed to me that Satan had stepped in and was troubling Edson. We found it even so. We found the child at the point of death.

James took his horse and carriage and started to overtake Brother Rhodes. He went five miles, overtook him, and brought him back. That night they prayed for Edson, and he has come up very fast since. Satan wanted to hinder the work of the Lord, so he afflicted the child, but he was beaten back by faith in God, and His name shall have the glory.

When Satan found he could not take the life of the child he tempted me that God had left me or the child would have been healed when we first prayed for him. I sank under this temptation in despair and was so until last Sabbath evening August 10. My heart seemed within me like lead, but God delivered me that eve, and Satan's power was broken.

But Satan, in his efforts to thwart the work of publishing, was relentless in his attacks. The letter continued:

The next he got hold of was Clarissa; she was sunken and discouraged. At the same time James was taken with the cholera morbus; he failed very fast until yesterday P.M. Then he made a request for us to pray for him. Brother Harris was gone to his work, so that it left only Sister Harris, Clarissa, and Sarah and me. We all felt unworthy to engage in the work, but we felt that the work of the Lord was hindered by his lying on a sickbed, and we knew unless God should deliver him, he could not get well.... We knew something must be done.

I anointed his head and stomach and bowels in the name of the Lord, then we took hold of faith for him; our united prayers went up to God, and the answer came.... James was healed every whit, the great distress he had had in his head was every whit removed, and he looked as though he had got the holy anointing; the fever and all pain left him, and he ate and was strengthened. He walked out upon his faith, harnessed his horse, and he and I went to Port Byron, one mile and a half, and back. He gained strength very fast; he is quite strong today [August 15]. Praise the Lord.

[183]

Even so, Satan was not content to cease his buffetings. Continued Ellen White in her letter to the dear friends at Topsham:

When Satan found his power was completely broken upon him [James], he went to the child again; he woke us crying at the top of his voice. He seemed to have colic, and we went up to the chamber, anointed his stomach with oil and prayed over him, and rebuked Satan, and he had to flee. We heard no more from him till morning. He is quite well today, but rather weak.—  
[Ibid.](#)

At this point in the narrative Ellen White referred to the warning mentioned earlier that Satan would hinder them, but they must struggle for the victory and go on. She commented:

It has been just so. He knows this work will hurt his cause and save some jewels. That is why he rages so, but he is driven back.—[Ibid.](#)

### **Special Significance Disclosed by Vision**

The letter to the Howlands recounting the harrowing experiences in confronting the great adversary was written on Thursday, August 15. On Sabbath, August 24, she was shown in vision more of what was back of the experience, and its fuller significance. She made reference to still another attempt on their lives. Beginning with the healing of Edson:

I saw our acting out faith and sending for Brother Rhodes after he had started on his journey saved the life of the child, for God heard the prayers of Brother Rhodes and healed Edson. I saw the child was not afflicted because I held him dear as an idol, but Satan wanted to sadden our hearts and cause the nominal Adventists to triumph and say “Where is their God?” and to hinder the work of God in papers coming out....

[184]

I saw it was the work of the enemy, as we were going from Oswego to Volney, to destroy us on the way by our being thrown from the wagon. I saw the angels of Satan triumphed as they were carrying out their purposes. But I saw the angels of God were around, and as we fell, their arms were beneath us that we might not be injured. I saw the hands of one of the angels were busy at work and wrought for us or we should have been destroyed by Satan....

I saw these efforts of Satan were to hinder the paper coming out, for the lines that were being republished were written in the Spirit of God and would rejoice the hearts of the trusting ones.... I saw that the paper would strengthen the things that remain and would help build up God’s people in the most holy faith.—[Manuscript 7, 1850.](#)

Ellen White was also shown in the vision that much of the same type of conflict was still before God's people. She had been warned:

We must buckle on the whole armor and take the shield of faith and we should be enabled to stand and the fiery darts of Satan could not move us.—[Ibid.](#)

Four issues of the *Advent Review* were published at Oswego during August and September. The type was saved, and a forty-eight-page combined number was issued as a "Special" almost immediately. During the next few years it was given a wide distribution.

### **The Third Angel's Message to be Made Plain by a Chart**

In mid-September James White laid aside publishing the *Advent Review*, as there were conferences to attend at Sutton, Vermont, September 26 to 29; at Topsham, Maine, October 12 and 13; and at Fairhaven, Massachusetts, October 19 and 20. The Whites could not visit Massachusetts without spending a little time at the Otis Nichols home, in Dorchester, near Boston. So on Monday, the day after the Fairhaven conference, they made their way there. That night, while in the home of a man whose business was lithographing, Ellen White was given instruction in vision. She wrote of it to Reuben Loveland and his wife, whom she had recently met on a visit to Vermont:

[185]

There in the night God gave me a very interesting vision, the most of which you will see in the paper.—  
[Letter 26, 1850.](#)

In her letter to the Hastings family she went into more detail concerning this vision and its call for an advance step in proclaiming the third angel's message:

On our return to Brother Nichols' the Lord gave me a vision and showed me that the truth must be made plain upon tables and it would cause many to decide for the truth by the third angel's message, with the two former being made plain upon tables.—[Letter 28, 1850.](#)

In this vision she was also shown that which would give James White courage to continue publishing:

I also saw it was as necessary for the paper to be published as for the messengers to go, for the messengers need a paper to carry with them containing present truth to put in the hands of those that hear, and then the truth would not fade from the mind. And that the paper would go where the messengers could not go.—*Ibid.*

Work on the new chart was begun at once, and opportunity was given to tell the brethren about it in the issue of *Present Truth* that James got out the next month:

The Chart. A chronological chart of the visions of Daniel and John, calculated to illustrate clearly the present truth, is now being lithographed under the care of Brother Otis Nichols, of Dorchester, Massachusetts. Those who teach the present truth will be greatly aided by it. Further notice of the chart will be given hereafter.—*The Present Truth, November, 1850M.*

By late January, 1851, the chart was ready and advertised for \$2. James White was much pleased with it and offered it free to “those whom God has called to give the message of the third angel” (*The Review and Herald, January, 1851*). Some generous donations had helped meet the expense of publication.

[186]

### **A Marked and Significant Change in the Tide**

Turning the pages of the publications and perusing the extant letters as 1850 gave way to 1851 reveals a marked change in the tide as it related to the emerging church. While James or Ellen White would in 1849 or early 1850 write in gratitude for the receipt of \$1 to aid the cause, in January, 1851, James could publish a list of significant contributions toward the publication of “the chart“:

Brethren in Connecticut have paid \$40; David Arnold, \$5; A. R. Morse, \$10; Harvey Childs, \$5; Reuben Loveland, \$5.—*Ibid.*

Two weeks later he reported that Otis Nichols had contributed \$75.

New names were beginning to appear in correspondence, and published reports indicated larger numbers were attending the conferences called here and there. Preaching forces were materially increased with S. W. Rhodes, John N. Andrews, and George W. Holt traveling from place to place, and Elders Hollis and Lathrop also in the field (JW to “Dear Brother,” July 21, 1850), encouraging the believers and through their ministry adding to their numbers. A different tone developed in the later months of 1850 in James White’s editorial statements and notes, in the Ellen White communications, and in the letters from the field written by both “messengers” and laymen. A firm foundation had been constructed through the late 1840s and the time for marked advance was approaching. The *Advent Review* was doing an effective work, fulfilling its God-appointed mission.

Reports of the conferences held among the believers took on a brighter turn, as evidenced in the report of the gathering at Sutton, Vermont, from Thursday to Sunday, in late September. Hear James White on this:

Conferences—The blessing of the Lord attends such meetings in a wonderful manner. The Vermont conference, held at Sutton, September 26, 27, 28, and 29, was well attended, and we are sure resulted in much good. The number of believers present was about seventy. Eight of our dear brethren from Canada East were among the number, strong in the “commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

We anticipated a great trial at that meeting, but were very happily disappointed. True, some trial arose in consequence of the introduction of certain views, relative to the judgment, et cetera, upon which we could not at first agree, but God helped us to discuss the subjects upon which we differed, with profit, and to commit them and ourselves to Him in fervent prayer. Before we left the place of meeting, our trials were all removed. Errors

[187]

were confessed, and perfect union, as sweet as heaven, was felt among us all. The readiness of all to receive truth in exchange for error has proved sincerity of heart, and has created union, and a confidence in each other, never to be lost.

The fact that God is thus uniting those who keep the commandments is cheering to every soul that loves God and His holy law, and is one strong evidence that He has stretched out His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people.—AR, November, 1850.

On the Monday before this conference opened, a very significant vision was given to Ellen White in which she was shown that “the scattering time” was just coming to a close and “the gathering time” was dawning. She wrote:

The Lord showed me that He had stretched out His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people, and that efforts must be redoubled in this gathering time. In the scattering time Israel was smitten and torn; but now in the gathering time God will heal and bind up His people.

In the scattering, efforts made to spread the truth had but little effect, accomplished but little or nothing; but in the gathering when God has set His hand to gather His people, efforts to spread the truth will have their designed effect. All should be united and zealous in the work.—[The Present Truth, November, 1850](#) (see also [Early Writings, 74](#)).

### **Many Visions Giving Insights and Guidance**

As if in preparation for this day when new impetus would be given to the cause of God, through the summer and fall Ellen White had received an unusually large number of visions giving helpful insights and definite guidance.

On June 27, 1850, she was shown the experience of those who receive the “mark of the beast” and suffer the “seven last plagues,” and she wrote:

Then I realized, as never before, the importance of searching the Word of God carefully, to know how to escape the plagues which the Word declares shall come on all the ungodly who shall worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands.—[Ibid.](#), 65.

Before the vision closed she was again shown the reward of the faithful:

Then I was pointed to the glory of heaven, to the treasure laid up for the faithful. Everything was lovely and glorious. The angels would sing a lovely song.... I joined with them in their songs of praise and honor to the Lamb, and every time I opened my mouth to praise Him, I felt an unutterable sense of the glory that surrounded me.—[Ibid.](#), 66.

The angel gave counsel as to what must be done to prepare for the days ahead. He admonished, “Get ready, get ready, get ready.”

On August 24 she was shown the significance of the “mysterious rapping” at Hydesville, near Rochester, New York, which marked the revival of modern spiritualism. She was told it would spread and increase and would be accompanied by miraculous powers ([Ibid.](#), 59).

At Oswego on September 7 she was shown the “great work” that must be done for the Lord’s people “before they could stand in the battle in the day of the Lord” ([Ibid.](#), 69).

At the conference in Sutton in late September, she was given a vision in which she was shown the “last plagues and the judgment” and then carried through to the new earth. It was helpful in gaining an understanding of the order of some of the events yet to come ([Ibid.](#), 52-54).

### **A Summary of Other Important Visions**

Taking up work in Paris, Maine, in late October, Ellen White wrote for publication in the November issue of the *Present Truth*

an inclusive summary of other visions given within recent weeks.

[189] Briefly, the following topics were dealt with:

1. I saw that the message “Sell that ye have and give alms” had not been given by some in its clear light; that the true object of the words of our Saviour had not been clearly presented. I saw the object of selling was not to give to those who are able to labor and support themselves, but to spread the truth. It is a sin to support and indulge those who are able to labor, in idleness....

2. Some, I saw, had erred in praying for the sick to be healed before unbelievers.... We should follow the example of Jesus. He put unbelievers out of the room, then healed the sick; So we should seek to be separated from the unbelief of those who have not faith....

3. Then I was pointed back to the time that Jesus took His disciples away alone, into an upper room, and first washed their feet, and then gave them to eat of the broken bread, to represent His broken body, and juice of the vine to represent His spilled blood. I saw that all should move understandingly, and follow the example of Jesus in these things, and when attending to these ordinances, should be as separate from unbelievers as possible.

4. Then I was shown that the seven last plagues will be poured out, after Jesus leaves the sanctuary. Said the angel, “It is the wrath of God and the Lamb that causes the destruction or death of the wicked. At the voice of God the saints will be mighty and terrible as an army with banners; but they will not then execute the judgment written. The execution of the judgment will be at the close of the 1,000 years.”—[The Present Truth, November, 1850.](#)

She reviewed the events that will take place during the millennium, such as examining the books of records, as revealed in the vision at Sutton, Vermont, and delineated in [Ibid., 52-54.](#)

5. I also saw that the shepherds should consult those in whom they have reason to have confidence, those who have been in all the messages, and are firm in all present truth, before they advocate any new point of importance, which they may think the Bible sustains.

Then the shepherds will be perfectly united, and the union of the shepherds will be felt by the church. Such a course I saw would prevent unhappy divisions, and then there would be no danger of the precious flock being divided, and the sheep scattered, without a shepherd.—[Ibid.](#)

[190]

### **A Time for Development of the Doctrinal Structure**

In the perspective of time by which we are advantaged, what may not have been so easily seen by the pioneers through the years 1845 to 1850—“the scattering time”—may now be easily seen as the time of the development of a doctrinal structure, a time when the body of truth was being firmly fitted together, piece by piece. It was a time when those involved would have been ill-prepared to herald a message not yet understood in its fullness and its interrelationships. The “scattering time”—when attempts to spread the truth accomplished little—allowed the painstaking, thorough Bible study and the confirming work of the Spirit of God through the visions, which resulted in the invulnerable structure of truth to present to the world.

But now a change had come. The “messengers” in the field clearly detected it. Joseph Bates wrote to James White on November 4, 1850. In closing his report he writes enthusiastically:

So you see, dear brother, that in places where all was dark and dreary, a few weeks since, light is now springing up. Then let all the swift messengers that God has called, and still is calling into the field, to give the loud cry of the third angel, move forward.—[Ibid.](#)

The message of the vision given on September 23 takes on unique meaning:

I saw that it was a shame for any to refer to the scattering for examples to govern us now in the gathering; for if God does no more for us now than He did then, Israel would never be gathered. It is as necessary that the truth should be published in a paper, as preached.—[Ibid.](#)

Of the rather extended tour James and Ellen White took in the spring and summer of 1850, Ellen wrote later:

[191]

In 1850 my husband and I visited Vermont, Canada, New Hampshire and Maine. The meetings were held in private houses. It was then next to impossible to obtain access to unbelievers. The disappointment of 1844 had confused the minds of many, and they would not listen to any explanation of the matter.—[The Review and Herald, November 20, 1883.](#)

It was in connection with this trip that the marked change seemed to be taking place. At the conference held at Johnson, Vermont, July 6 and 7, there was a Mr. Heman Churchill present who had had nothing to do with the 1844 experience who took his stand for the “present truth.” The strictest view of the shut door would have precluded this. James White explained with a sense of surprise:

One brother, who had not been in the Advent, and had made no public profession of religion until 1845, came out clear and strong on the whole truth. He had never opposed the Advent, and it is evident that the Lord had been leading him, though his experience had not been just like ours. Such, who come into the truth at the eleventh hour, may expect great trials.—[AR, August, 1850.](#)

Just a year later James White would declare:

Now the door is open almost everywhere to present the truth, and many are prepared to read the publications who have formerly had no interest to investigate.—[Ibid., August 19, 1851.](#)

Clearly the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had come to “the gathering time.” James White used this term as he reported in November, 1850, of Mrs. Bates, the wife of Joseph Bates, taking her stand for the Sabbath.

### **The Crucial Yet Productive Years of the “Scattering Time”**

It will be appropriate to further review and sum up what took place in the emerging remnant church in the six years between 1844 and 1850. A hundred or more years later, some have been rather amazed and baffled because the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were not engaged in public evangelism, preaching “the message” immediately after the 1844 disappointment. “What message?” might be asked. And what’s more, “Who would listen?”

[192]

First of all, there must be the lapse of some time when the prejudice of the world against the 1844 experience would diminish. But most important, they had to determine what was the truth, what was the message.

Of prime importance was the Advent preaching that swept through the land in the early 1840s and was also heard in other parts of the world. Was it a movement led by God, or was it just a delusion, as many were claiming? The pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as they carefully reviewed the experience, could not dismiss the marked influence of the Spirit of God in the work, and the absence of fanaticism. This, together with what the experience did for them, led to the unalterable conclusion that the movement was ordained by God. Bible study backed up by the visions given to Ellen Harmon attested to this, giving a touch of certainty to the messages of the first and second angels of [Revelation 14](#).

Next, why had not Christ come? And if the 1844 experience was valid, what *did* take place on October 22, 1844? The pioneers worked their way through this, finding the explanation in an understanding of the sanctuary question in its fullness. Christ was now ministering in their behalf in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. In connection with this they found “doors” “open” and “doors” “shut” that were easily linked with the close of probation,

[Note: see [chapter 16](#) for elaboration.] the full extent of which was not at first seen.

Almost immediately in their experience, the pioneers were brought face to face with a prophet in their midst. It was unexpected, but it was Biblical. The message met their needs, and the gift, when tested by Bible criteria, measured up fully. This was a great aid but also an embarrassment, because of the natural prejudice against “visions.”

[193] Before the 1844 disappointment, the third angel’s message had not been clearly seen. The pioneers having been through the first and the second, the third angel’s message began to take on significance. It related to the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, although certain features of the message seemed to be a mystery. As the sanctuary in heaven was studied, the Sabbath of the fourth commandment took on special meaning. The visions given to Ellen White helped to clarify this. The Sabbath would be a test of allegiance to God, and as worship of the “beast and his image” and the receiving of his “mark” ([Revelation 14:9, 10](#)) became better understood, the pioneers saw it as “present truth” and were confronted with the responsibility of sounding that message to the world. It was staggering! A great and vitally important message, but only a handful of people who comprehended its meaning! And these, for the most part, were virtually penniless.

They were still close to the 1844 disappointment, and only those who had been with them in the Advent Awakening would give any attention at all to what they might have to say. They studied “doors” in the heavenly sanctuary, open and closed, but there were no open doors before them to the religious world outside of the Adventists. So the burden of the third angel’s message as first understood was for their former brethren. However, they gradually perceived that there were those who had not rejected the Advent message in 1844, and that there were children below the age of accountability for whom Christ ministered in the heavenly sanctuary.

Then to James White, a youthful advocate of the Advent message, a schoolteacher who had the benefit of a year in school, came the message, presumably from heaven, that he must publish the positions of truth ardently held. He was inexperienced so far as editing and publishing were concerned, and with no financial backing.

Admonished to start out by faith and write, write, write, he took his pen and began in the issuance of the four numbers of *Present Truth*. Through the school of experience he rather quickly learned the demands of writing, proofreading, publishing, circulating, and financing the printed page. God was preparing him for large responsibilities.

He and his wife were buffeted by brethren who misunderstood him, hounded by poverty, bereaved by separation from children so they could travel and minister to the scattered flock. But they enjoyed a rich experience in God, and with wholehearted dedication they gained the preparation needful for the work that was before them. All this was in “the scattering time,” 1844 to 1850. Now they were prepared to enter the openings of “the gathering time.” The message was clear. Doctrinal beliefs were for the most part well established. Wrote Ellen White on December 13, 1850, “We know that we have the truth.”—[Letter 30, 1850](#).

[194]

### **Taking Up Residence in Maine**

Returning to Maine, James and Ellen White passed through Portland and on to Topsham, with their eyes on Paris (Paris Hill today). They had been traveling for some weeks, and they wanted to take little Henry with them to see Ellen’s parents, so they headed for Gorham and “Grandma’s and Grandpa’s” home. The young mother wrote:

Friday [October 25], Brother Howland’s family and my little boy went with us to Gorham to spend the Sabbath with our parents. Found them strong in the faith. We had a good season with them. We parted with them Sunday sorrowful, because we were obliged to part, but rejoicing that we were of one faith and that soon we should meet if faithful, nevermore to part.—  
[Letter 26, 1850](#).

When James and Ellen White came to Paris they anticipated that they would reside there through the winter. On November 1, 1850, she wrote, “We shall stay here at Paris some little time,” and added:

James is now getting out a paper here. It is an excellent place to get out the paper.—[Ibid.](#)

From a letter written to the Hastings family a week later, we learn more:

Our home is in Paris at Brother Andrews' within a few steps of the post office and printing office. So shall stay here some little time. This is a very kind family, yet quite poor. Everything here is free as far as they have. We do not think it right to be any expense to them while here.—[Letter 28, 1850.](#)

The Whites arranged to stay at the Andrews home as boarders ([Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 278.](#))

[195]

### **Significant Conferences at Paris and Topsham**

On November 16 and 17, soon after the Whites settled in Paris, a conference was held. Ellen White described it in a letter to friends in Vermont:

Our last conference was one of deep interest. Two were dug from beneath the rubbish. The present truth was presented in its clear light and it found way to the hearts of the erring. Before the meeting closed all were upon their knees, some were crying for mercy that had been coldhearted and indifferent, others were begging for a closer walk with God and for salvation.

It was as powerful a time as I ever witnessed. The slaying power of God was in our midst. Shouts of victory filled the dwelling. The saints here seem to be rising and growing in grace and the knowledge of the truth.—[Letter 30, 1850.](#)

Two months before, at the conference held at Topsham, October 12 and 13, there had been similar exciting experiences. Ellen White wrote of it November 7, just before the Paris conference:

Our conference at Topsham was one of deep interest. Twenty-eight were present; all took part in the meeting. Sunday the power of God came upon us like a mighty, rushing wind. All arose upon their feet and praised God with a loud voice. It was something as it was when the foundation of the house of God was laid. The voice of weeping could not be told from the voice of shouting. It was a triumphant time. All were strengthened and refreshed. I never witnessed such a powerful time before.—[Letter 28, 1850](#).

Was the emerging church entering upon a period of emotionalism? Was this exciting and seemingly satisfying experience one that was to be encouraged and depended upon? In a vision given to Ellen White on December 24, God sounded a solemn warning, a warning that not only related to these exciting occasions but had a clear bearing on some unusual experiences of the previous two years in talking in unknown tongues.

[196]

## **Chapter 13—(1851) The First Winter of “The Gathering Time “**

Clearly a new day was dawning for the remnant church. But as it took on life it was threatened by certain perils. One of these was in the form of ecstatic experiences in connection with the conferences in Topsham and Paris, Maine, held in the autumn of 1850. James and Ellen White were present at both, and they partook of the experiences. Earlier ecstatic experiences, in the form of speaking in unknown tongues came to mind. There had been four such times in the previous thirty months. Two were of major importance, two less significant. Before presenting the restraining cautions of the vision of December 24, 1850, we should review these experiences. One led to encouragement and gave impetus to the work of God; the other misled in a doctrinal line. We present the affirmative first; the data for this comes largely from a Hiram Edson account, dated November 26, 1849, published in *Present Truth*.

### **The Rescue of S. W. Rhodes**

S. W. Rhodes had labored diligently and effectively in the Advent Awakening in 1843 and 1844. He was a man of means, which he dedicated to spreading the message. When the time of the expected advent of Christ passed in 1844, Rhodes was humiliated. He withdrew from public contact and secluded himself in a forest in the heart of New York State, sustaining himself by hunting and fishing and raising a small garden. Hiram Edson knew where Rhodes was and twice journeyed by foot to the hideout and tried to persuade him to rejoin his brethren. Both attempts failed.

[197]

On November 7, 1849, Edson started a third time in an attempt to rescue Rhodes. After walking fourteen miles, he felt impressed to turn back. With Rhodes uppermost in Edson's mind, he attended the conference at Centerport, New York, on Sabbath and Sunday, November 17 and 18. There he met Brethren Ralph and Belden, who

had come from Connecticut, and James and Ellen White, who had come from nearby Oswego. The meeting was a "refreshing season."

At the close of the conference, Edson told Ralph about Rhodes. He discovered that both he and Ralph were impressed that they should visit Rhodes together. That evening a half dozen joined in a season of prayer over the Rhodes case. Hiram Edson reported:

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

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

The group knew that neither James nor Ellen White had much faith in the interest that was felt for Rhodes, and she cautioned Ralph "to be sure to get a clear duty from the Lord." She told him that she thought Edson's feelings for Rhodes were mere sympathy. Edson continues the story:

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

From the account of the vision as recorded in *Present Truth* we quote the heart of the message:

While in vision the angel pointed to the earth, where I saw Brother Rhodes in thick darkness; but he still bore the image of Jesus. I saw it was the will of God that Brethren Edson and Ralph should go.

[198]

Then I was shown Brother Rhodes's past labors in the Advent cause; that he had been mighty in word and in deed. I saw him standing before the people, with the Bible in his hand, and a stream of light coming from his mouth, which found its way to the hearts of the people.... I saw that he had proclaimed the Advent with great confidence, and had shown his faith by his works, and when the time passed, the disappointment was very great....

I saw that Jesus was pleading His blood for Brother Rhodes, and that the angel was ready to enroll his name, as soon as he would come out of that dark place, and stand on all the present truth.... I saw that Brethren Edson and Ralph should make him believe there was hope and mercy for him, and tear him away, then he would come among the flock; and that angels would attend them on their journey.—[Ibid.](#), 35.

Shortly after the vision, the two men started on their way to rescue Rhodes. They found him at work in a field by the Black River. They told him that they had come in the name of the Lord to get him to go with them to see the brethren and go with them into the kingdom. Again there was a speaking in an unknown tongue. Hiram Edson as eyewitness reported:

God displayed His convincing power, and Brother Ralph spoke in a new tongue, and gave the interpretation in power, and in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost.—[Ibid.](#)

Triumphantly, Hiram Edson reported:

Brother Rhodes finally consented to come with us, and went about arranging his business in order to leave.... Friday, November 23, we returned as far as Brother Arnold's of Volney.... They were all rejoiced to see Brother Rhodes.—[Ibid.](#)

The account closes with these words:

He stands firm in all the present truth; and we heartily bid him Godspeed as he goes to search out and feed the precious, scattered flock of Jesus.—[Ibid.](#)

Records of the influence and work of Elder Rhodes following this experience attest to his effective ministry.

One point in connection with this experience is of particular interest, namely, the coolness of Ellen White toward the demonstration of speaking in an unknown tongue. She was unconvinced until a vision was given to her directly by God that the rescue of Elder Rhodes was in harmony with God's will. [199]

### **A Demonstration of Tongues that Misled**

A little more than a year before this there was a demonstration of tongues that placed endorsement on an erroneous interpretation of Scripture in connection with Sabbathkeeping. Joseph Bates, the apostle of the Sabbath truth, at the outset took the position that the Sabbath began at evening. Taking into account time problems in different parts of the world, Bates believed that the proper time to commence the Sabbath was equatorial time, or 6:00 P.M., the year around. This concept was generally accepted as men and women from the Adventist ranks began to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Writing from Berlin, Connecticut, on July 2, 1848, James White reported:

There has been some division [in Connecticut] as to the time of beginning the Sabbath. Some commenced at sundown. Most, however, at 6:00 P.M. A week ago Sabbath we made this a subject of prayer. The Holy Ghost came down; Brother Chamberlain was filled with the power. In this state he cried out in an unknown tongue. The interpretation followed, which was this: "Give me the chalk. Give me the chalk."

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

divided by crossing horizontal and vertical lines and the figures, 12, 3, 6, and 9 written in, as on the face of a clock].

This represents Jesus' words. Are there not twelve hours in the day? This figure represents the day or the last half of the day. Daylight is half gone when the sun is south or halfway from each horizon, at twelve o'clock. Now go each way six hours, and you will get the twelve-hour day. At any time a year, the day ends at 6:00 P.M. Here is where the Sabbath begins at 6:00 P.M.—JW to "My Dear Brother," July 2, 1848.

[200] James White added, "Satan would get us from this time. But let us stand fast in the Sabbath as God has given it to us and Brother Bates. God has raised up Brother Bates to give this truth. I should have more faith in his opinion than any other man's."— Ibid.

With the seeming strong evidence that accompanied the confirmation of the six o'clock time, Sabbathkeeping Adventists continued to observe it until Bible study and a confirming vision in 1855 led them, assembled in the conference in Battle Creek, to observe the Sabbath from sundown to sundown.

There were two other experiences, both of minor significance, one calling for John Andrews to enter the ministry and the other in connection with the ordination of Washington Morse to the gospel ministry. [See the series *sdas* and ecstatic experiences, [The Review and Herald, March 15, 22, and 29, 1973.](#)] In all the cases mentioned, those involved were of unquestioned integrity.

### **Stabilizing Counsels Given by Vision**

It was at this time and under these circumstances that God stepped in at Paris, Maine, in December, 1850, with His stabilizing counsels. Ellen White wrote of it:

We were united in praying last evening [December 24] for the Spirit of the Lord to fall upon us. God heard our earnest cries. I was taken off in vision. I saw how great and holy God was. Said the angel, "Walk carefully

before Him, for He is high and lifted up and the train of His glory fills the temple.”—[Manuscript 11, 1850](#).

Had they assembled on this Christmas Eve in expectancy of circumstances that would lead to shouting, and possibly being “slain by the Lord”? Were they looking for a repetition of what took place on the day of Pentecost? The circumstances, the timing, and the nature of the message given in the vision would strongly indicate that this might well have been so.

Had we been in the group that evening, how carefully we would have watched all that took place and with what attention we would have listened as Ellen spoke while in vision. The sentences were short and disconnected—just expressions dropped as she watched a portrayal in vision. In this case, these utterances were very enlightening. We quote relevant portions as written down by some-  
one present:

[201]

Great and holy. Walk carefully before Him. High and lifted up. Everything in perfect order. Know what thou doest. Must be so. Move in order, move in order. A meaning to everything. Yea, how perfect, how beautiful, how lovely, is this order.—[Manuscript 10, 1850](#).

Souls are coming to the knowledge of the truth. The burden not on him [James White] alone.—[Ibid](#). Look ye, let them go. They have not moved in God at all times. Encourage it not, for it will tend to destruction. There has been a stretching beyond. Look beyond the mortal.—[Ibid](#). O how mighty, how glorious would Israel be if they would go according to the Word of God. Hast thou thought all was unadulterated? How liable is the enemy to work there.

Does He frown upon His people, because they are jealous with a godly jealousy. What then? Truth, truth, present truth, the Word of God. Hold it before them. How beautiful to hold the Word of God. Thy ways are past finding out. He never erred in wisdom. Strive to lift the mind from self. Strive to let it dwell on *high* and *lofty* things.—[Ibid](#).

Have that the whole burden of the message. First, second, and third angels' messages. The force of it—how mighty it is, the mighty truth.

O we thank Thee that we have received the truth. A poor, despised company, but how honored of God. Should one tarry that has the message? Fly, fly. Buckle the armor on. Do we expect to be free? Fight the good fight of faith.—*Ibid.*

Look ye at the pattern. Follow Him, meek and lowly. Shut your eyes to everything but the truth.—*Ibid.*

The next day, under the heading of “Vision at Paris, Maine,” she wrote of what was revealed to her. Because of the importance of the matter, for it focused on erratic exercises, we quote at length, although in doing so there is some repetition of her exclamations while in the vision:

[202] We were united in praying last evening for the Spirit of the Lord to fall upon us. God heard our earnest cries. I was taken off in vision.

I saw how great and holy God was. Said the angel, “Walk carefully before Him, for He is high and lifted up and the train of His glory fills the temple.”

I saw that everything in heaven was in perfect order. Said the angel,

“Look ye; Christ is the head; move in order, move in order. Have a meaning to everything.” Said the angel, “Behold ye, and know how perfect, how beautiful the order in heaven; follow it.” ...

Then the angel pointed to Fairhaven, and said, “Ye have not moved in God at all times. There has been a stretching beyond the movings of God, and have moved in self.”

I saw that the mind should be taken from the mortal and be raised to God. *I saw that the exercises were in great danger of being adulterated, and their former opinion and knowledge in governing in a measure their*

*exercises, therefore implicit confidence could not be placed in these exercises.*

But if anyone was lost to everything around him, and he should be in the state that Paul was in, whether in the body or out of the body, he could not tell, and God communicate to him through His angels, there would then be no danger of a mistake.

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

I saw that God had moved by His Spirit upon your company [at Fairhaven] in some of their exercises and their prompting; but I saw danger ahead.—[Manuscript 11, 1850](#). (Italics supplied.)

Note the cautious way in which Ellen White referred to the experience of one being led unmistakably by the Spirit of God, citing Paul's experience and words. The visions stood out in bold contrast from exercises that might be influenced by the preconceptions of the individual, motivated by emotions leading to the ecstatic.

After making reference to some involvements in Massachusetts, she declared:

I saw that the burden of the message now was the truth. The Word of God should be strictly followed and held up to the people of God. And it would be beautiful and lovely if God's people should be brought into a straight [place] to see the workings of God through exercises and visions.

[203]

But I saw in our conference meeting some laid out the work that God was to give exercises, and rebels were to be purged out in the meeting; then the honest, conscientious ones began to tremble. [They think,] I am afraid I shall be purged out, and they take their minds from Jesus, and fix them upon themselves and others, and the meeting leaves them lower than it found them.

I saw that we must try to lift our minds above self and have it dwell upon God, the high and lofty one....

I saw the burden of the message should be the first, second, and third angels' messages, and those who had any hope in God would yield to the force of that truth. How mighty and glorious it looked to me. O what privilege is ours, that of being among the children of God and believing the mighty truth, a poor, despised company, but how honored of God.

I saw if Israel moved steadily along, going according to Bible order, they would be as terrible as an army with banners. Said the angel, Should any tarry that have the truth and can give an explanation of it from the Word of God? No, no! They must go quickly.—*Ibid.*

This vision, given under the circumstances described above, had a far-reaching influence and served to guard the church at a critical point in its history. The Word of God was elevated, and visions were pointed out as safe guidance, but ecstatic experiences could have questionable backgrounds and be misleading.

### The “Review and Herald” Is Born

When James and Ellen White took up residence in Paris, Maine, in late October, 1850, it was for the purpose of publishing the three angels' messages. James had suspended the publication of the *Present Truth* while they made the itinerary to Vermont, Canada, and Maine, from mid-May to mid-July, and while he was publishing the first four numbers of the *Advent Review* at Auburn, New York.

[204] In early November at Paris, Maine, he picked up the *Present Truth* again and put out number 11. In this he stated, “The brethren may now expect to receive a few numbers,” and he called for those who could so do to write for the paper. He also brought out number 5 of the *Advent Review*, the final issue. It was devoted entirely to a reprint of portions of Joseph Bates's *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps*, a significant pamphlet reviewing the 1844 experience. Within a few days publishing plans changed. At the conference in Paris on Sabbath and Sunday, November 16 and 17, it was decided

to combine the *Present Truth* and *Advent Review* into one journal. The new journal would be called *The Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*.

The page size was 9 1/2 by 13 inches, as compared to the 7 3/4 by 10 inches for the *Present Truth* and the *Advent Review*. The masthead carried four names as the Publishing Committee: Joseph Bates, S. W. Rhodes, J. N. Andrews, and James White, and the subscription terms were "gratis, except the reader desires to aid in its publication."

In his initial editorial statement addressed "To Our Readers," White declared:

The *Review and Herald* is designed to be strictly confined to those important truths that belong to the present time. We hope to be able to send you this enlarged size of the paper quite often, containing a simple and clear exposition of those great and sanctifying truths embraced in the message of the third angel, viz.: the "commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."—*Ibid.*, November, 1850.

Then the editor called for the names of those who will "candidly read." He urged the distribution of publications available and notified all readers that the mailing lists of the *Present Truth* and the *Advent Review* were being used for this first number, but only those who responded as wishing the *Review and Herald* would be retained in making up the new list. Typically, he added:

If any are not able to send means, we beseech them not to let this stop them from writing. We greatly desire to hear from such; and will cheerfully pay the postage on their letters.—*Ibid.*

At that time, letter postage could be either prepaid or collected from the addressee. [205]

### Difficult Days in Paris

James and Ellen White faced difficult times in Paris. She wrote of it: We suffered many privations.... We

were willing to live cheaply that the paper might be sustained. My husband was a dyspeptic. We could not eat meat or butter, and were obliged to abstain from all greasy food. Take these from a poor farmer's table and it leaves a very spare diet. Our labors were so great that we needed nourishing food.

We had much care, and often sat up as late as midnight, and sometimes until two or three in the morning, to read proof-sheets. We could have better borne these extra exertions could we have had the sympathy of our brethren in Paris, and had they appreciated our labors and the efforts we were making to advance the cause of truth. Mental labor and privation reduced the strength of my husband very fast.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 278.

They did have with them in Paris their horse, Charlie, and the carriage. In early January, 1851, they lent these to Rhodes and Andrews to visit brethren in Canada and northern Vermont. James and Ellen had received a special invitation to attend a conference at Waterbury, Vermont. In spite of the fact that it was midwinter, they started out traveling by train and private conveyance. Finding one poor brother whom they felt should attend the conference to which they were traveling, they promised him if he would go they would give him their fare to aid in buying a horse, and ride with him. En route they called on Joseph Baker. Eager to see him attend the conference, they gave him \$5 to pay his fare on the railroad, then they spent most of three days traveling in an open sleigh without blanket or buffalo robe to protect them from the January cold. Commented Ellen White, “We suffered much.”—[Ibid.](#), 279.

[206] At the Waterbury conference they ran into distressing criticism. A whispering campaign had been started against James White in which many joined, even the venerable Joseph Bates. It was based on the opinion that the Whites had too good a horse, and as James had been very liberal in contributing to the conference, he must be making money. Wrote Ellen White:

This was the reward he received. We were forced to wade through a tide of oppression. It seemed that the deep waters would overflow us, and that we should sink.—[Ibid.](#), 280.

One discouraging episode followed another. Severe colds that took hold of him on the journey to and from Waterbury settled in James's lungs. Of the result wrote Ellen White:

He sank beneath his trials. He was so weak he could not get to the printing office without staggering. Our faith was tried to the uttermost. We had willingly endured privation, toil, and suffering, yet but few seemed to appreciate our efforts, when it was even for their good we had suffered. We were too much troubled to sleep or rest.—[Ibid.](#), 280, 281.

The situation finally came to the point where James declared, "Wife, it is no use to try to struggle on any longer. These things are crushing me, and will soon carry me to the grave. I cannot go any farther. I have written a note for the paper stating that I shall publish no more."—[Ibid.](#) As he stepped out of the door to take the note to the printing office, Ellen fainted. He returned, and she rallied in response to earnest prayer. The next morning at family worship she was taken off in vision. She wrote of what she was shown:

I saw that my husband must not give up the paper, for such a step was just what Satan was trying to drive him to take, and he was working through agents to do this. I was shown that he must continue to publish, and that the Lord would sustain him.—[Ibid.](#), 281.

So the *Review and Herald* continued to come from the press one or two issues a month until Number 13 was put out on June 9, 1851. With this White closed the first volume and they terminated their stay in Paris. The back page of the next-to-last issue carried an announcement disclosing their plans:

[207]

All orders for publications, letters, and remittances should be sent in season to be received by the ninth of June, as we shall leave Paris for western New York about that time. Our post office address from the eighteenth to the twenty-third of June will be Camden, New York. From the twenty-fifth to the thirtieth of June, West Milton, Saratoga County, New York.—[The Review and Herald, June 2, 1851.](#)

The notice included appointments for conferences to be held in New York State, Camden and West Milton.

The next week the *Review* carried on its back page a message from James White concerning the paper:

It seems duty to suspend the publication of the paper for a few weeks, to attend the conferences at Camden, and Milton, New York, and visit other places as the way may open. But we are satisfied that we must have a paper, and we would now suggest that it may be duty to have it published weekly. Does not the cause of truth require it?

Our brethren are scattered in a wide field, and can be visited by the traveling brethren but seldom, and we think they need the weekly visits of a paper containing not only the evidences of our position, but the experience of those who are receiving the truth, and cheering accounts of the work in different parts of the field. Doubtless the brethren would be free to write, and thus contribute to the interest of the paper.

Perhaps it should be published at a more central place, where the publications could be obtained with less expense, and where we could go out and spend the Sabbath with the brethren in different places. We now ask the brethren to write freely relative to the above suggestions.—[Ibid., June 9, 1851](#)

### The 1851 Time Setting

In 1850 Joseph Bates, entirely on his own initiative, published a pamphlet on the sanctuary, in which he sparked a time-setting rash. A statement on pages 10 and 11 read:

The seven spots of blood on the golden altar and before the mercy seat I fully believe represent the duration of the judicial proceedings on the living saints in the Most Holy, all of which time they will be in their affliction, even seven years. God by His voice will *deliver* them, "for it is the *blood* that maketh an atonement for the soul" ([Leviticus 17:11](#)).

[208]

Then the number seven will finish the day of atonement (not redemption). Six last months of this time, I understand, Jesus will be gathering in the harvest with His sickle, on the white cloud.—"An Explanation of the Typical and Antitypical Sanctuary by the Scriptures With a Chart," pp. 10, 11.

This view was accepted by a few, mostly in New Hampshire and Vermont, but it was not taken up or advocated by the workers generally. Nevertheless, such teaching was a threat that could lead to confusion and disappointment. But at the conference at Camden, on Sabbath, June 21, Ellen White was given a vision on the point. The message of the vision was sent out in letters and then published a month later on the last page of a special number of the *Review* dated July 21 and hurried into the field:

*Dear Brethren,*

The Lord has shown me that the message of the third angel must go, and be proclaimed to the scattered children of the Lord, and that it should not be hung on time; for time never will be a test again. I saw that some were getting a false excitement arising from preaching time; that the third angel's message was stronger than time can be. I saw that this message can stand on its own foundation, and that it needs not time to strengthen

it, and that it will go in mighty power, and do its work, and will be cut short in righteousness.

I saw that some were making everything bend to the time of this next fall—that is, making their calculations in reference to that time. I saw that this was wrong, for this reason: Instead of going to God daily to know their Present duty, they look ahead, and make their calculations as though they knew the work would end this fall, without inquiring their duty of God daily.

In hope,

*E. G. White.*

In [The Review and Herald, August 19, 1851](#), James White, with the message of the vision of June 21 ringing in his ears, published a well-reasoned article entitled “Our Present Work,” in which he dealt firmly with the time-setting issue:

[209] It is well known that some of the brethren have been teaching that the great work of salvation for the remnant, through the intercession of our great High Priest, would close in seven years from the termination of the 2300 days, in the autumn of 1844. Some who have thus taught we esteem very highly, and love “fervently” as brethren, and we feel that it becomes us to be slow to say anything to hurt their feelings; yet we cannot refrain from giving some reasons why we do not receive *the time*.—[Ibid., August 19, 1851](#)

Six numbered reasons were given in detail. We present excerpts:

1. The proof presented has not been sufficient.... The whole matter seems to us to rest on inference.... We confess that we have not been able to see it....

2. The message of the third angel does not hang on time. Time is not in the least connected with it....

3. We are now emphatically in the waiting time.... Give us time again, and we cease to be in a waiting position....

4. Our present position relative to the truths connected with the third message is based on positive testimony, and is stronger than time can be, or ever has

been.... Connect time based on inference with the message, and our position is weakened.

5. If it is the purpose of God that time should be embraced, we think the brethren generally would be called up to it.... It has not been received only where those who teach it have traveled, and presented it as a subject of importance....

6. To embrace and proclaim a time that will pass by would have a withering influence upon the faith of those who would embrace and teach it.—[Ibid.](#)

Then White wrote in general terms:

It has been our humble view for the past year that the proclamation of the time was no part of our present work. We do not see time in the present message; we see no necessity for it, and we do not see the hand of the Lord in it. And we have felt it to be our duty to let the brethren know that we have no part in the present movement on time, and that we believe that our present work and present duty is to strive to be united in presenting those important truths embraced in the third angel's cry.—[Ibid.](#)

### **The Time Dropped Before the Expiration**

[210]

With the publication of the view given to Ellen White, and James White's clear-cut statement, Joseph Bates and others who had taken up the time message dropped it in the summer of 1851. It was considered of such minor importance that it was ignored in conferences held in the late summer, as noted by James White's second and last reference to "the time" in his report on the Oswego, New York, conference. He stated:

The subject of the seven years' time was not mentioned. In fact, we know of no one in this State or in the West who teaches it. Some may suppose from our remarks in No. 2 [August 19, 1851] that the seven years' time is held by quite a large portion of the brethren;

but it is not so. The view has been mostly confined to the State of Vermont, and we learn by Brother Holt that most of the brethren there have given it up.—[Ibid.](#), [September 16, 1851](#)

Some, however, who did not have confidence in the visions, persisted in holding the view of the 1851 time. After it passed they found themselves in confusion. Reporting a conference held in Washington, New Hampshire, October 31 to November 2, Ellen White stated:

The time has passed and left those who believed in it very low and dark, and the influence of those who believed the time has been very distracting....

Such confusion and distraction has followed the time and fighting against the visions! They had also lost the power of the third angel's message, and some of them were in complete darkness.—[Letter 8, 1851](#).

## Chapter 14—(1851) Mixed Experiences in “The Gathering Time”

[211]

When James White began to publish the *Present Truth* in 1849 the reading audience he addressed was limited to those who had been in the first and second angels’ messages. It was this same group he addressed in 1850 in the five numbers of the *Advent Review*. To a large degree it was this same group that he hoped to reach through the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. The title indicates this.

In the earlier two journals he did not hesitate to publish Ellen White’s communications and references to the “visions.” Volume 1 of the *Review and Herald*, however, coming out in early 1851, was being issued at the opening of “the gathering time”—a time that James White recognized as offering a door “open almost everywhere to present the truth,” a time when, as he said, “many are prepared to read the publications who have formerly had no interest to investigate.”—[The Review and Herald, August 19, 1851](#).

The marked change now appearing in the attitudes of the general public presented a challenge in setting forth truths that would win, and not be cut off through prejudice. James White cautiously refrained from publishing the visions in the thirteen issues of volume 1 of the combined journal issued at Paris, Maine. Nor did he make direct reference to the special experience of Ellen White. In the issue of April 21, 1851, he did introduce an article he titled “The Gifts of the Gospel Church.” He opened his remarks by quoting [Ephesians 4:11-14](#), in which the apostle Paul names the gifts: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. In a comprehensive presentation that filled nearly two pages, James defended the proposition of the gift of prophecy in the church, but he did not mention Ellen White. By mid-June, 1851, the growing number of church members were calling for the visions in published form. This led him to plan for the issuance of *Extras* of the *Review* just for the believers. He explained this in the first, and only, issue of an *Extra*. It

carried the date of July 21, 1851, and was published between volume 1 of the *Review*, which closed with the June 9 issue, and volume 2, which opened August 5. The Whites were residing temporarily at the Jesse Thompson home near Ballston Spa, New York, only a few miles from Saratoga Springs.

[212]

### Concerted Plan to Publish the Visions

Here is what he wrote of the plan in the *Extra*:

This sheet is the form of the paper that we hope to publish once in two weeks.... We do not design this *Extra* for so general circulation as the regular paper, for the reason that strong prejudice exists in many minds against a portion of its contents. Those who judge of a matter before they hear are unwise. Says Paul, “Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

We believe that God is unchangeable, that He is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever,” and that it is His will and purpose to teach His tried people, at this the most important period in the history of God’s people, in the same manner as in past time. But as many are prejudiced against visions, we think best at present not to insert anything of the kind in the regular paper. We will therefore publish the visions by themselves for the benefit of those who believe that God can fulfill His word and give visions “in the last days.”—[The Review and Herald, Extra, July 21, 1851.](#)

White made a start by reprinting the visions as they first appeared in broadside form: (1) “To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad,” published in Portland, Maine, April 6, 1846, containing her first vision; (2) the vision concerning the Sabbath, published by Joseph Bates, at Fairhaven, Massachusetts, as “A Vision,” vol. 1, No. 1, April 7, 1847.

For this *Extra*, Ellen White, at “the request of dear friends,” wrote a brief sketch of her experience (see [Early Writings, 11-13](#))

which filled the first page and ran over to the second. Her first vision, [213] combined with the vision of the new earth, came next, following a significant four-line explanation:

Here I will give the view that was first published in 1846. In this view I saw only a very few of the events of the future. More recent views have been more full. I shall therefore leave out a portion and prevent repetition. [Note: her first vision as published in 1847 by James White in *a word to the "little flock"* was the source, from which she left out "a portion."]—[The Review and Herald, Extra, July 21, 1851](#).

It took longer to get out the *Extra* than was at first anticipated. The printing was done in Saratoga Springs. On July 21, the date carried by the yet-unprinted *Extra*, Ellen White wrote to friends residing in Michigan whom she had met at a recent conference. She mentioned plans for the publication of a pamphlet carrying the visions:

*Dear Brother and Sister Dodge,*

I now sit down to address you a few lines. The reason I have not written before is my time has been improved. I have been writing out the visions for publication and expected them to be out sooner and then you could have them in print; but the first paper is delayed and you will be anxious to learn something of our calculations [which were to appear in the paper], I will wait no longer....

There is a stir all around here since the conference [in West Milton, June 27 to 29] reports are being carried. (Evil, of course.) Some are anxious to hear for themselves and will come to the meetings [at Ballston Spa].

The visions trouble many. [One was given in connection with the conference held at Milton.] They [know] not what to make of them. We shall have the visions published in pamphlet form, and if all the particulars are not published in the pamphlet, that I saw at

Brother Cushman's, and if you desire it, I can write it off for you. As it was coming out so soon in the pamphlet, I thought that you would not wish me to write them all off for you. We now think that you can have the book in about four weeks. You must write us upon the reception of this.—[Letter 4, 1851](#).

[214] This communication is quite informative. As they were publishing the *Extra* they decided to turn to a pamphlet or book as a means of making the visions available in permanent form. To begin with, they could use the same type already set for the *Extra*, and a little book would be more serviceable than the paper.

James White was less optimistic about its early issuance. In a postscript he noted:

I think Ellen has set the time too soon for the vision pamphlet to come out. I will get it out as soon as possible. Perhaps it will be completed in eight weeks.— [Ibid.](#)

White promised that it would contain sixty-four pages (four printing forms), and two thousand copies would be printed, at a cost of \$5 per hundred.

### **Ellen White's First Book**

Even though the pamphlet contained only sixty-four pages, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*, with more than twenty chapters, is considered the first Ellen G. White book. Most of the chapters were a reprinting of her messages to the church, first published in broadsides or articles. As the entire work was republished in 1882 and is the first section of *Early Writings*, the reader is referred to these early materials as may be found in his own library.

### **Settling in Saratoga Springs, New York**

As James White closed up volume 1 of the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, in Paris, Maine, he suggested that it would be well to find a more central place from which to send out the paper

and other printed documents. He was looking for just such a place while at the conference at the Jesse Thompson home, just a few miles from Saratoga Springs. In her July 21 letter to Brother and Sister Dodge, Ellen White gave the up-to-date news:

After you left us we began to inquire of the Lord what He would have us to do, or where we should publish, and it was shown me in vision that James must lay his hand to the work and strive to open the way, and if the way should bend before him, he must remain; but if it was shut up and did not open, we must go elsewhere.

[215]

James has been doing as God showed me he must do, and the way has opened before him so that the first paper [the *Extra*] will be off today, and will be folded and in the [post] office tomorrow morning. He does his publishing at Saratoga [Springs], nine miles from here.

We have not yet got a house. We shall get one as soon as possible near the Springs where it will be only a few miles from the printing office. We expect our friends this week from Maine, and in about three weeks shall be entirely settled, if not before.—*Ibid.*

The friends from Maine referred to were her sister Sarah and Sarah's husband, Stephen Belden, who would help with publishing, and Clarissa Bonfoey. The latter would bring with her the Whites' 2-year-old Edson who had been in her care. Within days the Whites found a house, borrowed furniture from fellow believers, and set up housekeeping. The first number of volume 2 of the *Review and Herald* came from the press on August 5, 1851, some two weeks after the *Extra*. With the little vision pamphlet soon to go to press, no further issues of the *Extra* were published. Ellen was now 23 and James had, just the day before, turned 31. Soon 23-year-old Annie Smith, a very talented young woman, joined the publishing family. She was a new believer from New Hampshire, and very competent. She gave much-needed help in issuing the *Review and Herald*. Writing to the Howlands on November 12, Ellen White stated:

Annie Smith is with us. She is just the help we need; she takes right hold with James and helps him much. We can leave her now to get off the papers and can go out more among the flock.—[Letter 8, 1851](#).

[216] So through the fall and winter of 1851-1852 the Whites divided their time between publishing and field work. One tour was particularly fruitful, although strenuous. In [The Review and Herald, November 25, 1851](#), is an editorial report that White titled “Our Tour East.” The itinerary began October 23 with conferences at Medford, Massachusetts, in the Boston area; there was a conference at Washington, New Hampshire, and three in Vermont: Bethel, Johnson, and Vergennes. They were back home on November 18.

### **Moves Toward Order and Organization**

In recent visions Ellen White’s attention was called to the order in heaven, and she was shown that the believers must imitate this. At these conferences two points stood out: (1) church organization, and (2) the importance of the visions and their place in the emerging church. In the published report given by James White, and in James’s and Ellen’s correspondence, another feature stands out, namely, the number of believers who came together for these conferences. The meetings usually opened on Friday evening at six o’clock—the time they then commenced the observance of the Sabbath—and ran through Sabbath and Sunday. James White exuberantly reported from Waterbury, Vermont, in a general letter:

Our conferences at Medford, Washington, Bethel, and Johnson have been wonderful. We are astonished at the marvelous work of God. My words but faintly express my ideas—the facts in the case.—JW to “Dear Brethren in Christ,” November 11, 1851.

He reported seventy-five present at Medford, eighty at Washington, and at Johnson, ninety to one hundred. One thing that made the moves toward church order seem desirable was the destructive work of Stephen Smith, of Unity, New Hampshire, a few miles from Washington. In 1850 he was entering the field of public ministry but

was swept off his feet by the 1851 time setting projected by Bates. He refused to accept the warning counsel that time was no longer a test, picked up other strange ideas, and joined the opposition. At the conference in Medford, Massachusetts, James and Ellen White were met by his work.

James wrote:

When we arrived there, disunion existed among the brethren. They had been visited by Stephen Smith and J. Hart, who had tried to prejudice them against us. It had had a bad effect, but we went on with the meeting. There were eleven from Fairhaven and seven from Maine.... It was a meeting of labor. Not a lecture given.

The burden of the meeting was church order, pointing out the errors of S. Smith, H. W. Allen, and the importance of church action as to the course of some brethren.

[217]

Ellen had a vision. Saw that the frown of God was on us as a people, because the accursed thing was in the camp, that is, errors among us, and that the church must act, and the only way to do Brethren Allen and Smith good was to withdraw fellowship from them, in their present position. All acted on the light given, all received the vision, and, even to an individual, all raised the hand to withdraw fellowship from them.— Ibid.

### **The Conference at Washington, New Hampshire**

The next conference was at Washington, New Hampshire, where the Adventists first began to keep the Sabbath about the time of the disappointment in 1844. In a letter to the Howlands in Topsham, Maine, written from the E. P. Butler home [E. P. Butler was the father of George I. Butler, who served the church in prominent positions for many years.] in Vermont on November 12, near the close of their tour, she described the meeting at Washington in detail. The letter, which in typed form fills seven pages, gives illuminating glimpses of what took place. Butler had gone down from Vermont

to attend the conference. At the time he sympathized with Steven Smith and was opposing the visions. The opening lines set the tone of the experiences:

Here we are at Brother Butler's. O how changed everything is here. God has wrought for us mightily, praise His holy name.

At Washington the Lord took the rule of the meeting Himself. Stephen Smith and Brother Butler were present. There were about 75 present, all in the faith. Brother Stephen Smith was filled with the wrong spirit. J. Hart and himself had filled the minds of many of them with prejudice against us; false reports had been circulated. The band had been sinking and had lost the power of the third angel's message. They were sickly, but knew not the cause, but the reason was that there was an accursed thing in the camp and by the assistance of God we were trying to get it out of the camp....

[218]

[On Sabbath] I was ... taken off in vision.... The state of things was revealed to me in Washington, which I declared plainly to them. The vision had a powerful effect. All acknowledged their faith in the visions except Brother Butler and S. Smith. We all felt it duty to act, and by a unanimous vote of the brethren, S. Smith was disfellowshipped by the church until he should forever lay down his erroneous views.... [For a fuller report of Stephen Smith's erratic experience and his final turnaround after reading a testimony left for twenty-eight years in an unopened envelope, see appendix C.]

Sunday Eve, after we had disfellowshipped Brother Smith (in the afternoon) we had a glorious season. Many confessed that they had been prejudiced against us by different individuals such as S. Smith and J. Hart, but they praised God that they had seen us and were convinced that the visions were of God....

Monday ... we held another meeting and it was the best meeting of the whole. Sweet union and love prevailed in the meeting. We then sung the farewell

hymn and with sad yet joyful hearts parted, sad that we must part with those we love so well and had taken such sweet counsel with; but joyful that our hearts had been strengthened and comforted together, and that the clear light of truth had shone upon us, and that we were soon to meet to part no more, where no discord or disunion reigns.—[Letter 8, 1851](#).

James White reported November 11 in his general letter that "at Washington we met Brother Smith, *hard, hard*, full of errors." "It was a battle.... Sunday, Brother Smith was present. Hard as ever. We talked plain. Finally the conference voted to withdraw from him." In his published report of this conference he stated that it was one of great profit. He noted:

A committee of seven was chosen (see [Acts 6](#)) to attend to the wants of the poor, and we have reason to believe that it will be a great pleasure for them to do so.—[The Review and Herald, November 25, 1851](#).

This is the first record of such steps being taken as the brethren began to move toward organization, that there might be order in the church.

At the close of the conference that Monday, a request was received from Sister Mead, who was afflicted with a "slow fever," for anointing and prayer for her healing. Of this Ellen White reported: [219]

We went into a room by ourselves, Brethren Holt, Wheeler, Stowell, James and self. After I had anointed her with oil we prayed over her and she was healed every whit.—[Letter 8, 1851](#).

The immediate healing of Sister Mead was so marked that those acquainted with the circumstances thought of another serious case, of which Ellen White wrote:

That night we got into a rowboat and went on to the pond about one mile to Brother Mead's. His sister was there with a very sick child. We anointed it with oil and

prayed over it, and God heard our prayers. Then the two Brothers Mead rowed us back again in the night.—[Ibid.](#)

### **The Bethel, Vermont, Conference**

The next conference was held at the home of Washington Morse, at Bethel, Vermont. “We anticipated many trials at this meeting,” wrote James White, “but were happily disappointed.” He explained:

The Lord worked gloriously for His people. Brethren Holt and Wheeler were present. Here also the importance of union was dwelt upon, and the Holy Spirit seemed to break down all opposing influences, and the honest children of God were made one.—[The Review and Herald, November 25, 1851.](#)

In her report to the Hastings, Ellen White went into more detail, painting a vivid picture of what took place at these meetings with the companies of believers. Of the Bethel meeting she noted:

Brother Butler was at that meeting; also Brother Josiah Hart, who was so strong on the time, and after it passed by, got a substitute, the “age to come,” and was carrying that about, and such confusion and distraction has followed the time and fighting against the visions! They had also lost the power of the third angel’s message, and some of them were in complete darkness. Brother Hart was stiff and unyielding enough.

[220]

I got up and told him what God has shown me concerning him. Brother Butler began to break away and come into the clear light. In the morn [Thursday] we all seemed to have an agonizing cry for God to work like Himself, a wonder-working God. Our prayers were answered, the power of God came down; it was a good season; angels were hovering over us.

I was taken off in vision and saw just the state of things there, and just the state that Brother Baker was in, and Brother Hart and Butler. I got up and told the

vision. It had quite a powerful effect. Brother Hart began to give way a little and break down, but still he did not confess much. Brother Butler came almost out there at Bethel. I had some straight messages to bear to different individuals which had their effect. When we parted, we parted in love, and union prevailed among nearly all.—[Letter 8, 1851](#).

### The Conference at Johnson, Vermont

As the conference opened at Johnson, Vermont, some present pressed hard on the matter of the 1851 time. One brother declared that "he was not sure but something did take place, that Jesus did leave the Most Holy the time they said He would. He was happy; these were the happiest days of his life."—[Ibid](#). Ellen White continued the story:

He went on in this strain with such a wild spirit that all were disgusted with him. The Spirit of God came upon James. He arose and rebuked him in the name of the Lord. His mouth was closed in a moment. He could not say ... anything through the meeting. He was rebuked by God. This was a great help to the meeting and a great help to Brother Baker.

I got up and told them what God had shown me about some trying to get a substitute after the time passed. Some would get Jesus upon the great white cloud, others would be looking to old Jerusalem or, as they called it, the "age to come." ...

I talked plainly. The Lord helped me. I showed them how the messengers that had been toiling in the scattering time had labored to get the truth before them, how much they had suffered, and now when God's cause was prospering they embrace the third angel's message and enter into the labors of the chosen messengers of God and lift up their heel against them.—[Ibid](#).

[221]

On Sabbath there were one hundred present; G. W. Holt and James White preached. Sunday morning, before the preaching, Mrs.

Butler confessed that she had been wrong. Butler himself “talked very well,” wrote Ellen White, and “there was a confession made all around with weeping.” It was a dramatic meeting described by Ellen White:

I got up and told my vision about Brother Baker and Hart and others. I never had it in a more clear manner. I told Brother Baker his going to the churches to proclaim the third angel’s message was all wrong, that he had to tame down that message or he could not have got into the churches and that he had been taking the children’s bread and giving it to dogs. I told him just how his case was shown to me.

I also told them all that the messengers of God should be perfectly united in their views of Bible truth and should consult with each other and should not advance any new view until they first went to the messengers and examined those views with the Bible, and if they were correct let all the messengers spread them and if they were error lay them to one side. Then the gospel seed would be sown in union and raised in strength; all the messengers east and west, north and south, would be telling the same story....

In the afternoon after James talked, Brother Baker arose. None knew what he was about to say. He told them that every word of the vision related in the forenoon concerning him was every word of it truth, just exactly as it was. (I saw in vision that Brother Baker had not had any bitter feelings towards us like some others.) He referred to this in particular. He knew it to be just so.

“Well, now,” says he, “you will say, ‘What is Brother Baker going to do with the visions?’ I will tell you. It is high time for me to decide there is no halfway work about this business. The visions are *all* of God, or there is none of them of God. ‘Well,’ say you, ‘what is Brother Baker going to do?’ *Believe the visions.*

“I see that they are inseparably connected with the third angel’s message, and if I give up the visions, I must give up the third angel’s message, and if I give up the third angel’s message, I give up that we have had the first and second, and if I give up that we have had the first, second, and third angels’ messages, I give up the Word of God, my Christian experience, and am an infidel at once.”—[Ibid.](#)

[222]

It was a traumatic experience, and not only was Baker involved. Ellen White continued the account:

I never witnessed such a melting, weeping time before. (Brother Butler had taken his stand the day before and told the brethren and sisters in public where to find him, on the side of the visions. “I believe them to be of God, I am a full believer in the visions, so you know where to find me.”)—[Ibid.](#)

Relief came to all present, but this was not all. At a meeting held Monday morning, the power of God rested on the company of believers, and Ellen White was given a vision that, when she related it, comforted Brother Baker and made him strong. He was not to sink down but was admonished by the angel, “Feed the sheep, feed the sheep.” She wrote regarding the feeling that existed when the conference closed:

We parted with the brethren and sisters while sweet love and union prevailed among all.—[Ibid.](#)

In his report of the Johnson experience in the *Review* James White pointed out that “the meeting was most manifestly led by the Holy Spirit.... It seemed wonderful that a meeting of such intense interest, where the brethren had such deep feeling, should be so free from unpleasant excitement.” Finding it difficult to reach for words that expressed his feeling, he declared:

Though every heart felt deeply, yet the sweet, gentle spirit of Jesus reigned, and the God of peace and order

was glorified.—[The Review and Herald, November 25, 1851](#).

### The Conference at Vergennes, Vermont

[223] The next meeting, the third in Vermont, was called on short notice and held at the home of Elon Everts. “Brother Everts,” wrote Ellen White, “is a blessed brother, but has been in the ‘age to come’ all over and he said he could not give it up.”—[Letter 8, 1851](#). And she added:

He held such a strong mixture of views that if followed out would lead to spiritualism of the worst kind, such as spiritual wifery.

On Sabbath evening she had a vision in which she was shown that “the accursed thing must be put out of the camp” or the church would suffer. She wrote:

After I had the vision and told it, Brother Everts began to confess and break down before God. He gave up his “age to come” and felt the necessity of keeping the minds of all on the third angel’s message.

I had as solemn a view at that time as I ever had in my life. The next day we went to Henry Allen’s, and God gave me a cutting message for him and I dared not daub with untempered mortar. Never did I have such a cutting message for anyone before. He did not break down. We withdrew all fellowship from him until he should give up his spiritual union views and get right. We left the brethren and sisters there in a much better state than we found them.—[Ibid.](#)

Back in Saratoga Springs by mid-November, they found everyone well. The work had gone on in their absence with only one issue of the *Review* missed. As James picked up his work at the *Review* “office” he declared:

We never felt so good courage to toil on in this cause as now. God blesses every effort His children make to advance this cause, and certainly we should be encouraged. We witnessed tenfold more good accomplished on this tour than we anticipated. It is God's marvelous work, and He shall have all the praise.—[The Review and Herald, November 25, 1851.](#)

Soon the back pages of the *Review and Herald* were carrying notices of conferences through late December and into January, and James and Ellen White would attend some of those in northern and western New York.

### Testimony Concerning Using Tobacco

[224]

On December 14 Ellen White wrote a letter as follows:

*Dear Brother Barnes,*

I received a few lines from Brother Hewett. He wishes me to write whether I have seen in vision [that] it is wrong to use tobacco.

I have seen in vision that tobacco was a filthy weed, and that it must be laid aside or given up. Said my accompanying angel, "If it is an *idol*, it is high time it was given up, and unless it is given up, the frown of God will be upon the one that uses it, and he cannot be sealed with the seal of the living God. If it is used as a medicine, go to God; He is the Great Physician, and those that use the filthy weed for medicine greatly dishonor God. "There is a balm in Gilead, there is a Physician there. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

I saw that Christ will have a church without *spot* or *wrinkle* or *any such thing* to present to His Father, ... as He leads us through the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem.... After Jesus has done so much for us, will anyone be undecided whether to deny himself of the filthy *weed* for His sake? We must be perfect Christians, deny ourselves all the way along, tread the narrow,

thorny pathway that our Jesus trod, and then if we are final overcomers, heaven, sweet heaven will be cheap enough.—[Letter 5, 1851](#).

She wrote understandingly of the struggle some will have to leave off the use of tobacco, and suggested that they do as S. W. Rhodes did when he was battling to break away from its use. “He called for the brethren to pray for him,” she wrote, “and we did. He was cured and has desired none since.” She counseled:

Go to God, dear brother; wrestle with Him and you can overcome. Pray in faith, nothing doubting. Jesus will be touched with the brother’s infirmities.—[Ibid.](#)

### **The Midwinter Tour in Western New York**

[225] Leaving Saratoga Springs on December 22 or 23, James and Ellen White were in Camden for the conference held on December 25 ( [The Review and Herald, February 3, 1852](#)), and for the next seven weeks visited scattered groups of believers and churches over a wide area in northern and western New York. They stopped at Oswego going, and also on their return trip six weeks later ([Ibid., February 17, 1852](#)). At the David Arnold home in nearby Volney they found Marion Stowell helping in the home, for Mrs. Arnold was quite ill. Marion had been there two and a half years and was much worn. The Whites saw that a change in her surroundings was absolutely essential. They urged her to go with them as they continued their homeward trip by sleigh. First, there was the fifteen miles north to Oswego for the weekend meetings of February 8 and 9, and then to Lorain forty miles beyond as they traveled east. Marion being ill, it was a difficult time for her, especially as the snow was melted in places, leaving bare ground for the runners of the sleigh to traverse. Marion recounted the events after leaving Lorain for the White home in Saratoga Springs in a letter to Ellen White written in 1908:

We left all greatly encouraged, as you started for your home at Saratoga. We had not gone many more miles when you said, “James, everything that was shown

me about this trip has transpired but one. We had a little meeting in a private family. You spoke with great freedom on your favorite theme, the near coming of Christ."—DF 439, Marion Stowell Crawford to EGW, October 9, 1908.

To this James White responded:

"It is impossible to transpire on this trip as there is not an Adventist family between here and Saratoga. We will put up at a hotel tonight, and we surely wouldn't have a meeting there, and tomorrow afternoon will reach home. It must occur on our next trip."

[Ellen replied:] "No, James, it was surely on this, as nothing has been shown me of the next one, and it is three months before we take another. It was shown me on this trip, yet I can't see how it can come to pass."—*Ibid.*

Marion recounts that the subject was dropped at that point. Near sundown, James said, "Ellen, who did Emily Cady marry?" She gave him the name and said, "I do not know where they live." He replied, "I do, and I think this is the place." On inquiry, it was found [226] that they lived a house or two away, and the traveling party was heartily welcomed. Marion Stowell reported:

Supper over, Emily said, "Brother White, would you mind speaking to my neighbors on the near coming of Christ? I can soon fill both rooms. They have heard me tell so much about you both, they will come."—*Ibid.*

They did come, and every corner of the two rooms was filled. After the meeting James White exclaimed, "Ellen, I never spoke to a large crowd with greater freedom than this evening." It seems that the connection between the vision and the evening meeting was not thought of till they were driving into Saratoga Springs. Wrote Marion Stowell in her letter to Ellen White. "Not once from that time to this has Satan ever tempted me to doubt your visions."—*Ibid.*

### **Back Home in Saratoga Springs**

James White's report at the end of the seven-week tour in mid-winter was optimistic:

We reached home the thirteenth, and found our friends in good health and spirits. Sister [Annie] Smith, who has had the care of the paper in our absence, seems happy with her charge. Our health is improved by traveling. We are all very happy to see the cause of truth rapidly advancing.—*Ibid.*, February 17, 1852

On the back page of the same issue he makes an interesting proposition regarding the work of publishing the message:

We think the time has come when a press should be owned by Sabbathkeepers. Now our work is being done on the Sabbath, which is very unpleasant and inconvenient. It also costs much more than it would if we had an office of our own. Will the committee take this matter in hand?—*Ibid.*

He called a conference to be held in the vicinity of Saratoga Springs, and to commence Friday, March 12, 1852. The next issue pinpointed the matter, calling it to convene at the house of Jesse Thompson, two miles from Ballston Spa, New York, at 10:00 A.M.

## Chapter 15—(1852) Girding Up for a Mighty Thrust

[227]

As the “messengers” and friends of the cause committed to heralding the third angel’s message assembled in the commodious home of Jesse Thompson, midmorning, Friday, March 12, the topic of prime interest was publishing the truth through the press. The Thompson home was in the country, nine miles from Saratoga Springs, where the fourteen numbers of volume 2 of the *Review and Herald* had been published. Attending that conference Friday morning were Joseph Bates, S. W. Rhodes, G. W. Holt, Frederick Wheeler, J. C. Day, Joseph Baker, William S. Ingraham, Ira Wyman, Heman Churchill, G. W. Morse, Hiram Edson, and James and Ellen White. They were joined by the *Review* staff and believers from nearby. Had not the meeting been called on such short notice, others would have been present. The report of the work done that Friday was faith-challenging:

The subject of publishing the paper was introduced. Several brethren spoke of the disadvantages of having it published as it has been, and of the propriety of having an office at the control of Sabbathkeepers. And after investigating the matter it was decided by a unanimous vote (1) that a press, type, et cetera, should be purchased immediately, (2) that the paper should be published at Rochester, New York, (3) that Brethren E. A. Pool, Lebbeus Drew, and Hiram Edson compose a committee to receive donations from the friends of the cause to purchase the press, type, et cetera, and to conduct the financial concerns of the paper, (4) that the brethren abroad be requested through the next number of the *Review and Herald* to choose agents in their churches to receive donations for the purpose of establishing the press, and carrying forward the publishing of the paper,

[228]

and (5) that those donations that are immediately sent in should be sent to Hiram Edson, Port Byron, New York.

It was thought that \$600 would be sufficient to establish the press at Rochester.—[Ibid., March 23, 1852](#)

The conference continued through Monday, March 15. “The brethren came together,” wrote James White, “with a desire to be benefited and benefit each other. Not to establish any peculiar [new] views of their own, but to be united in the truth.”—[Ibid.](#)

One matter of rather far-reaching significance came up on Monday. White reported:

The subject of holding conferences in different parts of the field, especially where the brethren have but recently embraced the truth, was introduced, and investigated with much feeling. There seemed to be but one view of the subject, that small conferences and many of them would prove a great blessing to the cause. And that those brethren who have recently embraced the Sabbath should not be neglected, but that they should have the labors of suitable brethren who shall hold such meetings with them.

It was thought that there should be two to travel in company in the State of New York and Canada West, and two to travel in New England and Canada East, whose work should be to hold conferences.—[Ibid.](#)

In harmony with this, one committee was appointed to look after the east and another committee to care for the interests in the west.

The call for the conference at the Thompson home had declared its object to be that those who teach the message of the third angel might “examine more fully their present position” in preparation to go forth in “union and strength” ([Ibid., March 2, 1852](#)). James White’s report of the meeting would indicate that this objective was met:

The Spirit of the Lord was with His servants during the entire meeting, and love and union prevailed. The

business meetings were pleasant and free. All seemed willing to act, and ready to act in *union*, and to act *now*. The word was preached with freedom, and the examination of some points of doctrine touching the present message was conducted in harmony.—[Ibid.](#), [March 23, 1852](#)

[229]

### **Status of Publishing the Review**

In vision Ellen White had been shown that “James must lay his hand to the work and strive to open the way,” and if the way opened he must stay by and publish ([Letter 4, 1851](#)). In Saratoga Springs the way had opened to publish, and James White, in the last issue of volume 2 of the *Review*, made a statement regarding finances:

We would say that \$150 was raised at the Camden Conference, June, 1851, to commence the present volume. This sum, with the receipts since that time, will only pay for this volume.—[Ibid.](#)

He pleaded for financial support, not large gifts but “each having the pleasure of doing something, and sharing the blessing, instead of a few freehearted souls doing the whole.” He continued:

In fact, we cannot see how the paper can benefit such as are not ready to make an effort to sustain it. We cheerfully send the paper free of charge, and shall continue to do so, and hope these remarks will lead all who profess to believe and love the present truth to act their part in sustaining the publication of the paper and books.—[Ibid.](#)

He thought the next issue would appear in May; he solicited “matter for the paper, either original or selected,” and called on all to be free to write.

### **Establishing a Publishing Office in Rochester, New York**

Steps were taken immediately to carry out the actions of the conference at Ballston Spa. A printing press was purchased in New

[230]

York City and the stocks of papers and pamphlets, along with their meager household equipment and personal belongings, were packed and shipped from Saratoga Springs. As money was scarce, they had to borrow to pay the freight westward across the State. In Rochester they found, at 124 Mount Hope Avenue, a home thought sufficiently large to accommodate the publishing house family and the printing equipment. The rent of \$14.50 a month seemed to be within their ability to pay. As the house stood on about an acre of land, there was space for a garden. On April 16 Ellen White described their circumstances in a letter to the Howland family:

We are just getting settled here in Rochester. We have rented an old house for \$175 a year. We have the press in the house. Were it not for this, we should have to pay \$50 a year for office room.

You would smile could you look in upon us and see our furniture. We have bought two old bedsteads for 25 cents each. My husband brought me home six old chairs, no two of them alike, for which he paid \$1, and soon he presented me with four more old chairs without any seating, for which he paid 62 cents for the lot. The frames were strong, and I have been seating them with drilling.

Butter is so high we do not purchase it, neither can we afford potatoes. Our first meals were taken on a fireboard placed upon two empty flour barrels. We are willing to endure privations if the work of God can be advanced. We believe the Lord's hand was in our coming to this place.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 287.](#)

William C. White, born in Rochester two years later, in his *Review and Herald* series “Sketches and Memories of James and Ellen G. White,” gives us a picture of the publishing house family:

At first there were James and Ellen White; little Edson, and his nurse Clarissa Bonfoey; Stephen and Sarah Belden, and Annie Smith. Soon Jennie Fraser was

employed as cook. For a short time Thomas and Mary Mead were members of the family and office force. Then came Oswald Stowell, who acted as pressman.

In the autumn, Warren Bacheller, a boy of 13, joined the force, and served as roller boy while learning type-setting. In the spring of 1853, Uriah Smith joined the family, and in the autumn, George Amadon, a young man of 17, also became a member of the little company. These three were to grow gray in the service of the *Review and Herald*. Later on they were joined by Fletcher Byington, a son of John Byington, of northern New York....

It was necessary to employ a skilled printer to superintend the work and teach the beginners. For this position a very competent man was found in Lumen V. Masten, with whom Elder White had become acquainted in Saratoga Springs.—[The Review and Herald, June 13, 1935](#).

The Washington hand press, other needed equipment, and the type purchased in New York cost more than \$600. Hiram Edson advanced the money on a short-term loan; James White called for donations with which to pay this debt, if possible by mid-June, and work began. The first issue of volume 3 of the *Review*, bearing the publication date of May 6, was ready in type before the press arrived, so was “struck off” on another press in the town. The masthead lists as a publishing committee, Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, and Joseph Baker; James White was named editor. The paper would appear semi-monthly. The “terms” were stated: “Gratis. It is expected that all the friends of the cause will aid in its publication, as the Lord has prospered them.”—[Ibid., May 6, 1852](#). A poem from the pen of Annie Smith titled “The Blessed Hope” filled column one and half of column two of the first page. The articles related to the third angel’s message, and White’s editorial reviewed the past and dealt with present work.

### The Tour East

Soon after the Whites had settled in Rochester, a letter from Ellen's mother informed them that her brother Robert was dying of tuberculosis at the family home in Gorham, Maine. James had trained the staff quite well while at Saratoga Springs, and Lumen Masten was on hand to manage the office. So with faithful Charlie at hand to convey them by carriage, he and Ellen planned a trip east that would take two months. The *Review* of June 24 set his plans before the companies of believers:

[232]

We now design making a tour east, and spending several weeks, holding conferences where they are most needed. On our way east, we could hold meetings at Coughdenoy, Lorain, at some central place in St. Lawrence County, Panton, Vermont; Washington, New Hampshire; Portland, Maine; and Bangor. Returning, hold meetings at Boston, Leverett, and Ashfield.

Will those who wish us to hold conferences with them write in season, to give notice of such conferences in the *Review and Herald*. We shall not be confined to the places named. Have mentioned them to give some idea of the intended tour. We shall probably be able to leave Rochester by the first of August.—[Ibid., June 24, 1852](#)

In mid-June, while visiting a nearby company of believers over the weekend, they were pleasantly surprised. James White wrote about this:

Brother Drew being informed of our intended Eastern tour, and seeing that our carriage was about falling to pieces, purchased and gave us a suitable carriage for which he paid \$85. For this we thank God, also our brother, His steward.—[Ibid., July 8, 1852](#)

The couple planned to take 3-year-old Edson with them. As the summer wore on, cholera struck Rochester with heavy mortality. Ellen White described the scourge:

All night long the carriages bearing the dead were heard rumbling through the streets to Mount Hope Cemetery. This disease did not cut down merely the low, but it took from every class of society.... As we passed through the streets of Rochester, at almost every corner we would meet wagons with plain pine coffins in which to put the dead.—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White](#), 143.

Just as they were to start on their carriage tour east the dread disease invaded the White home. Little Edson was stricken. Of course, their first resort was to pray for his healing. “I took him in my arms,” wrote Ellen White, “and in the name of Jesus rebuked the disease.” He felt relief at once; as a sister commenced praying for the Lord to heal him, Edson looked up and said, “They need not pray any more, for the Lord has healed me.”—[Ibid.](#), 144. But James did not dare start on their journey until Edson had improved sufficiently to call for food. He did that afternoon, Wednesday, July 21, and they started, for they had nearly one hundred miles to cover in the next two days to fill their first appointment at Oswego.

[233]

James had charted the itinerary, allowing time to drive from one appointment to the next and giving word in advance through the *Review*. The issue of August 19 carried a concentration of such appointments:

Providence permitting, we will hold meetings at the following places: Potsdam, St. Lawrence County, New York, at the house of Brother John Byington, Thursday, August 26, at 2:00 P.M.

Norfolk, at the house of Brother Haskell, to commence Friday, August 27 at 6:00 P.M., and hold over Sabbath and First-day. Chateaugay, Tuesday, August 21, at 4:00 P.M., where the brethren may appoint.

Wolcott, Vermont, to commence Friday, September 3, at 6:00 P.M., and hold Sabbath and First-day.

Washington, New Hampshire, to commence Friday, September 10, at 6:00 P.M., and hold Sabbath and First-day.

Boston, Massachusetts, Tuesday, September 14, at 2:00 P.M.

Portland, Maine, Friday, September 17, at 6:00 P.M., and hold over Sabbath and First-day.

Bangor, Maine, Friday, September 24, at 6:00 P.M., and hold over Sabbath and First-day.—[The Review and Herald, August 19, 1852.](#)

The journey by carriage rested both James and Ellen White.

Charlie was very fond of apples. As they drove where apple orchards lined the roads and big red apples lay in the path of the travelers, James would loosen the checkrein. Charlie would gently slow down from a seven-mile pace, select a good apple within easy reach, pick it up, and then throw his head high and dash on at full speed, chewing the apple as he journeyed (WCW, “Sketches and Memories,” [Ibid., April 25, 1935](#)).

Ellen White described their travel experience:

The Lord greatly blessed us on our journey to Vermont. My husband had much care and labor. At the different conferences he did most of the preaching, sold books, and took pay for the papers. And when one conference was over, we would hasten to the next.

[234]

At noon we would feed the horse by the roadside and eat our lunch. Then my husband, with paper and pencil upon the cover of our dinner box, or the top of his hat, would write articles for the *Review* and *Instructor*.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 292.](#)

The *Youth's Instructor* was a monthly journal James White had recently started to reach the youth of the emerging church. Each copy contained Sabbath school lessons, the first prepared for children and young people. James, as he later recalled, thought out the lessons while the “carriage was in motion“: while the horse was eating he wrote them out.

### A Visit to the Gorham Home

The fast-ebbing life of Robert Harmon, Ellen's older brother, provided one of the incentives for the trip east. Upon receiving word of Robert's failing health, Sarah Belden, Ellen's older sister, had gone on to Gorham and watched over him till he passed to his rest. When Ellen and James arrived, they found Robert emaciated, but she observed that his wasted features lit up with joy as they talked of the bright hope of the future. In the seasons of prayer they had in his room Jesus seemed very near. But James and Ellen could not tarry long. She observed:

We were obliged to separate from our dear brother, expecting never to meet him again this side of the resurrection of the just. The bitterness of the parting scene was much taken away by the hope he expressed of meeting us where parting would be no more.—*Ibid.*, 289.

Shortly after Ellen's visit with Robert, Annie Smith, at the Rochester office, composed the poem "He Sleeps in Jesus," later set to music (*Church Hymnal*, No. 494).

While the Whites were in the vicinity of Gorham a conference was held in nearby Portland. Here is where James had first met Ellen; here is where they had been married; here is where Ellen received her first vision and was called to go into the field. It was here that she later said the Lord ordained her. It was here that fanaticism had raged in 1845. Now, seven or eight years later, James White reported of the conference held there:

Our meeting at Portland, Maine, held September 18 and 19, was excellent. The friends in the city obtained a very convenient place for the meeting. A number of brethren and sisters came in from the country who bore good testimonies to the truth, which added to the interest of the meeting. Several of our Advent brethren who do not observe the Sabbath came out to hear. We had freedom in presenting the reasons of our faith. The Spirit of the Lord was felt in every meeting, reviving and cheering the people of God.

[235]

Perhaps there is no place where more prejudice has existed than in Portland. This is giving way. There we were again united in Christian fellowship with some that we once took sweet counsel with, but during the time of scattering, that union was entirely broken, and we feared that they would not again be united with the true church. There we could weep tears of joy with those that wept, and freely confessed past errors. Several have, since the meeting, confessed the Sabbath.—[The Review and Herald, October 14, 1852.](#)

### On to James White's Boyhood Home

James and Ellen pressed on another hundred miles into eastern Maine, to the home of James's parents in Palmyra. "They have been much interested in the 'blessed hope' of Christ's immediate coming," wrote James, "but with thousands of others they seem to have lost much of the spirit and sweetness of this hope." He hoped for better days. It warmed James's heart to go over the roads he had traveled ten years before on horseback as he preached the soon coming of Jesus, and to meet many old friends. Referring to the days of their association then, he declared that "these were the happiest hours of our life."—[Ibid.](#)

On October 6, 1852, the long journey east was over, and they were home in Rochester. During the two months of the tour many had been encouraged. At some of the conferences attendance ran into the hundreds. From time to time visions were given to Ellen White. On occasion James and Ellen were called to pray for the healing of the sick, and their prayers were answered. James White reported in the *Review*:

[236]

We can now look back upon our eastern tour with a good degree of satisfaction. Our expectations have been more than realized. We have in almost every place been happily disappointed in witnessing the glorious display of God's power, and the triumph of His truth.—[Ibid.](#)

He added:

And praise the Lord, for what He has done for the little church in Rochester in our absence. Our dear Brother Masten, who has been brought so low by the cholera, and raised up by the prayer of faith, is at work in the office, enjoying the precious hope of the gospel, keeping the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And the brethren generally are greatly revived.—[Ibid.](#)

### Subjects Discussed at the Conferences

From James White's reports in the Review we gain a view of the topics dwelt upon as they met with company after company of believers. Of the Boylston, New York, meeting, held on Sabbath in a grove, White reported:

In the forenoon the subject presented was the Advent movement in the past, as symbolized by the angels of [Revelation 14:6-8](#). And we were enabled to see that the word of the Lord had been fulfilled in our disappointments, as well as in our joyful expectations; and that we are still on the track of prophecy.

[In the afternoon] it was stated that merely believing and observing the Sabbath would not save one, and that there was no salvation in the Sabbath alone; but that in the hand of God it was a cleaver to cleave us out from the world, and bring us into the Lord's workshop, where the whole gospel can be brought to bear upon us and we be hewed and squared by the faith of Jesus.—[The Review and Herald, September 2, 1852.](#)

Later at Norfolk, New York, many were present who had embraced the Sabbath but had little or no experience in the past Advent movement. James White wrote:

We presented our views relative to the seventh-day Sabbath, Babylon, the open and shut door, et cetera, and the Spirit of God fastened the truth upon the minds of those who heard. We were much cheered by the

decided testimonies of some who have formerly been wavering.—[Ibid., September 16, 1852](#)

At Wolcott, Vermont, they had found a tent prepared to seat four hundred persons. Again James reported:

There were many present who have very recently embraced the Sabbath, or are just becoming interested....

Our expectations were more than realized at this meeting. The cause in Vermont is moving onward. The meetings were harmonious, refreshing, and some of them very powerful. There were, at least, 150 Sabbath-keepers present, besides others deeply interested.—[Ibid.](#)

How different now in the “gathering time” than in the “scattering time,” only two or three years before! Also, the large numbers of those newly come to the faith were being told about the “shut door” and its true significance.

### **John N. Loughborough Enters the Picture**

Three days after James and Ellen White returned to Rochester, 21-year-old John Loughborough was at the Sabbath meeting at the home on 124 Mount Hope Avenue. Oswald Stowell, who operated the hand press, was severely ill with pleurisy and had been given up by his physician to die. On that Sabbath morning he was in an adjoining room in bed. At the close of the service he requested that special prayer be offered for his healing. Loughborough with some others was invited to gather about his bed for the solemn service. Loughborough wrote of the experience:

We bowed by his bedside, and while prayers were being offered, Elder White anointed him with oil “in the name of the Lord.” There was a sensible presence of the Spirit of God, and he was instantly healed. When we arose from prayer he was sitting up in bed, striking his sides, which before had been so painful, and saying, “I am fully healed. I shall be able to work the hand press

tomorrow.” Two days after this, he did work it.—GSAM, p. 318.

As so often was the case, at a time when God’s special blessing was felt Ellen White was taken in vision. It was so this Sabbath. Loughborough reported: [238]

As Elder White turned to look at her, he said, “Ellen is in vision; she does not breathe while in this condition. If any of you desire to satisfy yourselves of this fact, you are at liberty to examine her.” She remained thus in vision about one hour and twenty minutes. While in that condition she spoke words, and sometimes distinct sentences: yet by the closest scrutiny no breath could be discerned in her body.— Ibid., 318, 319.

While the physical phenomena he observed provided Loughborough with interesting and convincing *evidence*, it was the verification of the conduct of a man not known to all present, someone Ellen White had never met nor known of, that very soon provided *indisputable proof* to the questioning Loughborough. He later explained:

Before the return of Elder White and his wife from their eastern journey, one of our number had left the city, and was traveling on business in the State of Michigan. He was not, therefore, present at this meeting, and had never seen Elder White or his wife. In relating her vision, Mrs. White told us, among other things, what she saw concerning a man who, while he was traveling and away from home, had much to say about the law of God and the Sabbath, but was at the same time breaking one of the commandments. She said he was a person whom she had never met, yet she believed she would see him sometime, as his case had been unfolded to her. Not one of our number, however, supposed him to be anyone with whom we were acquainted.

About six weeks from the time of the above vision, the brother previously mentioned returned from

Michigan. As soon as Mrs. White looked upon his countenance, she said to one of the sisters, "That is the man I saw in the vision, of whom I told you." The vision being related to this brother, in the presence of his wife and several other persons, Mrs. White said to him, as Nathan did to David, "Thou art the man."

[239]

He then did just what Paul said some persons would do when reprov'd for their sins by the gift of prophecy [see [1 Corinthians 14:24, 25](#)].... After listening to the rehearsal of his wrongdoings by Mrs. White, this brother dropped upon his knees before his wife, and with tears said to her, and to the few present, "God is with you of a truth," and then made a full confession of his course while in Michigan, in violating the seventh commandment, as revealed at the time of its occurrence, over five hundred miles away.— *Ibid.*, 319, 320 (see also [The Review and Herald, March 4, 1884](#)).

Commented Loughborough, "Thus a few weeks' time gave us a strong confirmation of the testimonies."

## **Chapter 16—(1845-1852) The Shut and the Open** [240]

### **Doors** [241]

The past two chapters have told the story of the turning in the tide in the beginning days of the remnant church. On the eastern tour in the late summer of 1852, even when speaking to large audiences of those newly come to the message, James White did not hesitate to refer freely to the Advent experience of eight or ten years earlier and lead his listeners into an understanding of the “shut door.” It is very clear from the context of his many references to the shut door that the term in 1851 and 1852 had quite a different connotation from what it did in 1844, 1845, 1846. In the intervening years it had undergone a gradual but important change in significance. [242] [243] [244] [245] [246] [247] [248] [249] [250]

Because the development of an understanding of the matter was gradual, statements made in retrospect put the shut door in an easily grasped setting. A knowledge of the experience of the pioneers through the years 1844 to 1851 places the question in its true light. [251] [252] [253] [254]

### **Ellen G. White Looks Back** [255]

In the years 1874, 1883, and 1884, Ellen White looked back and recounted the history in which the shut-door teaching figured, and commented upon it. We present first her published statement appearing in *The Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 4, published in 1884. [256]

After the passing of the time of expectation, in 1844, Adventists still believed the Saviour’s coming to be very near; they held that they had reached an important crisis, and that the work of Christ as man’s intercessor before God had ceased. Having given the warning of the judgment near, they felt that their work for the world was done, and they lost their burden of soul for the salvation of sinners, while the bold and blasphemous scoffing of the ungodly seemed to them another evidence that the [257]

Spirit of God had been withdrawn from the rejecters of His mercy. All this confirmed them in the belief that probation had ended, or, as they expressed it, “the door of mercy was shut.”—[The Spirit of Prophecy 4:268](#).

The chapter closes with these words:

The passing of the time in 1844 was followed by a period of great trial to those who still held the Advent faith. Their only relief, so far as ascertaining their true position was concerned, was the light which directed their minds to the sanctuary above. As has been stated, Adventists were for a short time united in the belief that the door of mercy was shut. This position was soon abandoned.

Some renounced their faith in their former reckoning of the prophetic periods, and ascribed to human or satanic agencies the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit which had attended the Advent movement. Another class firmly held that the Lord had led them in their past experience; and as they waited and watched and prayed to know the will of God, they saw that their great High Priest had entered upon another work of ministration, and, following Him by faith, they were led to understand also the closing work of the church, and were prepared to receive and give to the world the warning of the third angel of [Revelation 14](#). [See also [The Great Controversy, 428-432](#), for a similar statement.]—[The Spirit of Prophecy 4:271, 272](#).

The reader of this chapter, “An Open and a Shut Door,” is referred to an appendix note, most likely written by J. H. Waggoner. We quote a portion of it:

Note 6. Page 268.—Almost all Adventists, including Mr. Miller, did, for a short time after their disappointment in 1844, believe that the world had received its last warning. They could hardly think otherwise, with

their faith in the message which they had given—“the hour of his judgment is come.” [Revelation 14:6, 7](#). They naturally thought that this proclamation must close the dispensation. They were as unable to find their bearings at once as were the disciples when their Lord, whom they had hailed as their king coming to His throne, was crucified and buried. In both cases they were unable to comprehend their terrible disappointment.

But the idea that the work of the gospel was finished was soon renounced, except by some fanatical ones who would neither be counseled nor receive instruction. But most of those who renounced it, and yet retained their faith in the work, *continued to believe that they who clearly saw the light of the Heaven-sent warning and persistently rejected it were rejected of the Lord*. There is no more fanaticism in that than there is in the common belief that those obdurate Jews who continued to reject the light of the advanced truth sent to that generation, were rejected of God.—[The Spirit of Prophecy 4:499](#). (Italics supplied.)

The note then deals with the experience of the early Sabbath-keeping Adventists and their acceptance of the sanctuary truth and an understanding of the message of the third angel. It closes with a statement that is well supported elsewhere in this volume:

Among the first who taught the third message and the open door was the author of this book [E. G. White]. By her untiring zeal, her earnest appeals, and the clear light of the testimony which she bore, she did much to advance the cause, to correct the errors of fanaticism, to renew the hopes of the desponding, and to cheer the hearts of the “little flock” who loved the appearing of their soon-coming Saviour.—[Ibid., 4:500](#).

### **Positive Denial of the False Charge**

Another retrospective Ellen G. White declaration was penned in August, 1874. It deals with a charge made by Miles Grant, a

first-day Adventist minister, that she had declared on the basis of the visions that probation for the world had closed:

*Dear Brother Loughborough,*

[259]

I hereby testify in the fear of God that the charges of Miles Grant, of Mrs. Burdick, and others published in the *Crisis* are not true. The statements in reference to my course in '44 are false.

With my brethren and sisters, after the time passed in '44 I did believe no more sinners would be converted. But I never had a vision that no more sinners would be converted. And am clear and free to state no one has ever heard me say or has read from my pen statements which will justify them in the charges they have made against me upon this point.

It was on my first journey east to relate my visions [mid-February, 1845] that the precious light in regard to the heavenly sanctuary was opened before me and I was shown the open and shut door. We believed that the Lord was soon to come in the clouds of heaven. I was shown that there was a great work to be done in the world for those who had not had the light and rejected it. Our brethren could not understand this with our faith in the immediate appearing of Christ.

Some accused me of saying that my Lord delayeth His coming, especially the fanatical ones. I saw that in '44 God had opened a door and no man could shut it, and shut a door and no man could open it. Those who rejected the light which was brought to the world by the message of the second angel went into darkness, and how great was that darkness.

I never have stated or written that the world was doomed or damned. I never have under any circumstances used this language to anyone, however sinful. I have ever had messages of reproof for those who used these harsh expressions.—[Letter 2, 1874](#) (see also [Selected Messages 1:74](#)).

## Explained Further as a Charge is Answered in 1883

In 1883 Ellen White wrote at length on the subject in answer to a charge brought against her that her visions taught that probation closed for the world in 1844. It is one of the few statements written by her in her own defense:

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

[260]

I am still a believer in the shut-door theory, but not in the sense in which we at first employed the term or in which it is employed by my opponents.

There was a shut door in Noah's day. There was at that time a withdrawal of the Spirit of God from the sinful race that perished in the waters of the Flood. God Himself gave the shut-door message to Noah:

“My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” ([Genesis 6:3](#)).

There was a shut door in the days of Abraham. Mercy ceased to plead with the inhabitants of Sodom, and all but Lot, with his wife and two daughters, were consumed by the fire sent down from heaven.

There was a shut door in Christ's day. The Son of God declared to the unbelieving Jews of that generation, “Your house is left unto you desolate” ([Matthew 23:38](#)).

Looking down the stream of time to the last days, the same infinite power proclaimed through John:

“These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth” ([Revelation 3:7](#)).

I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door in 1844. All who saw the light of the

first and second angels' messages and rejected that light were left in darkness. And those who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them.

[261] Those who did not see the light had not the guilt of its rejection. It was only the class who had despised the light from heaven that the Spirit of God could not reach. And this class included, as I have stated, both those who refused to accept the message when it was presented to them, and also those who, having received it, afterward renounced their faith. These might have a form of godliness, and profess to be followers of Christ; but having no living connection with God, they would be taken captive by the delusions of Satan.—[Manuscript 4, 1883](#) (see also [Selected Messages 1:63, 64](#)).

### **Developing Perception on Ellen White's Part**

Three or four decades after the experience, Ellen White could look back and see the full significance of the light given her that guarded against a very restrictive stance on the shut door, but it seems clear that in her early experience the full application of the visions was not at first fully perceived. From the light given her in 1844 in her first vision, there were 144,000 "living saints" who would greet their Lord at His second coming ([Early Writings, 15](#)). The records indicate only 50,000 to 100,000 were awaiting His coming in 1844. As noted earlier, in the summer of 1845, Ellen Harmon was at Paris, Maine, some months before she had ever written the account of her first vision. She there took a stance quite distinct from those who held extreme views on the shut-door question. Marion C. Stowell (Truesdail) brought to her the particulars of the experience of a young woman, a close friend, whose father had prevented her from attending the Advent meetings and consequently had not rejected light. In a statement attested to by four others who were present, Ellen is reported to have replied:

God never has shown me that there is no salvation for such persons. It is only those who have had the light of truth presented to them and knowingly rejected it.—[The Review and Herald, April 7, 1885](#).

It is indisputable that there were a few years in which Ellen herself did not understand the full significance of the “shut door” and “open door.” This is evidenced in a very valuable letter only recently come to light written by Otis Nichols to William Miller on April 20, 1846, and quoted from in chapter 5. To reach accurate final conclusions on the matter, all available sources must be taken into account.

### **A Term with a Changing Meaning**

One point is certain: The term *shut door* was employed through the period of 1845 to 1852 with a gradually changing and broadening significance. Through most of that period it referred primarily to confidence in the fulfillment of prophecy on October 22, 1844. As pointed out by Ellen White, those who did hold such confidence were known for a time for their shut-door views. A vision or two and several experiences opened the eyes of the pioneers and aided them eventually in reaching sound views of their relation to the shut door.

[262]

In November, 1848, the vision given at the home of Otis Nichols calling for publishing the Sabbath truth indicated that there was a work before the pioneers that would spread the Sabbath message like streams of light all around the world. Then early the next year there was a more specific vision.

### **Vision of the Open and Shut Door**

On March 24, 1849, a vision of an open and a shut door was given to Ellen White. This is referred to by some of the early church workers as a repetition of the vision at Exeter, Maine, in mid-February, 1845. Many of the same points are dealt with. She saw Jesus transfer His ministry from the holy place in the heavenly sanctuary to the Most Holy Place, closing one door and opening

another. As Ellen White wrote of this vision to Leonard and Elvira Hastings, she referred to the fact that there were those at Paris, Maine, who had given up the “shut door.” In other words, they had abandoned their confidence in the fulfillment of prophecy on October 22, 1844. Reference has been made to this in chapter 10.

She wrote of what was revealed to her in this vision:

I saw the commandments of God and shut door could not be separated. I saw the time for the commandments of God to shine out to His people was when the door was opening in the inner apartment of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844. Then Jesus rose up and shut the door in the outer apartment and opened the door in the inner apartment and passed into the Most Holy Place, and the faith of Israel now reaches within the second veil where Jesus now stands by the ark.

I saw that Jesus had shut the door in the holy place and no man can open it, and that He had opened the door in the Most Holy Place and no man can shut it; and that since Jesus had opened the door in the Most Holy Place the commandments have been shining out and God has been testing His people on the holy Sabbath.—[Letter 5, 1849](#).

[263]

The account of the vision continues. As given in the letter, it parallels very closely the account given in [Early Writings, 42-45](#), in the chapter “The Open and the Shut Door.” Attention should be given to the closing paragraph:

I saw that the mysterious signs and wonders and false reformations would increase and spread. The reformations that were shown me were not reformations from error to truth. My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked, but could not see it; for the time for their salvation is past.—[Ibid., 45](#).

The pattern is developing. Truths are opening up. Standing out are the Sabbath and the understanding of the sanctuary in heaven. In-

separably linked with this is confidence in the fulfillment of prophecy concerning October 22, 1844. Referring to the passage quoted above, Ellen White wrote in 1854:

The “false reformations” referred to on page 27 are yet to be more fully seen. This view relates more particularly to those who have heard and rejected the light of the Advent doctrine. They are given over to strong delusions. Such will not have “the travail of soul for sinners” as formerly. Having rejected the Advent, and being given over to the delusions of Satan, “the time for their salvation is past.” This does not, however, relate to those who have not heard and have not rejected the doctrine of the Second Advent.—[Supplement to the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White, 4.](#) (see also [Early Writings, 45](#)).

### **Labor for Sinners During the Shut-Door Period of 1845 to 1851**

We now introduce several exhibits giving evidence that James and Ellen White did, as there were opportunities (limited as they might be), work for sinners through the years between 1845 and 1851.

Reference has just been made to Ellen Harmon’s experience in Paris, Maine, in the summer of 1845, as reported by Mrs. Truesdail.

J. N. Loughborough, in an article in the *Review and Herald* dated September 25, 1866, makes reference to the vision given to Ellen White in Exeter, Maine, in mid-February, 1845, and states:

[264]

Brother White went on to show that it was the visions that led them out of the extreme view of the shut door.... Instead of leading them to cease to labor for the unconverted, it led them to labor for those who are now Brother and Sister Patch of Minnesota.

Hiram Patch and his fiancée were not in the Advent movement of 1843-1844. Their experience is related in chapter 11.

### Experience of Heman Churchill (July, 1850)

The *Advent Review*, volume 1, number 1, published in August, 1850, at Auburn, New York, carries a report from James White entitled “Our Tour East.” Meetings were held at Johnson, Vermont, on July 6 and 7, with “quite a number of scattered brethren and sisters present” (AR, August, 1850).

We left the brethren in that vicinity, strong in the “commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” One brother, who had not been in the Advent, and had made no public profession of religion until 1845, came out clear and strong on the whole truth. He had never opposed the Advent, and it is evident that the Lord had been leading him, though his experience had not been just like ours. Such, who come into the truth at the eleventh hour, may expect great trials.— Ibid.

George I. Butler remembered the meeting and identified the man as Heman Churchill, of Stowe, Vermont, a man whose name appears often in reports of the progress of the cause. Butler writes:

His was one of the very first cases of conversion from the world to the present truth, which occurred after 1844.... I remember him well as he came to Waterbury, Vermont, and attended meeting in my father’s house, where a few met from time to time. They were quite surprised at first that one who had been an unbeliever should manifest an interest in the Advent doctrine. He was not repulsed but welcomed. He was earnest and zealous, and as they discerned in him sincerity, they accepted him as a true convert.—[The Review and Herald, April 7, 1885.](#)

[265]

### J. H. Waggoner Recalls His Experience

Writing in 1883, J. H. Waggoner made reference to his own experience, much like Heman Churchill’s, and wrote:

I have before me the report of a meeting held in Vermont, signed Joseph Bates, dated Fairhaven, November 4, 1850. In the last paragraph the report says:

“The two Brothers Martin and their companions, with two others in Bennington, professed their clear convictions of the seventh-day Sabbath and shut door.”

This, then, was noted as an article of their faith as late as 1850. But now notice further. In this same report he says: “Brother and Sister Butler came from Waterbury with Brethren Chamberlain and Churchill.” And yet Brother Churchill was not in the first message; his first Advent experience was in the faith of the third angel’s message, the Sabbath, and the shut door! It is also true that Brother Churchill was held off for a time by some who were in doubt about his case, but *Sister White had a message of hope for him*, which silenced the objections of all who had confidence in the visions.... The visions were the means of bringing them out to the faith of an open door as well as the shut door.—RH Supplement, August 14, 1883.

In a “Conference Address” published in [Ibid., June 11, 1861](#), signed by J. H. Waggoner and several others, Waggoner made a veiled reference to his own experience. Apparently the penman for the group, he was identified by Ellen White in her 1883 statement as found in [Selected Messages 1:64](#). Note the reference, penned by Waggoner, to the “shut door” in this 1861 “Conference Address“:

If we go back to a period of from six to nine years, we find the believers in the third angel’s message, few in number, very much scattered, and in no place assuming to take the name of a church. Our views of the work before us were then mostly vague and indefinite, some still retaining the idea adopted by the body of Advent believers in 1844, with William Miller at their head, that our work for “the world” was finished, and that the message was confined to those of the original Advent faith. So firmly was this believed that one of our number

[Waggoner himself] was nearly refused the message, the individual presenting it having doubts of the possibility of his salvation because he was not in “the ‘44 move.”—[The Review and Herald, June 11, 1861](#).

Ellen White, quoting this in her 1883 statement, added:

To this I need only add, that in the same meeting in which it was urged that the message could not be given to this brother, a testimony was given me through vision to encourage him to hope in God and give his heart fully to Jesus, which he did then and there.—[Manuscript 4, 1883](#) (see also [Selected Messages 1:64](#)).

The Patch, Churchill, and Waggoner experiences, and the experience reported by Marion Stowell, provide a few of how the pioneers related themselves to the opening door.

### A Review of 1851 Developments

We have pointed out that God could lead His people only as fast as they could grasp unfolding truth and follow intelligently. This leading is found in His Word, in His messages to the prophets, and in transpiring circumstances. All three played a part in the developments of 1851, but circumstances played a leading role.

Ellen White described conditions in 1850:

In 1850 my husband and I visited Vermont, Canada, New Hampshire, and Maine. The meetings were held in private houses. *It was then next to impossible to obtain access to unbelievers.* The disappointment in 1844 had confused the minds of many, and they would not listen to any explanation of the matter.—[The Review and Herald, November 20, 1883](#). (Italics supplied.)

But by 1851 a change was taking place. In the *Review and Herald* James White could report:

Now the door is open almost everywhere to present the truth, and many are prepared to read the publications who have formerly had no interest to investigate.—[Ibid.](#), [August 19, 1851](#)

This change in the situation that now provided circumstances favorable for the heralding of the three angels' messages was indeed welcome. During the seven years since the great Disappointment there had come onto the stage of action an increasing number of those who in 1844 were children and had not yet reached the age of accountability. Added to these were many who had not taken a decided stand against the truths presented in the great Advent Awakening, and with the fading memory of the 1844 experience were now ready to listen.

[267]

It is apparent that James and Ellen White had been in the lead in advocating an open door to salvation on the part of those who had not rejected the message in 1844. A basic factor in this was the visions given to Ellen White.

It took time for most to come into an understanding of all the involvements in the shut door—the door of mercy for all the world; the open and shut door in the heavenly sanctuary; the door that closed for those who had rejected the clear Advent preaching of the 1840s; the door open to youth who had not attained the age of accountability; the door open to those who had not heard and rejected the Advent preaching in the Millerite awakening.

### **Criticism of Deletions from the First Vision**

As already noted, the record of Ellen White's first vision appeared in several forms before taking its place in her first book in 1851. As first written out by her on December 20, 1845, in a personal letter to Enoch Jacobs, editor of the *Day-Star*, she stated that it was not written for publication in his journal but for his personal benefit. However, at the request of friends he published it in the issue of January 24, 1846. James White and H. S. Gurney took it from the *Day-Star* and had it printed in a broadside on April 6, 1846. On May 30, 1847, James White included it in his little pamphlet *A Word to the "Little Flock,"* adding Scripture references. From there

it was drawn into the *Review Extra* of July 21, 1851, and then in her first book, *Experience and Views*, published in August, 1851. It was introduced in the two 1851 printings by her significant statement that “more recent views have been more full. I shall therefore leave out a portion and prevent repetition.—Page 9.

[268] The major deletion is of materials descriptive of what she saw in heaven, especially the temple, a description similar to that of the vision of April 3, 1847, in which the Sabbath was confirmed. The other deletion, one that has attracted attention, relates to those who took their eyes off Jesus and fell from the path to “the wicked world below.” At this point in her letter to Jacobs, editor of the *Day-Star*, she wrote:

It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the City, as all the wicked world which God had rejected. They fell all the way along the path one after another.” (See also *A Word to the “Little Flock,”* p. 14.) [A facsimile copy of this little pamphlet is currently available at adventist book centers, and the text is reproduced in F. D. Nichol’s *Ellen G. White and her critics*, pp. 561-584.]

It was not until some thirty years after the publication of *Experience and Views* in 1851 that question was raised concerning the deletion, in a pamphlet published by a group made up of those who had withdrawn from Seventh-day Adventists because of church organization and the Spirit of Prophecy. These formed the Church of God (Seventh Day), in Marion, Iowa. In this pamphlet Ellen White was accused of suppressing materials she did not wish to come before the public. Not often did she turn aside from her routine work to answer her critics, but on this occasion she did, in a statement on file as [Manuscript 4, 1883](#), now found in [Selected Messages 1:59-73](#). She introduced her explanation of the charges thus:

My attention has recently been called to a sixteen-page pamphlet published by C [A. C. Long], of Marion, Iowa, entitled *Comparison of the Early Writings of Mrs. White With Later Publications*. The writer states that

portions of my earlier visions, as first printed, have been suppressed in the work recently published under the title *Early Writings of Mrs. E. G. White*, and he conjectures as a reason for such suppression that these passages teach doctrines now repudiated by us as a people....

The first quotation mentioned by C is from a pamphlet of twenty-four pages published in 1847, entitled *A Word to the "Little Flock."* Here are the lines omitted in *Experience and Views*:

"It was just as impossible for them [those that gave up their faith in the '44 movement] to get on the path again and go to the City, as all the wicked world which God had rejected. They fell all the way along the path one after another." ... It is claimed that these expressions prove the shut-door doctrine, and that this is the reason of their omission in later editions. But in fact they teach only that which has been and is still held by us as a people.

[269]

It is in this setting, as noted earlier in this chapter, that she explained that "all who saw the light of the first and second angels' messages and rejected that light were left in darkness" and also those who later "renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, thereby rejecting the Spirit of God." These she contrasted with "those who did not see the light" and "had not the guilt of its rejection." Then she declared:

These two classes are brought to view in the vision—those who declared the light which they had followed a delusion, and *the wicked of the world who, having rejected the light, had been rejected of God. No reference is made to those who had not seen the light, and therefore were not guilty of its rejection.*—[Manuscript 4, 1883](#) (see also [Ibid., 1:59-64](#)). (Italics supplied.)

As attention is focused on phrases in the first written account of the vision, it is proper to point out that in the letter that Jacobs published Ellen would naturally condense the presentation and confine

the written statement to just the essential features. At the same time, she would write with much less painstaking than would ordinarily be required in preparing material for publication. This she soon discovered, as is evidenced by her explanations that she added to her first book in 1852. She had discovered that in writing for print great care must be taken to phrase the message in such a way that none might misunderstand the intent.

[270] A point of considerable significance must not be overlooked, and that is, a few months before these words were penned, Ellen Harmon in Paris, Maine, had made it clear that from what God had shown her there was opportunity for the salvation of a person who had not heard and rejected the first angel's message. This, and the absence of statements declaring the extreme shut-door position, would guard against reading into the phrases in question the interpretation of probation's close for the world generally in 1844.

### Why Were the Lines Omitted in 1851?

It may be asked, then, why were the three lines omitted from the printing of the vision in 1851 in Mrs. White's first book? In introducing the vision in the book, she gives a very general reason for all omission—space and repetition of subject matter. This would apply more to the paragraphs descriptive of the new earth than the three lines in question. As to the statement embodied in them, the author herself had the right, even the responsibility, to choose content and wording for her book that would correctly convey what was revealed to her. If there were phrases that were capable of distortion or interpretation to mean that which she did not intend to teach, she had the privilege and even the duty of handling the matter in such a way that the printed account would correctly reflect her intentions.

Again, one must not overlook Ellen White's reference to the "144,000 living saints" and her later explanation of what she meant by the "shut door." One must be alert to other evidences that indicate she did not hold *the extreme view* of no salvation for sinners, either at the time she wrote the letter to Enoch Jacobs on December 20, 1845, or in 1851, when her first book was published.

In the light of developing history, what to some may at first have seemed perplexing becomes clear and evinces God's gentle but certain leading of His children in difficult times. Fuller documentation and explanation in the form of a sixty-nine-page document titled *Ellen G. White and the Shut-Door Question—The Experience of Early Seventh-day Adventist Believers in Its Historical Context*, prepared by the author in 1971, is available for more detailed study. [Copies may be secured from the Ellen G. White Estate or the Sda Ellen G. White research centers.] An exhaustive statement also appears in F. D. Nichol's *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pages 161-252.

[271] **Chapter 17—(1852-1853) The Message Pushes to  
the West**

With faithful Charlie pulling their carriage, James and Ellen White drove into their yard in Rochester on the afternoon of Wednesday, October 6, returning from their 1852 trip east.

The *Review* office staff had not missed an issue in the eleven weeks the editor was absent. This proved to James White that others could carry many of the routine tasks to which he had given attention in the past three years. Every other Thursday, two thousand copies were “struck off” on the hand press and mailed to 1,600 homes ([The Review and Herald, June 27, 1935](#)). The *Youth’s Instructor*, started in August, was mailed to nearly one thousand homes. Now there was need for more space in which to work. The first important action after getting back was to rent office space in downtown Rochester on South St. Paul Street, on the third floor of an office building, and move the printing work to this new location.

### **Strict Economy Maintained**

[272] It took the strictest of economy to keep things going at the home and the office, but James and Ellen White knew something of poverty and economy. Soon after getting settled in the home on Mount Hope Avenue, arrangements were made to have the open land near the house prepared for a spring garden. As the plow started to turn the soil Ellen noticed many small potatoes that had not frozen during the mild winter. The drought the preceding year had resulted in a crop thought not worth harvesting. What a find! Soon Ellen, with pail in hand, was following the plowman, gathering in what she saw to be a precious harvest. In the White household, economy was considered not only a necessity but a religious duty.

It was Ellen White’s philosophy that neither a family nor an individual should spend an entire income. A reserve, no matter how small, must always be kept for a “rainy day.” In the Rochester home,

with its large family to feed, she knew such a day would come. From her allowance for maintaining the home, she astutely took out a few coins each week and slipped them into a stocking hidden behind a cupboard door in the kitchen. It was her secret, one she did not share even with James. There did come a day when an express shipment of paper arrived, “collect.” There was no money to pay for the paper, which was needed for the next issue of the *Review*. In distress James told Ellen he did not know what to do. He watched her closely as she went quietly to the cupboard, opened the door, and took down the stocking from the nail that held it. As James looked on with wide-open eyes, she emptied its contents on the kitchen table. There was sufficient in that stocking to meet the bill, and the next issue of the *Review* came off the press on time.

But these were indeed days of sacrifice, on the part of everyone connected with the enterprise. White noted this as he told of moving the printing office to its downtown location. Joyfully he reported that October day, “The office is not in debt.” He explained how this could be. The employees were willing to sacrifice as he, the editor and proprietor, had done:

Brethren Belden and Stowell, who have worked in the office the past six months, have received but a trifle more than their board. Others engaged in the same work have received but a trifle more than their board.—[Ibid.](#), [October 14, 1852](#)

White was happy to write:

It is now evident that God had been well pleased with the effort of His children to obtain an office to be conducted in strict obedience to the fourth commandment. We are incapable of expressing our feelings of gratitude to God, whose wise providence has ordered this thing, and to the dear brethren who have so promptly acted their part.—[Ibid.](#)

[273]

### Working in the Opening West

Now James and Ellen White were able to get away from Rochester to attend meetings in western New York State. Through editorials and back page notes in the *Review* he kept the field informed. Letters addressed to the editor kept the progress of the cause and the challenging new openings before the rapidly growing church. During the three months they were in the East, there were an accelerating number of reports coming from Michigan disclosing the almost explosive way in which the Sabbath truth was being proclaimed and accepted in that new “western” State.

At about the time White started the publication of the *Present Truth* in the summer of 1849, Joseph Bates had gone to Jackson, Michigan. From among the Adventists there he raised up a little company of Sabbathkeepers, with Dan Palmer, a blacksmith, and his wife among the first to take their stand. Others in the group were H. S. Case, J. C. Bowles, and C. P. Russell. The leaven was at work, and by early 1852 other companies of believers were springing up. Such names as M. E. and Angeline Cornell of Tyrone and the Kellogg family of Lapeer appeared in reports—new believers bubbling over in their enthusiasm for “the truth.”

Joseph Bates reported trips to Jackson in April and again in June in 1852, each attended with success. James and Ellen White could not escape observing what was taking place, and soon after their return to Rochester from the East in October, 1852, they determined to visit Michigan as soon as the work in Rochester would allow.

A letter from youthful Merritt Kellogg, an older son of J. P. Kellogg, reported on meetings and baptisms. Interest was increasing and little bands were springing up here and there ([Ibid., March 3, 1853](#)).

#### First Visit of James and Ellen White to Michigan

The May 12 *Review* carried a note from James White:

Providence permitting, we will hold conferences as follows: Mill Grove, New York, May 21 and 22. Tyrone, Michigan, May 27, 28, and 29. Jackson, Michigan, June 3, 4, and 5.

They would travel by train to Buffalo, New York, and take a boat for Detroit, Michigan. Mill Grove was en route, and there the Roswell Cottrell family, Seventh Day Baptists, were taking their stand for the full third angel's message. [274]

As the day approached when he and his wife were to leave Rochester, James White was in bed with a high fever. His associates gathered about his bed and earnestly prayed for his recovery. He was relieved but left very weak. He and Ellen decided to start out, traveling the fifty miles to Mill Grove. If he did not continue to recover they would return to Rochester. At the Cottrell home he was extremely weak and feared he would have to turn back. "We were in great perplexity," wrote Ellen White.

Must we be driven from the work by bodily infirmities? Would Satan be permitted to exercise his power upon us, and contend for our usefulness and lives as long as we remain in the world? We knew that God could limit the power of Satan. He may suffer us to be tried in the furnace, but will bring us forth purified and better fitted for His work.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 301.](#)

Ellen found her way to a log house nearby, and there she poured out her soul to God that He would rebuke the fever and give her husband strength to pursue their journey west. She reported:

My faith firmly grasped the promises of God. I there obtained the evidence that if we should proceed on our journey to Michigan the angel of God would go with us.

When I related to my husband the exercise of my mind, he said that his mind had been exercised in a similar manner, and we decided to go trusting in the Lord.—[Ibid.](#)

Every mile they traveled James felt stronger, the Lord sustaining him. The night trip across Lake Erie to Detroit on a ferry carrying six hundred or more passengers was enjoyable. Theirs was a pleasant stateroom with every convenience. Of the overnight trip Ellen wrote:

We slept sweetly through the night. James felt much better than he expected to. He began to feel better directly after leaving Mill Grove, and he has been growing better ever since.—[Letter 2, 1853](#).

[275] In Michigan they found themselves among friends—new believers. They were entertained first in the Henry Lyon home near Plymouth where they met M. E. Cornell and his wife. Then they were taken to Tyrone for three days of meetings. There they met the Kellogg family, J. P. and his wife and the children, including 21-year-old Merritt. Meetings were held in a barn ([The Review and Herald, June 27, 1935](#)). Sabbath morning Ellen White was given a vision, and what took place was observed very carefully by those present. Merritt Kellogg later wrote of this:

We were engaged in a prayer and social meeting Sabbath morning at about nine o'clock. Brother White, my father, and Sister White had prayed, and I was praying at the time. There had been no excitement, no demonstrations. We did plead earnestly with God, however, that He would bless the work in Michigan.

As Sister White gave that triumphant shout of “Glory! glory! glory!” which you have heard her give so often as she goes into vision, Brother White arose and informed the audience that his wife was in vision. After stating the manner of her visions, and that she did not breathe while in vision, he invited anyone who wished to do so to come forward and examine her. Dr. Drummond, a physician, who was also a first-day Adventist preacher, who (before he saw her in vision) had declared her visions to be of mesmeric origin, and that he could give her a vision, stepped forward, and after a thorough examination, turned very pale, and remarked, “She doesn’t breathe!”

I am quite certain that she did not breathe at that time while in vision, nor in any of several others which she had when I was present. The coming out of vision was as marked as her going into it. The first indication

we had that the vision was ended was in her again beginning to breathe. She drew her first breath deep, long, and full, in a manner showing that her lungs had been entirely empty of air. After drawing the first breath, several minutes passed before she drew a second, which filled the lungs precisely as did the first, then a pause of two minutes, and a third inhalation, after which the breathing became natural.—M. G. Kellogg, M.D., Battle Creek, Michigan, December 28, 1890, in [The General Conference Bulletin, 1893, 59, 60.](#)

### **With the Believers in Jackson, Michigan**

[276]

On Wednesday after the weekend meetings at Tyrone, James and Ellen White hastened on to Jackson where meetings were scheduled to be held beginning Friday afternoon, June 3, 1853, through Sunday. Shortly before, trouble had arisen in the church. The wife of Dan Palmer had had a series of irritating experiences with an unconverted neighbor. Off guard, she had spoken harshly to her, calling her a “witch.” The daughter of one of the church members had overheard, and charged her with the use of a crude word that sounded much like the one she employed. Though pressed by the officers of the church, Mrs. Palmer denied the charge and refused to disclose the word she did use. Two of the brethren insisted that she was guilty and should confess. When James and Ellen White arrived, they found cross accusations and dissension in the church. The entire Jackson church was present for the June 3 meeting.

As Ellen White was praying at the opening of the meeting, she was taken off in vision and certain features of the situation were revealed to her. Coming out of vision, she had a message for Mrs. Palmer, reproving her for the wrong spirit she had manifested toward her unbelieving neighbor. She stated that more had been shown to her, but it was not clear in her mind.

The two accusing brethren, Case and Russell, were pleased. They arose and expressed unbounded confidence in the visions as a genuine manifestation of the Spirit of God. Turning to Mrs. Palmer, in a harsh and stern manner they urged her to confess. She remained silent.

The next day, Sabbath, Ellen White was given another vision. In this she was shown that Mrs. Palmer did not use the word with which she was charged; she was also shown the unchristian character of Case and Russell and the very wrong course they had pursued. Mrs. Palmer made a full confession, disclosing that she had called the irritating neighbor a “witch” and sought forgiveness for her wrong feelings and attitudes.

[277] Case and Russell bitterly complained of the reproof given them. Demonstrating the just character of the words of reproof, they were ready to give up everything. Friday they had been in full support of the visions, and could not doubt. Now on Sabbath, with their own sins pointed out, they turned against the visions. With a few others they started the first dissident movement among the Sabbathkeeping Adventists, known as the *Messenger* party. Months later they started a journal called the *Messenger of Truth*.

The young minister J. N. Loughborough, who had been laboring in Ohio and parts of Michigan, had caught up with the Whites Thursday afternoon, June 2, just before the Jackson meeting. He found that that morning Ellen White had been writing out a part of the vision given to her in Tyrone, which related to several companies of Sabbathkeepers in the State. She asked Loughborough to take her pencil copy and make a careful copy with pen and ink. This he did and was interested and surprised at some of its disclosures.

### **The Strange Case of a Self-Appointed Woman Evangelist**

One portion of the vision Loughborough copied related to a woman professing great holiness who was endeavoring to introduce herself to the new believers in Michigan. Of course, Ellen White, had never met the woman. All she knew about her was revealed in the vision at Tyrone, just after entering the State. M. E. Cornell, who had newly embraced the third angel’s message, had met the woman a few days before the Whites reached Michigan but he did not mention her to them. When he learned of what Ellen White had written of the situation, he told Loughborough, “Now we will watch, and see how the case comes out.” He would not tell Loughborough where she was. When Ellen White asked him about the matter, he replied, “If there is such a woman you will probably find her, as you

have appointments where you will be apt to see most, if not all, of the Sabbathkeepers in the State.” Loughborough wrote of the matter:

In Sister White’s written description of the woman she not only told her mode of procedure, but that when she should reprove her, she would “put on a sanctimonious look, and say, “God knows my heart.”” She said this woman was traveling about the country with a young man, while her own husband, an older man, was at home working to support them in their course. Sister White said the Lord had shown her that “with all this woman’s pretensions to holiness, she was guilty of violating the seventh commandment.”—[The Review and Herald, May 6, 1884.](#)

[278]

With this description of the woman in his pocket, Loughborough waited with curiosity to see how the case would turn out.

### Lost on the Way to Vergennes

From Jackson, the workers moved on to Battle Creek, nearby Bedford, and Vergennes. The trip to Vergennes was memorable, one that Ellen White later recalled in an article in the *Signs of the Times*:

I well remember the long journey we took ... in Michigan. We were on our way to hold a meeting in Vergennes. We were fifteen miles from our destination. Our driver had passed over the road repeatedly and was well acquainted with it, but was compelled to acknowledge that he had lost the way. We traveled forty miles that day, through the woods, over logs and fallen trees, where there was scarcely a trace of a road.

I was feeble, and fainted twice on the way. We had no food. The brother who drove the team tried to find some water; but there was none fit for use. He made efforts to obtain a little milk from the cows we met on the road; but they were too wild to be approached by a stranger.

As I was fainting with thirst, I thought of travelers perishing in the desert. Cool streams of water seemed to lie directly before me; but as we passed on they proved to be only an illusion. A goblet of water seemed just

within my grasp. I eagerly reached out my hand to take it, but it was gone. My husband prayed for me that I might be sustained on that dreary journey. We could not understand why we should be left to this singular wandering in the wilderness.—[The Signs of the Times, October 19, 1876.](#)

Finally they broke through into a little clearing and spied a log cabin. To their delight they found the housewife at home. She welcomed the wearied and famished travelers and invited them in and provided them with refreshments. As they rested, Ellen White talked with her of Jesus and heaven and then left with her a copy of her little sixty-four-page book *Experience and Views*.

[279] At a camp meeting at Lansing, Michigan, in 1876, Ellen found the answer to what had seemed a mystery. After a meeting at which Ellen had spoken she was approached by a woman who grasped her hand and inquired if she remembered calling at a log house in the woods more than twenty years before. The woman had provided the wandering strangers with refreshments, and Ellen White had left with her a copy of her little book *Experience and Views*. The woman now introduced quite a company to Ellen White, all Seventh-day Adventists, who dated their experience to the influence of that copy of her first book. Commenting further on the experience, Ellen White wrote:

She stated that she had lent that little book to her neighbors, as new families had settled around her, until there was very little left of it and she expressed a great desire to obtain another copy of the work. Her neighbors were deeply interested in it, and were desirous of seeing the writer. She said that when I called upon her I talked to her of Jesus and the beauties of heaven, and that the words were spoken with such fervor that she was charmed, and had never forgotten them. Since that time the Lord had sent ministers to preach the truth to them, and now there was quite a company observing the Sabbath. The influence of that little book, now worn out with perusing, had extended from one to another,

performing its silent work, until the soil was ready for the seeds of truth.—*Ibid.*(see also [Evangelism](#), 448, 449).

### **The Vergennes Meeting and Mrs. Alcott**

On June 11 they reached the home where they were to be entertained. Loughborough recounted what happened:

As we alighted from the carriage, and were standing under a large apple tree in front of the house, Sister White said to her husband, “James, we have got to the church where that woman lives whom I saw in the Tyronne vision.” “Why,” said Brother White, “this is not the house where she lives, is it?” “No,” said Sister White, “but I saw this man and woman in connection with the case. The woman in this house has no confidence in that woman, but the man here thinks she is all right.”

Loughborough commented:

[280]

I thought that was a plain venture in the matter, as there had been no exchange of words between Sister White and these persons on the subject.

As we still stood under the tree, Elder Cornell spoke and said, “Brother Brigham is coming.” Sister White looked up, while they were still some ten rods off, and said, “Oh! I saw them in connection with this case. None of that load have any confidence in that woman’s pretensions.”

Then another load drove up. As she looked at them, she said, “That load is divided on the case. Those on the front seat have no confidence in the woman; those on the back seat think she is all right.” Then a third load came up. She said, “They are all under the woman’s influence.”

She then said, “This must be the church where that woman lives; for I have seen all these persons in con-

nection with that affair.”—[The Review and Herald, May 6, 1884](#).

Sabbath morning the meeting was held in a large barn three miles beyond the home where the visitors were entertained. Loughborough recalled:

While Brother White was preaching, an old man, a young man, and a woman came in. The two former sat down directly in front of Brother White, while the woman took a seat close to the barn door. After a brief discourse from Brother White, Sister White arose to speak. She introduced her remarks by speaking of the care ministers should have that they mar not the work committed to them. She said God could not call a woman to travel about the country with some other man than her husband.

Finally she said, “That woman who just sat down near the door claims that God has called her to preach. She is traveling with this young man who just sat down in front of the desk, while this old man, her husband—God pity him!—is toiling at home to earn means which they are using to carry on their iniquity. She professes to be very holy—to be sanctified. With all her pretensions and talk about holiness, God has showed me that she and this young man have violated the seventh commandment.”

[281]

All in that barn knew that Sister White had never personally seen these individuals until they came into that barn. Her picking out of the persons and her delineation of the case had weight in favor of her vision.—[Ibid.](#)

Now all eyes turned toward the woman in question, a Mrs. Alcott. What would be her reaction to this plain delineation of her strange witness and her adultery? “What did she do?” asked Loughborough as he told the story.

After sitting about one minute, she slowly arose to her feet, put on a sanctimonious look, and said, “God—knows—my—heart.” That was all she said, and sat down. Here was just what the Lord showed (May 28) that the woman would say. On June 11 she did just as it was said she would do, and said the identical words predicted she would say when reproved, and no more.—[Ibid.](#)

During the next few weeks opposition grew that led the young man in the case to return to Canada. Before he left he was asked by one of the Adventists if Ellen White’s vision concerning him was true. He replied, “That vision was too true.”—[Ibid., June 10, 1884.](#) Some weeks later Mrs. Alcott, when questioned by several Adventist women living in Greenville as to the truthfulness of Ellen White’s vision concerning her, replied, “I consider Sister White a good, devoted, Christian woman. While I may not regard her visions just as you do, I shall not say one word against her or her work.”—[Ibid.](#)

She would not deny the truthfulness of the vision.

### **Back Home in Rochester**

It was Tuesday, June 21, when James and Ellen White arrived back in Rochester. Ellen White reported thankfully, “We ... found our family as well as usual and what was best of all, enjoying the sweet presence and blessing of God.”—[Letter 3, 1853.](#)

They were not home long before a comprehensive vision was given to her. She wrote:

Last Sabbath [July 2] the power of God settled upon me; I was taken off in vision and saw many things of great interest to us. I have scribbled off the vision. It covers twenty-four pages. Many things were explained to us which we did not understand and which were necessary for us to know.

I saw that we must have the truth got out oftener; that the only paper in the land owned and approved of

God should come out oftener than once in two weeks, while papers that are full of error come out weekly and some oftener than that. I saw that the way was opening for us to extend our labors.—[Letter 5, 1853](#).

Then she was given detailed light relating to the experience of the church groups in Michigan. This called for the writing of many letters, which took several weeks' time. But they were no sooner back in Rochester than they were planning another trip. They would go east by horse and carriage, like on their trip the year before. James White was not well, and working in this line seemed helpful not only to the companies of believers but also to him. They would leave Rochester on August 31.

The work at the printing office pressed hard. Lumen Masten was ill from overwork. Ellen White reported that often it was ten, twelve, two or three o'clock before Stephen Belden and Fletcher Byington returned home from the downtown office. She commented that "God has strengthened them, or they must have broken down."—[Letter 7, 1853](#).

### **The Review and Herald to be Published Weekly**

Before leaving for the East a change in the publishing schedules was made for the *Review*. For some time the field had been asking for a weekly paper, and the vision of July 2 called for it. After mentioning the urgency of such a move, James White stated in a back page note:

The Review Weekly: ... We shall probably be able to commence about the first of August, if our readers send the means to commence with. It will be necessary for us to purchase a quantity of paper before going east.—[The Review and Herald, July 7, 1853](#).

### **The 1853 Eastern Tour**

Leaving Rochester with faithful Charlie pulling their carriage, James and Ellen White started on their eastern tour, which would take them as far as eastern Maine. The trip was similar to that of the

autumn of 1852, taking about ten weeks, with a return to Rochester in mid-November. One feature was different—when they drove back into their yard at 124 Mount Hope Avenue, they had 6-year-old Henry with them. For the first time the family was now fully united. While at Topsham they had spent several days in the Howland home. For five years the Howlands had had the entire care of Henry, the Whites' first child. Writing of this experience, James White stated:

At first we left him with them for a short time only. Soon attachments between them became very strong; and having perfect confidence in their ability to train the child for heaven, we left him with them. Sister Frances, daughter of Brother Howland, has had the care of the child five years without the least expense to us, and now returns our Henry to us a well-trained, praying boy. We are not able to express the gratitude we owe that dear family, not only for their care and labor for our child, but for their labors of love to us in times past when the friends of the Sabbath were very few and the cause feeble.—[Ibid., November 1, 1853](#)

How Ellen White reveled in having both boys with them in the Rochester home! Henry was 6 and Edson was 4 years of age.

## Chapter 18—(1854) Nurturing the Developing Church

Three individuals stand out as the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: Joseph Bates, James White, and Ellen G. White. The foundations of their work were laid in the great Advent Awakening under William Miller and his associates in the first few years of the 1840s under the proclamation of the first and second angels' messages of [Revelation 14](#). Joseph Bates, retired, seasoned sea captain, became the apostle of the Sabbath truth. The youthful schoolteacher James White, with organizational ability and clear perceptions, and his wife Ellen, imbued with the gift of prophecy, were used of God in molding and guarding the emerging church. In no more clear-cut way does this show up than in the few years between 1852 to 1855.

The *Review and Herald*, first appearing in the embryo form of the *Present Truth* in 1849 and 1850, then developing into the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* in late 1850, was the catalyst. It carried the third angel's message to an ever-enlarging audience, turning "adventists" into Sabbathkeeping Adventists. For the most part, the reading audience accepted the Bible; they understood the mission of Christ and the steps in conversion. But through the doctrinal articles in *The Review and Herald* the Sabbath and sanctuary and other truths were opened up to them in such a plain manner that many honest in heart were soon led to move forward into what was termed "present truth." The back page of the *Review* kept the readers informed as to literature available, financial needs, and the movement of the ministers who comprised the scant working force. The paper also carried appointments of weekend meetings—called conferences—at various places. To these the teachers of truth had been invited or they were led by the impressions of the Spirit of God to attend. Such "appointments" might read:

Brethren Baker and Ingraham may be expected to attend the following meetings: East Bethel, Ver-

mont, March 27 and 28; Unity, New Hampshire, at the house of Brother John Jones April 3 and 4; Ashfield, Massachusetts, April 10 and 11; and April 17 and 18 at such place as Brother Luther Payne of Ware, Massachusetts, may appoint.—[The Review and Herald, March 23, 1852.](#)

Each issue of the *Review* carried up to two or three pages of letters from the growing number of believers. Some were from members of groups, but many were from isolated believers. These related their recent experiences and the state of the cause in their area; they conveyed their joy in the newfound message and admonished fellow believers, and some dealt with doctrinal points. These letters were addressed “Dear Brother White,” were reasonably short, and carried the writer’s name, home location, and date. They were inviting and readable. A *Review* issue chosen at random is that of June 23, 1853. Under the general heading Communications, two-and-a-half columns carry these letters:

“From Bro. (Elon) Everts,” of New Haven, Vermont, 43 lines.

“From Bro. (John) Byington, “Of Buck’s Bridge, New York, 16 lines.

“From Bro. (Samuel) Everett,” of Iowa City, Iowa, 29 lines.

“From Bro. (G. W.) Holt,” of Manlius, New York, 29 lines.

“From Bro. (E. S.) Sheffield,” of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin 38 lines.

“From Bro. (Samuel) Warner,” of Providence, Rhode Island, 13 lines.

“From Sister (Margaret) Cramer,” of Clinton, New York, 22 lines.

“From Sister (Sarah) Jessup,” of Pine Creek, Michigan, 23 lines.

“From Sister (Nancy) Clafin,” of Norfolk, New York, 27 lines.

[286] Averaging ten words per line, the communications feature in this issue yielded messages aggregating 2,400 words, or the equivalent of seven or eight ordinary book pages. This feature, which appeared in each issue of the paper, bound the believers together in an important and close fellowship and became an important factor in building the church. Urging the believers to thus communicate through the *Review*, White wrote:

Speak often one to another, brethren, of your faith, hope, trials and joys, through the *Review*. This adds life and interest to it for very many.—[Ibid., August 15, 1854](#)

The strength emerging from this source must not be underestimated.

### **The Vital Need for Church Organization**

As the work proliferated, it became clear that there was a pressing need for some guidance and controls. Except for the messages that came from God through the visions given to Ellen White, there was no authoritative voice, no voice of an organization to endorse doctrinal holdings or to certify to the integrity and the qualifications of those who chose to represent themselves as ministers to the Sabbathkeeping remnant. Some who felt called gave no real evidence of such a call. As time advanced, the need for organization of some kind became very clear. The experience of the church in Jackson, Michigan, in 1853, emphasized such a need.

Late in the year Ellen White prepared a comprehensive article on organization based largely on the vision given in late September, 1852, at the Nichols home in Dorchester, Massachusetts. This was printed in late December in a fifty-two page pamphlet first advertised in the *Review* of January 10, 1854, as *Supplement to the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*. The article titled “Gospel Order” may be read in [Early Writings, 97-104](#). It opens:

The Lord has shown me that gospel order has been too much neglected and feared. That formality should be shunned; but in so doing, order should not be neglected. There is order in heaven. There was order

in the church when Christ was upon the earth; and after His departure, order was strictly observed among His apostles. And now in these last days, while God is bringing His children into the unity of faith, there is more real need of order than ever before.—*Supplement to Christian Experience and Views*, p. 15 (see also *Ibid.*, 97).

[287]

In view of the great importance of this testimony in relation to the emerging church, it will be well to consider some of the high points:

1. Men are hurried into the field who lack wisdom and judgment.—*Ibid.*, 97.

2. Men whose lives are not holy and who are unqualified to teach the present truth enter the field without being acknowledged by the church or the brethren generally, and confusion and disunion are the result.—*Ibid.*

3. Some have a theory of the truth, and can present the argument, but lack spirituality, judgment, and experience; they fail in many things which it is very necessary for them to understand before they can teach the truth.—*Ibid.*, 98.

4. Others have not the argument, but ... are pressed into the field, to engage in a work for which God has not qualified them.—*Ibid.*

5. The church should feel their responsibility and should look carefully and attentively at the lives, qualifications, and general course of those who profess to be teachers.—*Ibid.*, 100.

6. It is the duty of the church to act and let it be known that these persons [men who are not called of God, but profess to be teachers] are not acknowledged as teachers by the church.—*Ibid.*

7. I saw that this door at which the enemy comes in to perplex and trouble the flock can be shut. I inquired of the angel how it could be closed. He said,

“The church must flee to God’s Word and become established upon gospel order, which has been overlooked and neglected.”—[Ibid.](#)

### **James White Joins in Calling for Gospel Order**

[288] Through December, James White joined Ellen White’s voice through four *Review* editorials. Under the same title, “Gospel Order,” he came to grips with the matter in a practical way. He first pointed out the confusion among the body of Adventists who had not accepted the Sabbath whom we have called “first-day Adventists,” in contrast with those who worshipped on the seventh day of the week. These had overlooked gospel order and, as he said, were in “perfect Babylon” ([The Review and Herald, December 6, 1853](#)). Was having a creed the answer? He pointed out:

It is the opinion of the mass of professors of religion that human creeds are indispensable to the maintenance of gospel order.... But what is the real condition of the churches with all their creeds to aid them? They are in a condition but little less than perfect confusion.... It is evident, therefore, that human creeds do fail to accomplish the work for which men plead their necessity.—[Ibid., December 13, 1853](#)

He then presented his basic position:

We go for order and strict discipline in the church of Christ. And while we reject all human creeds, or platforms, which have failed to effect the order set forth in the gospel, we take the Bible, the perfect rule of faith and practice, given by inspiration of God. This shall be our platform on which to stand, our creed and discipline.

This will not fail to accomplish the work “whereunto it was sent.” It came from above. It has its origin in the councils of heaven. Its author is the God of “peace” and order; while the strange confusion of man-made creeds spring from this world, and have their origin in the brains of poor erring mortals. “As the heavens

are higher than the earth,” so is our creed, which is the Word of God, higher in perfection and real worth than all human creeds.—[Ibid.](#)

In this editorial, the second in the series, James White made it clear that he saw a large task ahead in arriving at and preserving “gospel order in the church,” but he declared that it “must be and will be accomplished.” In the third editorial he deals with the “calling, qualifications, and the duties of a gospel minister.” He asserts that “the united action of the church relative to those who take the watchcare of the flock would have a powerful influence to unite the church in love.”—[Ibid., December 20, 1853](#)

The fourth editorial brought out the responsibilities of the individual church members in giving support in both prayers and finances.

[289]

The series closed with the words of the apostle Paul in [Romans 12:1-18](#), setting forth God’s ideal for His people. Ellen and James White had sown the seed—it would take time to mature. What was written tended to restrain a tendency to disunion in the ranks of the believers. Another factor, something not enjoyed by the other churches, was the guiding and restraining influence of the visions, which the believers accepted as having authority. The interplay of Bible instruction and the Spirit of Prophecy messages come into full view as church organization was consummated a few years later.

### **The Tour of Northeastern New York State**

It would seem that if there was any place where church order and discipline was called for, it was in the vicinity of Oswego, in the northeastern part of New York. Appointments were made for meetings there on Sabbath and Sunday, February 4 and 5, 1854; others were to follow at Lorain, Brookfield, and Lincklaen.

Neither James nor Ellen were well; her heart pained her constantly, but the needs of the cause seemed to demand this brief swing into the field. They expected that their labor in Oswego would be principally for the church, but they found on arrival that handbills had been circulated through the city advertising lectures on Sabbath and Sunday. Meetings were held in a comfortable hall with 150

present ([The Review and Herald, February 14, 1854](#)). The minister who had been caring for the flock, with somewhat less faithfulness than his office demanded, was especially invited to be present. Fortunately there were but few other than church members who attended the meetings, and James White in somewhat veiled tones reported the Sabbath meeting:

The day was spent in plain, close remarks relative to what constitutes a Christian, and our present duty. It was plain to be seen that the church was on the background, and we trust all felt it.—[Ibid.](#)

He attributed the “principal causes of the low state of the church” to be:

[290]

First, leading brethren have erred, which has lessened confidence and has had a scattering, saddening influence; and second, brethren have not always taken a scriptural course [[Matthew 18:15-17](#)] relative to little differences of opinion, and little trials arising among them.—[Ibid.](#)

### **Sins Tolerated in the Camp**

But in a vision given to Ellen White, which she wrote out while at the Abbey home in Brookfield on Sunday, February 12, she declared:

I saw the situation of many in our meeting at Oswego. They were in the way of the work of God.... The ax has not been laid at the root of the tree. Those who have indulged in the wicked passions of the heart have been fellowshipped.... God will not look upon sin now any sooner than He did anciently when Israel sinned. Sins have not been held forth in their sinful character, but have been made to appear as though sins have been lightly regarded by God.

I saw the seventh commandment had been broken by some who are now held in fellowship by the church, and in consequence God’s frown is upon the church.

This sin is awful in these last days and the church has brought God's frown and curse upon them in regarding this sin lightly.—[Manuscript 1, 1854](#).

She referred to the far-reaching effects of the toleration of such sins in the church:

Said the angel, "This is not the sin of ignorance. It is a known sin, and will receive the awful visitation of God, whether committed by old or young." Never was this sin regarded by God to be so sinful as at present, because God is purifying to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—[Ibid.](#)

After writing at length in this vein, she again quoted the words of the angel:

Said the angel, "Fearful is the work of the third angel, and awful is his mission. He is to select the wheat from the tares, and bind or seal the wheat for the heavenly garner."—[Ibid.](#)

Introducing another phase of the vision, she was led to write: [291]

The next thing shown me was the sins of parents in neglecting their children. I saw they would have an awful account to give.—[Ibid.](#)

She then discussed the discipline that should be begun at "8, 9, or 10 months" and wrote of the lack of discipline that allowed children to treat the house of God with disrespect by their unrestrained conduct.

### **Early Light on Basic Health Principles**

The vision was a comprehensive one, taking in many features in the conduct of church members, including their proper attire and cleanliness, both of person and home:

I then saw a lack of cleanliness among Sabbath-keepers. I saw that God would have a clean and holy people, a people that He can delight [in]. I saw the camp must be cleansed or the Lord would pass by and see the uncleanness of the children of Israel and would not go forth with their armies to battle, but would turn from them in displeasure, and our enemies would triumph over us, and we left weak in shame and disgrace.

I saw that God would not acknowledge an untidy and unclean person as a Christian. His frown was upon such. Our souls, bodies, and spirits are to be presented blameless by Jesus to His Father, and unless we are clean in person and pure in heart, we cannot be presented blameless to God....

I saw that the house of God had been desecrated by the carelessness of parents, with their children, and by the untidiness and uncleanness there. I saw that these things should meet with an open rebuke, and if there was not a change immediately in some that profess the truth in these things, they should be put out of the camp.—[Ibid.](#)

This revealing vision brought matters still closer home:

[292]

I then saw the appetite must be denied, that rich food should not be prepared, and that which is lavished upon the appetite should be put in the treasury of the Lord.... Pride and idols must be laid aside. I saw rich food destroyed the health of the bodies and was ruining the constitution, was destroying the mind, and was a great waste of means.

I saw some who were sickly among the saints, made themselves so by indulging the appetite. If we wish good health we must take special care of the health God has given us, deny the unhealthy appetite, eat more coarse food with little grease. Then you can consistently ask God's blessing upon such food as is congenial with your natures. We must pray as did Solomon for food

convenient for us, and act accordingly, and God will bless us.... There are few who eat to the glory of God.—[Ibid.](#)

### Ellen White's Battle With Disease

When this vision was given to Ellen White she was battling with illness. She was also pregnant, carrying her third child. She wrote:

It was difficult for me to breathe lying down, and I could not sleep unless raised in nearly a sitting posture. My breath often stopped, and fainting fits were frequent. But this was not all my trouble. I had upon my left eyelid a swelling which appeared to be a cancer. It had been more than a year increasing gradually until it was quite painful and affected my sight. In reading or writing I was forced to bandage the afflicted eye.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 304.](#)

When she consulted a “celebrated physician in Rochester,” he provided her with some “eyewash” and told her he thought the swelling would prove to be a cancer, but feeling her pulse, he told her she would die of apoplexy before the swelling would break out. Said he, “You are in a dangerous condition with disease of the heart.” About a month later she suffered a stroke; her left arm and side were helpless, and her tongue was heavy and numb. There was no response to the earnest prayers of those assembled to plead with God in her behalf; there was no immediate healing. But she felt she had the assurance of God’s love, and was led to ask herself, “Can you believe the naked promise of God? Can you walk out by faith, let the appearance be what it may?”—[Ibid., 306.](#)

I whispered to my husband, “I believe that I shall recover.” He answered, “I wish I could believe it.” I retired that night without relief, yet relying with firm confidence upon the promises of God. I could not sleep, but continued my silent prayer to God. Just before day I slept.

When she awoke with the sun shining through the window, all pain was gone. She wrote of this:

The pressure upon my heart was gone, and I was very happy. I was filled with gratitude. The praise of God was upon my lips. Oh, what a change! It seemed to me that an angel of God had touched me while I was sleeping. I awoke my husband and related to him the wonderful work that the Lord had wrought for me. He could scarcely comprehend it at first; but when I arose and dressed and walked around the house, and he witnessed the change in my countenance, he could praise God with me. My afflicted eye was free from pain. In a few days the cancer was gone, and my eyesight was fully restored. The work was complete.—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 306, 307.](#)

When she visited the physician and he felt her pulse, he declared that a complete change had taken place. The case was a mystery to him, and he did not understand it.

### **Continuing the Evangelistic Thrust**

James and Ellen White worked very closely as a team. One seldom traveled without the other. Ellen's healing from her heart and eye difficulties was complete, and she was soon ready to accompany James on another trip west. This seemed to be the time for strong thrusts in that direction. They planned to swing through northern Ohio, stopping for a weekend at Milan, then divide the next six weeks between Michigan and Wisconsin. Wisconsin was a promising new outreach, with J. H. Waggoner laboring there.

The work was just opening up in Ohio, and they attended the first conference held in the State, at Milan, May 5 to 7. J. N. Loughborough had worked in that part of the State through the winter. Between thirty and forty people were at the conference, representing nearly half the believers in the State. Loughborough joined the Whites as they went on to Michigan.

At Sylvan they met M. E. Cornell and spent the weekend together. Sabbath evening, at the Glover home, Ellen White was given

in the West. It settled in their minds the question of whether they should visit Wisconsin—it was important that they should go.

The attendance at the meeting at Locke over the weekend of May 19 to 21 was so large that only half the audience could get into the schoolhouse secured for the occasion. The speakers stood near an open window where the larger, outside, portion of the audience could see and hear as they sat in their carriages and on the grass (JNL, in [The Review and Herald, January 27, 1885](#)). While they were driving the next day to Sylvan, the experience at Locke was discussed, this led to the proposal that tent meetings might be held. James White suggested that by another year they might try using a tent to proclaim the message.

Cornell asked, “Why not have a tent at once?” As they discussed it they decided to propose it at coming conferences at Sylvan and Jackson. The response was enthusiastic, and money was raised and pledged. On Tuesday, Cornell hurried off to Rochester to buy a sixty-foot round meeting tent ([Ibid.](#)).

### The Trip to Wisconsin

That same night James and Ellen White were to leave for Wisconsin, taking the train at Jackson at eight o’clock. Tuesday afternoon was spent at the Palmer home. Several times James White spoke about the anticipated trip. He said, “I feel strangely in regard to starting on this trip; but Ellen, we have an appointment out, and we *must* go.” A little later he declared, “With my feelings, if I had not an appointment, I should not go tonight.”— [Ibid.](#) Before the Whites left for the station, all united in a season of prayer for God’s special protection of the workers. Getting up from his knees, James expressed his faith that the Lord would care for them and keep them. Loughborough accompanied them to the station, and he later described what took place:

At eight o’clock I went aboard the train with them, to assist in getting on their parcels. We went into one car with high back seats, called in those days a “sleeping car.” Sister White said, “James, I can’t stay in this car; I must get out of here.”

[295]

I helped them in getting a seat in the middle of the next car. Sister White sat down with her parcel in her lap, but said, "I don't feel at home on this train." The bell then rang, and I bade them "goodbye."

On leaving the train, I went to Brother Smith's in west Jackson to tarry for the night. What was the surprise of Brother Smith's family, about ten o'clock, to hear Brother White, whom we supposed was well on toward Chicago, knocking for admittance!

He said the train had run off the track three miles west of Jackson; that most of the train, with the engine, was a total wreck; but while a number had been killed, he and Sister White had escaped uninjured. Brother Dodge went with Brother White and brought Sister White in the carriage to Brother Smith's.—*Ibid.*

Ellen White described the accident:

The train had run about three miles from Jackson when its motion became very violent, jerking backward and forward, and finally stopping. I opened the window and saw one car raised nearly upon one end. I heard most agonizing groans. There was great confusion. The engine had been thrown from the track. But the car we were in was on the track, and was separated about one hundred feet from those before it. The baggage car was not much injured, and our large trunk of books was safe. The second-class car was crushed, and the pieces, with the passengers, were thrown on both sides of the track. The car in which we tried to get a seat was much broken, and one end was raised upon the heap of ruins.

The coupling did not break, but the car we were in was unfastened from the one before it, as if an angel had separated them. We hastily left the car; and my husband took me in his arms, and, wading in the water, carried me across a swampy piece of land to the main road. Four were killed or mortally wounded.... Many were much injured. We walked one-half mile to a dwelling,

where I remained while my husband rode to Jackson with a messenger sent for physicians.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 308.](#)

The cause of the accident was reported in the Jackson *Patriot* of Wednesday, May 24:

The passenger train going west last evening at nine o'clock met with a severe accident at the second crossing, three miles west of the village. The train at this point came in contact with an ox lying on the track, and the locomotive [without a cowcatcher], tender, baggage car, and two second-class passenger cars were thrown off the track, and the forward end of one of the first-class cars badly stove in. The baggage car, locomotive, tender, and one second-class car are a perfect wreck. The engineer, Henry Cluck, the fireman, Woodbury Fuller, were instantly killed, the locomotive and tender falling upon them.... Doctor Gorham was promptly at the scene of suffering, doing all in his power.

[296]

Loughborough and Dodge went early Wednesday morning to the scene of the wreck. In an article in the *Review* Loughborough described what they found:

As we viewed the wreck, and then the car in which Brother and Sister White were riding at the time of the accident, standing quietly by itself, some fifteen rods away from the wreck, we felt to say in our hearts, God heard prayer, and sent His angel to uncouple that car that His servants might escape unharmed. More especially did we so decide when the brakeman said he did not uncouple the car, and that no one was on the platform when it was done, and that it was just as much a mystery to the trainmen how it was done as it was to us. There was no link nor bolt broken, but the bolt, with its chain, laid quietly on the platform of the unwrecked car.—JNL, in [The Review and Herald, January 27, 1885.](#)

Of this Ellen White wrote, “I have been shown that an angel was sent to preserve us.”—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\), 308.](#)

The next afternoon, the tracks having been cleared, the Whites took the train for Wisconsin. The first appointment was for the weekend of May 26 to 28 at Koskonong; the following weekend they were at Rosendale. James White gave a word picture of the Koskonong meeting—the first conference held in Wisconsin:

[297]

A goodly number of brethren came in from the region round about, some thirty miles. The meeting was one of interest, and we trust much profit. We were happy to meet Brethren Phelps and Waggoner at this place. They have labored extremely hard in the cause; have traveled many hundred miles on foot to get the truth before the people, and the Lord has blessed their labors, and raised up many friends of the cause.—[The Review and Herald, July 4, 1854.](#)

### **Establishing the First “Adventist Book Center”**

The trunk James White had brought with them was full of books and tracts, and he reported selling \$75 worth of publications at the Koskonong meeting. He then told of the first steps taken to establish what we know today as an “Adventist Book Center,” if only in embryo form:

The subject of publications was taken up at this meeting, and the importance of giving our publications a wide circulation was felt by the brethren. We stated that it was not possible for us to publish tracts and send them out into different States, \$100 in a place, and wait till they were sold for the pay, for this reason: we have not the capital to do it with. But if the brethren in Wisconsin would raise a small fund, and put it into the hands of an agent, who could send the pay with the order for publications, we could furnish common tracts and pamphlets, neatly printed on good paper, at

the rate of two thousand pages for \$1, and would pay half of the freight bill on the books from Rochester to Wisconsin.—*Ibid.*

It was proposed that several of the brethren of a given church should join together, each giving \$20 to establish a capital of \$150. Book sales would keep the business going. At Koskonong, E. S. Sheffield, who was zealous to handle the book business, was chosen to serve as the agent. At the next weekend meeting, at Rosendale, six hundred assembled in a grove. On the evening after the Sabbath, the people met to consider the matter of publications. The same plan proposed for Koskonong was adopted, and an agent chosen. Here James White sold \$75 worth of literature he brought with him. The interest was such that they stayed more than a full week beyond what they had first planned.

### **Eyes on the Evangelistic Tent**

Quite naturally, James and Ellen White had special interest in the tent that Cornell purchased in Rochester and, with Loughborough, pitched in Battle Creek. Meetings were advertised for Friday, June 2, to Sunday, June 4. Thinking the meetings might run longer, the Whites hoped to get to Battle Creek in time to see and preach in the tent. He wrote:

[298]

We had a great desire to be at the Battle Creek meeting, and to speak to the people in the tent at least once before our return home. And when we arrived in Battle Creek we were happy to learn that the brethren had a cheering meeting, and the tent was on its way to Grand Rapids to our last appointment.—*Ibid.*

Loughborough described this first attempt at tent meetings. The tent was located, he reported, on “Van Buren Street, just above the railroad, near the planing mill.” He and Cornell worked together in this new, promising evangelistic thrust. Loughborough later reported:

Here, June 10 (Sabbath), the writer opened the tent meetings with a discourse on [Daniel 2](#). This meeting continued only two days, and then we took our tent to Grand Rapids.—[The Review and Herald, February 24, 1885](#).

[Ibid., July 4, 1854](#), announced that one thousand people attended the Sunday evening meeting, and a good interest was awakened.

Of the meeting in the tent at Grand Rapids, a week later, White wrote:

On Sixth-day the brethren pitched it on a vacant lot in the city. We were much pleased with its appearance from without, and when we entered it to engage in the solemn worship of God, we felt that the Lord was indeed with us. We are perfectly satisfied that the brethren have moved none too fast in obtaining the tent for this season. On First-day probably about five hundred came out to hear, and if the brethren could have remained another week, the congregation doubtless would have increased to thousands. The people listened with great interest, and when publications were offered, crowded forward to obtain them. The way seems to be fully open to spread the truth.—[Ibid., July 4, 1854](#)

[299] After the Grand Rapids meetings were over, Ellen White, at the house of Brother Fitch, was given a vision, described by Loughborough as being “full of instruction, reproof, and counsel, for the church present, and also encouragement of success to the tent enterprise.” Added Loughborough:

The use of tents for meetings was a new business to us, and we had some things to learn by experience that may look a little strange to those now engaged in tent labor.

First, we did not then so fully realize that when an interest was first awakened in a place it was best to follow up that interest with a thorough effort, or with a full series of discourses, bringing as many as possible of the interested ones to a decision.

Secondly, we did not suppose people would be interested to come out evenings through the week, and so

the most of our meetings were held only over Sabbath and first day of each week.

Thirdly, we looked upon tent meetings as a means for the general arousing of the public mind; and, with this idea, we tried to visit as many different places as possible in one season.—*Ibid.*, February 24, 1885

The use of a tent was a new approach in evangelism. Different plans were followed in the fourteen tent meetings held in Michigan in the summer of 1854. The majority were two-day meetings in which Loughborough and Cornell gave a “condensed view of the prophecies, sanctuary, messages, and Sabbath, earnestly urging the people to obey.” This moved some to act.

Several meetings were held a little longer than two or three days, and one meeting was held over three consecutive weekends. Wrote Loughborough:

It was not, however, until the Lord gave us instruction through the Spirit of Prophecy that we fully understood the best mode of prosecuting “the work of the ministry” in connection with tent labor.—*Ibid.*

He was pleased to report that “in almost every place where our tent was erected there were some to obey the truth, but we saw the best results where we tarried the longest.”

A most promising line of evangelism was now opening up. Before the summer was out the *Review* was carrying reports of a second sixty-foot tent in New England, and the enlargement of the Michigan tent to ninety feet. The *Review* pages were also carrying appointments for meetings in the two evangelistic tents and thrilling reports of the success of these meetings.

[300]

At the close of the season James White summed up the success of what had been an experiment. He explained:

Much can be done with tents, and but little can be accomplished in the summer season in any other way. For example: One year since at our conference in Springfield, Massachusetts, a good hall was obtained, and the

people were notified by handbills, and through the daily paper, yet on First-day but few were present excepting believers. But on the sixth inst. 1,200 persons were assembled to hear the Word at the tent meeting held in that city.—[Ibid., October 24, 1854](#)

The big tent challenged the curiosity of the people and brought out the crowds.

## Chapter 19—(1854-1855) Through Hours of Darkness

[301]

August 29, 1854,” wrote Ellen White, “another responsibility was added to our family in the birth of Willie. He took my mind somewhat from the troubles around me.”—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 310. William Clarence was a third son.

What were some of the troubles Ellen White referred to?

On Friday, June 23, some two months before Willie’s birth, she and her husband had returned from their seven-week trip to Michigan and Wisconsin ([The Review and Herald, July 4, 1854](#)). It had been a strenuous trip, and both were weary and much worn. They came to their newly rented home on Monroe Street to find the four-day Rochester conference, which James White had called months earlier, about to open. Representatives from the churches in western New York, Pennsylvania, and Canada were there for the important meeting. But, noted Ellen White: “We returned ... much worn, desiring rest ... Without rest we were obliged to engage in the meeting.”—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 309.

This was not the usual weekend conference that had become common, but a “general gathering.” It had a larger attendance and had been called to consider important subjects relative to the welfare of the cause. During its business sessions special consideration was given to the *Review and Herald*, its welfare and its finances. Here it was decided to establish a subscription price of \$1 a year, in advance. The worthy poor would continue to receive it “without charge.” Liberal donations would be needed to keep the paper afloat financially. The conference ran from Friday afternoon till Monday. During the last meeting, Monday afternoon, June 26, an important vision was given to Ellen White. It was not James White who presented this information, for he was careful not to say much about the visions in print. He never hesitated, however, in recognizing

[302]

their importance and giving heed to the counsel thus imparted by God. Nor did he hesitate to call the attention of those present to the phenomena observed in connection with the vision they were witnessing.

### **Tested by a Physician While in Vision**

Three persons who were present that day later recalled the vision and gave their testimony of what they witnessed: First, listen to D. H. Lamson:

I was then 17 years old. It seems to me I can almost hear those thrilling shouts of “G-l-o-r-y!” which she uttered. Then she sank back to the floor, not falling, but sinking gently, and was supported in the arms of an attendant.

Two physicians came in, an old man and a young man. Brother White was anxious that they should examine Sister White closely, which they did. A looking glass was brought, and one of them held it over her mouth while she talked; but very soon they gave this up, and said, “She doesn’t breathe.” Then they closely examined her sides as she spoke, to find some evidence of deep breathing, but they did not find it.

As they closed this part of the examination, she arose to her feet, still in vision, holding a Bible high up, turning from passage to passage, quoting correctly, although the eyes were looking upward and away from the Book.

She had a view of the seven last plagues. Then she saw the triumph of the saints, and her shouts of triumph I can seem to hear even now. To these facts I freely testify.—Elder D. H. Lamson, Hillsdale, Michigan, February 8, 1893, published in GSAM, pp. 207, 208.

Another who witnessed this vision at the White home on Monroe Street in Rochester, was a young lady, Drusilla, who was later to marry D. H. Lamson’s cousin. At the time of writing, she was

the matron of the Clifton Springs, New York, Sanitarium. Of the experience she wrote on March 9, 1893:

I remember the meeting when the trial was made, namely, to test what Brother White had frequently said, that Sister White did not breathe while in vision, but I cannot recall the name of the doctor who was present.... It must have been Dr. Fleming, as he was the doctor called sometimes for counsel. He is, however, now dead. I can say this much, that the test was made, and no sign of breath was visible on the looking glass.—Drusilla Lamson, in GSAM, p. 208.

[303]

David Seeley, of Fayette, Iowa, was another eyewitness; he gave his testimony on August 29, 1897:

This is to certify that I have read the above testimonials of David Lamson and Mrs. Drusilla Lamson, concerning the physician's statement when examining Mrs. E. G. White while she was in vision, June 26, 1854.

I was present at that meeting, and witnessed the examination. I agree with what is stated by Brother and Sister Lamson, and would say further that it *was* Doctor Fleming and another younger physician who made the examination. After Mrs. White rose to her feet, as they have stated, quoting the texts of Scripture, Doctor Fleming called for a lighted candle. He held this candle as near her lips as possible without burning, and in direct line with her breath in case she breathed. There was not the slightest flicker of the blaze. The doctor then said, with emphasis, "That settles it forever; there is no breath in her body."—David Seeley, in GSAM, pp. 208, 209.

Ellen White was totally unconscious while in vision; she knew nothing of the circumstances observed by others. Later she wrote of why the visions were thus given.

Some of the instruction found in these pages [her books] was given under circumstances so remarkable as to evidence the wonder-working power of God in behalf of His truth. Sometimes while I was in vision, my friends would approach me, and exclaim, “Why, she does not breathe!” Placing a mirror before my lips, they found that no moisture gathered on the glass. It was while there was no sign of any breathing that I kept talking of the things that were being presented before me.

[304]

These messages were thus given to substantiate the faith of all, that in these last days we might have confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy.—[The Review and Herald, June 14, 1906.](#)

At the time of this vision at Rochester, the *Messenger* party was doing its work, and the church was just on the verge of the defection of Stephenson and Hall, of Wisconsin. All of them were denouncing the presence of the Spirit of Prophecy as an important factor in the work of the Sabbathkeeping Adventists.

### Problems that Loomed Large

Ellen White, a full seven months pregnant, could not escape the conference at the White home in Rochester in late June, 1854. She had to face the realities of her situation, but her spirits were low. The problems loomed large before her:

1. Anna, James’s sister, was at death’s door with consumption ([Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 309).

2. James was far from well and facing large problems in publishing the *Review and Herald* and managing the office.

3. Lumen Masten, in charge of the printing office, was failing fast with tuberculosis.

Confided Ellen White:

4. “Trials thickened around us. We had much care. The office hands boarded with us, and our family numbered from fifteen to twenty. The large conferences and Sabbath meetings were held

at our house. We had no quiet Sabbaths; for some of the sisters usually tarried all day with their children. Our brethren and sisters generally did not consider the inconvenience and additional care and expense brought upon us. As one after another of the office hands would come home sick, needing extra attention, I was fearful that we should sink beneath the anxiety and care. I often thought that we could endure no more; yet trials increased.”—*Ibid.* Then she observed:

With surprise I found that we were not overwhelmed. We learned the lesson that much more suffering and trial could be borne than we had once thought possible. The watchful eye of the Lord was upon us, to see we were not destroyed.—*Ibid.*, 309, 310.

5. One source of aggravation and trouble that gave James and Ellen White deep concern were the irresponsible activities of the group of Sabbathkeeping Adventists in Michigan who had withdrawn from the main body and had started publishing the *Messenger of Truth*. [305]

The two dissident ministers in Jackson, Case and Russell, having been reproved by the visions, were now in bitter opposition. Wrote Ellen White:

They would not bear reproof, and in a secret manner at first, afterward more openly, used their influence against us. This we could have borne, but some of those who should have stood by us were influenced by these wicked persons.—*Ibid.*, 310.

This was the first time the pioneers had been confronted with the development of a dissident movement within their ranks, and at a time when formal church organization was yet several years off. Up to this point, the movement, devoted to heralding the third angel’s message, was built largely around the *Review and Herald*. Now this was challenged, and through it, its editor.

At the same time, White was forced to deal with the future of the *Review*, its ownership, its support, and its editorship. The major

factors of concern here were his very poor health, suffering as he was from overwork, and the ultimate responsibility for the paper to serve a rapidly growing constituency. The two distressing elements, the dissident movement and the welfare of the *Review and Herald*, emerged simultaneously in the late summer of 1854.

It was all too much for James. Ellen White described the bleak situation:

He was troubled with cough and soreness of lungs, and his nervous system was prostrated. His anxiety of mind, the burdens which he bore in Rochester, his labor in the office, the sickness and repeated deaths in the family, the lack of sympathy from those who should have shared his labors, together with his traveling and preaching, were too much for his strength, and he seemed to be fast following Nathaniel and Anna to a consumptive's grave.

[306] That was a time of gloom and darkness. A few rays of light occasionally parted these heavy clouds, giving us a little hope, or we should have sunk in despair. It seemed at times that God had forsaken us....

If the cause of God had been ours alone, we might have trembled; but it was in the hands of Him who could say, No one is able to pluck it out of My hands. Jesus lives and reigns.—*Ibid.*, 311, 312.

This was demonstrated through the next fifteen months. By the time the *Review* office and press were moved from Rochester to Battle Creek, Michigan, in November, 1855, both were settled. In the interest of clarity, the dissident movement will be considered first.

### **The Messenger Party**

The *Messenger* party was born in the weeks following the visit of James and Ellen White to the Jackson, Michigan, church in June, 1853. Case and Russell, having been reproved for their unreasonable

course of action, began to sow seeds of distrust and criticism. They were soon joined by other critical believers. In time they started their paper, the *Messenger of Truth*, which they hoped would rival the *Review and Herald*. The first issue came out in the fall of 1854.

The chief burden was criticism and condemnation of the *Review* and its publishers. Case accused James White of speculation; he declared that White, on his trip to Wisconsin, sold Bibles for a sum greater than he had paid for them in New York. When White pointed out that the sale price in Wisconsin was below cost, Case admitted there was no ground for censure, but shortly thereafter he was repeating the charge. Another pretext was found in the fact that money was sent to James White for the advance of the cause, at a time when he alone was responsible for the finances of the *Review* office. Further, he kept an eye on the needs of both poorly supported ministers and the widows and orphans. Handling money in these interests gave rise to the accusation that James and Ellen White were getting rich. These charges were followed by an ever-growing roster of falsehoods and accusations.

The *Messenger of Truth* was sent to the readers of the *Review*, some of whom accepted its “disclosures” as gospel truth. The leaders of the emerging church were at a loss to know what course to take. As new accusations followed one on another, James White and loyal ministers endeavored to get the truth before the perplexed members. J. N. Loughborough, now one of the dedicated evangelists and closely associated with the Whites, wrote of the matter:

[307]

The mission of this sheet and its conductors seemed to be to tear down and defame instead of to build up. Many falsehoods were inserted in its pages, which annoyed us in our work in the message; and as it was our first experience with such an open attack, we thought it our duty to refute their slanderous statements. Doing this occupied time that should have been spent in advancing the truth committed to our trust, and suited well the purposes of Satan, who was undoubtedly the instigator of this opposition.—GSAM, p. 325.

In an editorial in the *Review* of September 5, 1854, which he titled “Our Position: Its Trials and Duties Considered,” White pointed out that those who honor God’s Sabbath may expect severe trials and declared:

It has ever been God’s plan to try and prove His people; but the Scriptures warrant us to expect that the “remnant” who “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,” in the midst of the perils of the last days, will be called to pass through peculiarly trying scenes. The dragon, the devil, is wroth, and even now is making war with the remnant. [Revelation 12:17.](#)—[The Review and Herald, September 5, 1854.](#)

There was little opposition and trial from the unbelieving, unchristian world. From the sectarian churches often there was bitterness and opposition. Even more bitter opposition, he wrote, came from former brethren in the Advent faith—“first-day Adventists.” He then pointed out the trials most difficult to bear:

But those trials which arise among ourselves are the most severe. It is unfortunate for the cause that some men of little or no moral worth profess the truth, who appear to run well for a while, till those not the most discerning have them in great estimation, and they obtain some influence; then the dragon uses them as his chosen instruments to divide and distract the flock.—[Ibid.](#)

[308]

White added:

It is not our duty to leave the work of God to contend with unreasonable men. This Satan designs that we shall do, but God has something better for us to attend to. It is our duty to point out and warn the flock to beware of the influence of those who cause divisions, then leave the matter in the hands of God.—[Ibid.](#)

Good in theory, but this was hard to do. The letters from the field and occasional notes in the *Review* yield glimpses of the matter.

In the December 26, 1854, issue, White presented an editorial in which he spoke of the prosperity of the cause and the union that existed. He then made reference to the Messenger party:

The late scourge to which some refer in this number will prove one of the greatest blessings to the cause. It will put the people of God on their guard in their future course, and free them of some who have been a burden to the cause, and whom they could not reform. In speaking of such, brethren should seek to “speak the truth in love.” ... The *Review* must be devoted to the truth and, breathe its sweet spirit.—[Ibid., December 26, 1854](#)

Late in January or during February, James White got out an *Extra* of the *Review* devoted to the offshoot group. Little is said of it in the regular issues, but on March 20, 1855, he made reference to and quoted a few sentences of commendation for it written by J. M. Stephenson—note carefully the name—writing from Aztalan, Wisconsin, on March 1. Stephenson was a first-day Adventist minister who had recently accepted the third angel’s message under the ministry of J. H. Waggoner. His testimony was very positive:

Yesterday afternoon I saw for the first time the *Review and Herald Extra*, also Nos. 22 and 23 of the *Review*. With the *Extra* I am well pleased. It cannot fail of doing much good in Wisconsin.... My sympathies are all with the *Review*. It is that paper or none for me. I cannot affiliate the spirit or doctrines of the *Messenger of Error*. They are rushing headlong, and I fear heedlessly, into the most egregious errors in doctrine, exposition of prophecy, et cetera. I believe the *Review* has the truth in the main.—[Ibid., March 20, 1855](#)

[309]

Just at this time White was planning to publish another issue of the *Extra* ([Ibid.](#)).

On Sabbath and Sunday, June 16 and 17, a tent meeting was held at Oswego. James and Ellen White were present and remained in the vicinity during the week following. On Wednesday, June 20, they attended a prayer meeting at the home of John Place. Loughborough, who was present, writes of it:

Mrs. White was given a vision in which she was shown that if we would keep at our work, preaching the truth, regardless of any such as the "*Messenger party*," they would go to war among themselves and their paper would go down, and when that should happen we would find that our ranks had doubled. Believing this testimony to be from the Lord, we began at once to act in harmony with it.—GSAM, pp. 325, 326.

Soon after the vision Ellen White wrote of it:

When at Oswego, New York, June, 1855, I was shown that God's people have been weighed down with clogs; that there have been Achans in the camp. The work of God has progressed but little, and many of His servants have been discouraged.... The *Messenger party* has arisen, and we shall suffer some from their lying tongues and misrepresentations, yet we should bear it all patiently; for they will not injure the cause of God, now they have left us, as much as they would have injured it by their influence had they remained with us.

God's frown has been brought upon the church on account of individuals with corrupt hearts being in it. They have wanted to be foremost, when neither God nor their brethren placed them there. Selfishness and exaltation have marked their course. A place is now open for all such where they can go and find pasture with those of their kind. And we should praise God that in mercy He has rid the church of them.... An excitement and sympathy now leads them, which will deceive some; but every honest one will be enlightened as to the true state of this company, and will remain with

God's peculiar people, hold fast the truth, and follow in the humble path, unaffected by the influence of those who have been given up of God to their own ways, to be filled with their own doings.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:122.](#)

[310]

She outlined the course of action the church should take:

I saw that the people of God must arouse and put on the armor. Christ is coming, and the great work of the last message of mercy is of too much importance for us to leave it and come down to answer such falsehoods, misrepresentations, and slanders as the *Messenger* party have fed upon and have scattered abroad.

Truth, present truth, we must dwell upon it. We are doing a great work, and cannot come down. Satan is in all this, to divert our minds from the present truth and the coming of Christ. Said the angel: "Jesus knows it all." In a little from this their day is coming. All will be judged according to the deeds done in the body. The lying tongue will be stopped. The sinners in Zion will be afraid, and fearfulness will surprise the hypocrites.—[Ibid., 1:123.](#)

After the vision the workers thanked God for guidance; from then on they virtually ignored the *Messenger* party.

Five months later, at a general conference in Battle Creek, they went on record as revealed in the minutes:

*Whereas*, Inquiries have been made as to what course we designed to pursue in the future, in reference to the misstatements of the enemies of present truth, therefore, for the information and satisfaction of the brethren abroad.

*Resolved*, That we henceforth devote ourselves exclusively to the advocacy and defense of the present truth, committing ourselves in all things to Him who judgeth righteously, after the example of our Pattern,

in affliction and in patience.—[The Review and Herald, December 4, 1855.](#)

### **A Bitter Lesson on Compromising on Doctrinal Truth**

[311] This was a period of learning on the part of the leaders of the emerging church. On their first visit to Wisconsin in late May, 1854, James and Ellen White met J. M. Stephenson and D. P. Hall, former ministers among the first-day Adventists who, under J. H. Waggoner's ministry, had accepted the third angel's message. The acquisition of the two men doubled the ministerial force in Wisconsin. During the preceding months both had been in communication with White. On meeting them, he was favorably impressed and asked both of them to write for the *Review*. There was just one catch in the matter. Both Stephenson and Hall held the "age to come" doctrine, which presented the prospect of a second probation following the millennium. Months later White told the story of his contacts with these men:

When we were in Eldorado, Wisconsin, June, 1854, Elders Stephenson and Hall stated to us that they were firm believers in the "age to come." We asked them if they had ever known one sinner converted, or a backslider reclaimed, as the fruits of preaching "age to come."

The answer was "No."

We then asked if that, in their opinion, much harm had not been the result of preaching "age to come," in dividing the Advent people.

The answer was, "Yes."

We inquired, "Then why preach it?"

The reply was "We are willing to waive the subject, and unite on the third angel's message, if those who oppose the 'age to come' will do the same."

We then stated that we could speak in behalf of Brethren East, that they would be willing to waive the subject.

At this point in the conversation, said Elder Stephenson, “The ‘age to come’ is premature. It is future truth, it is not the present truth, and if the third angel’s message had been presented to us at the time the ‘age to come’ was, we would not have taken hold of the ‘age to come.’”—*Ibid.*

White wrote that up to the time of the conference at Mill Grove, New York, in April, 1855, nothing appeared in the *Review* on the “age to come.” In the meantime White had invited Stephenson and Hall to come to the East. At the commencement of the year 1855, D. P. Hall was in Pennsylvania and New York holding meetings (*Ibid.* February 20, 1855). A little later a notice appeared in the *Review*. [312]

It is now expected that Brethren Hall and Stephenson, of Wisconsin, will visit this State the first of April, when it will be proper to have two or three conferences in the State. Those churches wishing conferences will please send in requests in season to give notice in the next *Review*.—*Ibid.*, March 20, 1855

The *Review* of April 3 carried an appeal for funds to provide a tent in Wisconsin for the use of the two ministers. A conference was called for Jackson, Michigan, which they would attend. White reported that at this conference “Brethren Stephenson and Hall, of Wisconsin, were present, ... and improved most of the time in preaching the Word.”—*Ibid.*, May 1, 1855. The visiting ministers attended other weekend conferences as they made their way east. They were at the Mill Grove meeting in western New York the weekend of April 7 and 8 and here again met Elder White.

Quite sure that a discussion of the “age to come” could not be avoided, White proposed to Stephenson that they discuss the doctrine in tracts, each meeting the expense of publication. This was rejected, and at that point “Stephenson pronounced the covenant, made at Eldorado, June, 1854, to use his own words, ‘null and void.’”—*Ibid.*, December 4, 1855. When he urged that he be given access to present his views to the church through the *Review*, White referred him to

the publishing committee, promising that he would abide by the committee decision. While in Michigan and New York the two men attended several conferences, including the one at Rochester, May 26 and 27 ([Ibid., June 12, 1855](#)). Some seventy-five were present on Sabbath, mostly Sabbathkeepers, and on Sunday about eight hundred came out to “hear the word of the Lord” ([Ibid.](#)).

While in Rochester, James White took the visiting ministers into his confidence, opening up to them the conditions and work of the office. What he did not at the time discern was opened up a few months later to Ellen White in vision:

[313]

While my husband was openhearted and unsuspecting, seeking ways to remove their jealousy, and frankly opening to them the affairs of the office, and trying to help them, they were watching for evil, and observing everything with a jealous eye.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:117](#).

A few days after the visit of Stephenson and Hall, James and Ellen White started on a tour through New England. The visiting ministers returned to Wisconsin to carry on evangelistic meetings in the new tent secured for their use. At this time the *Messenger* party, roundly denounced by Stephenson ([The Review and Herald, March 20, 1855](#)), was breaking up. But more of this later.

On their return to Wisconsin, Stephenson and Hall prepared for tent meetings, which they called for October 5 and 6, urging good attendance as “topics of vital interest will be investigated.”—[Ibid., September 4, 1855](#). At the conference they openly denounced the *Review* and decided to withdraw their support from it ([Ibid., December 4, 1855](#)). They now turned to the *Messenger of Truth*. This was a severe blow to James White, who a year before had compromised on the matter of freedom to discuss a point of error in doctrine.

In a vision given to Ellen White at the close of the conference held in Battle Creek in November, the whole matter was opened up to her. She wrote:

I was shown the case of Stephenson and Hall of Wisconsin. I saw that while we were in Wisconsin, in

June, 1854, they were convicted that the visions were of God; but they examined them and compared them with their views of the “age to come,” and because the visions did not agree with these, they sacrificed the visions for the “age to come.” And while on their journey east last spring, they both were wrong and designing.

They have stumbled over the “age to come,” and they are ready to take any course to injure the *Review*; its friends must be awake and do what they can to save the children of God from deception. These men are uniting with a lying and corrupt people. They have evidence of this. And while they were professing sympathy and union with my husband, they (especially Stephenson) were biting like an adder behind his back. While their words were smooth with him, they were inflaming Wisconsin against the *Review* and its conductors. Their object has been to have the *Review* publish the “age to come” theory, or to destroy its influence.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:116, 117.](#)

Ellen White was shown the shortness of the life of the opposition: [314]

Said the angel as I beheld them: “Think ye, feeble man, that you can stay the work of God? Feeble man, one touch of His finger can lay thee prostrate. He will suffer thee but a little while.”—[Ibid., 1:117.](#)

Then the whole matter was put in its proper perspective:

I was pointed back to the rise of the Advent doctrine, and even before that time, and saw that there had not been a parallel to the deception, misrepresentation, and falsehood that has been practiced by the *Messenger* party, or such an association of corrupt hearts under a cloak of religion. Some honest hearts have been influenced by them.... I saw that such will have evidence of the truth of these matters. The church of God should move straight along, as though there were not such a people in the world.—[Ibid.](#)

Within a year or two the *Messenger* party and the “age to come” advocates who united with the party fell apart and lost all influence.

### What Happened to the “Messengers”

Just a little more than two years after Ellen White penned the words quoted above, James White wrote concerning the leaders in the opposition movement:

Wyman, rejected by his party for crime, and a town charge. Bezzo, their editor [turned schoolteacher], fined \$25 for presenting a pistol, and threatening to shoot a scholar in school. Case, run out as a preacher, and fishing on the lakes. Chapin, in a clothing store. Lillis, a spiritualist. Russell and Hicks had denounced Bezzo and the publishers of their sheet [as] hypocrites, and were standing alone.

[315]

It seems that as soon as these restless spirits went out from the body by themselves, ... they immediately went to biting and devouring one another until not one of the eighteen messengers of which they once boasted as being with them is now bearing a public testimony, and not one place of regular meeting to our knowledge among them, east or west.—[The Review and Herald, January 14, 1858.](#)

As to those advocating the “age to come,” Stephenson soon adopted doctrinal views that cut him off from those who sympathized with him. He seemed to lose his ability as a speaker. He divorced his wife to marry a younger woman. Reported Loughborough:

In this forlorn condition—friendless, penniless, and with failing health—he was placed in the “poorhouse.” There his mental faculties failed him—not a derangement, but a state of imbecility. The last four years of his life he had no more sense, or ability to care for himself, than a year-old child.—[Pacific Union Recorder, May 12, 1910.](#)

D. P. Hall soon gave up his preaching and engaged in the real estate business. Through impracticable business transactions he lost everything and went bankrupt. This led to melancholy and terminated in insanity.

### **Ellen White Portrays the Steps in Apostasy**

Writing some years later concerning apostasies and the involvements of those who lost their way, Ellen White pointed out five natural steps:

“It is Satan’s plan to weaken the faith of God’s people in the *Testimonies*.” “Satan knows how to make his attacks. He works upon minds to excite jealousy and dissatisfaction toward those at the head of the work. The gifts are next questioned; then, of course, they have but little weight, and instruction given through vision is disregarded.” “Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition.

“When the *Testimonies*, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable, and ends in destruction.”—[Testimonies for the Church, 5:672](#).

[316]

## Chapter 20—(1855) Settling Administrative and Theological Questions

The year 1855 was a time when important administrative and theological problems were settled—the status and future of the *Review and Herald* office, and the time to begin the Sabbath. Both came to a culmination late in the year.

The issue of the *Review* dated February 20, 1855, carried an editorial written by James White titled “The Office.” In this he described the rather desperate situation he was in as proprietor, financial agent, and editor. His repeated appeals to the readers for stronger support had gone largely unheeded. Not only was he burdened with financial embarrassment, but there was also the “unreasonableness of ‘false brethren’” comprising the *Messenger* party. He pointed out that he was laboring from fourteen to eighteen hours a day. Altogether, this nearly ruined the health of 34-year-old James White. He made a rather startling declaration:

We cannot expect a tolerable state of health without a complete change in many respects. We are resolved on this change, even if we leave the office entirely. We hope to live, and, if possible, yet do some little good in the world.

Had we a constitution that could endure care and toil, we would cheerfully wear it out in the holy cause of Bible truth; but having worn out a good constitution in this cause, we can now hope for no more, than that by rest, and care, with the blessing of God, we may yet be able to do something....

Without capital, and without health, we cannot much longer bear the burden.—[The Review and Herald, February 20, 1855.](#)

[317]

He proposed (1) to take the proper steps to recover his health;

(2) to divest himself and Ellen from the care of the large publishing house family, which would, of course, result in a higher cost of printing, for all in the work had been laboring for little more than their board and room at the White home; (3) to get rid of the office debt of \$1,000. There was stock on hand that when sold would liquidate this. He acknowledged that the financial support came principally from understanding brethren in Michigan and Vermont, and declared: "They have our warmest gratitude for their *real* friendship in time of distress and need." This was his hope and plan, but it took eight months to implement it, and then only in part.

Under the circumstances he described, the most relaxing and seemingly beneficial course he could take was to travel leisurely by horse and carriage, visiting the churches and companies of believers. In the *Review* of March 20 he set forth his developing plans:

We are now calculating to leave the office for several months, and if health will permit, attend conferences in this State [New York]; and about the first of May start with private carriage for New England, and hold meetings by the way at Oswego, Lorain, Pottsdam, and Champlain. We should be happy to join the Vermont tent, in northern New York, and follow on with it through Vermont and New Hampshire, on our way to Massachusetts and Maine.

A hastily planned trip back to Michigan, however, delayed the start for the East. At Battle Creek a conference was held in "a private house," for as yet the Sabbathkeeping Adventists had no house of worship in the State. Here he had an opportunity to discuss the future of the *Review* and the *Review* office. He wrote of it as "a meeting of interest to God's people." The published report told why:

The brethren in Battle Creek and vicinity are generally awake to the wants of the cause, and are anxious to establish the *Review* office in that place. They are able and willing to do so, and manifest much anxiety to relieve us of those cares and responsibilities which we have too long borne. The climate, water, prices of

rent, fuel, provisions, et cetera, seem favorable to the location.—[Ibid.](#), May 15, 1855

James and Ellen remained in Battle Creek through the week following the conference, and were with the church on Sabbath, May 5. Three men were present who, as James White put it, “preach constantly.” But this time there was no preaching. In the veiled manner in which he usually referred in print to Ellen’s having a public vision, he wrote:

The Lord took the lead in the meeting in an especial manner, and manifested His power and goodness in our midst. The saints were filled with joy and gratitude to God for the encouragement and instruction given at this meeting.—[Ibid.](#)

The extant records furnish little as to just what was the nature of the “encouragement and instruction,” except one very interesting item preserved in the E. G. White manuscript files relating to her conversation with the angel about James:

I then inquired if James would be spared or would be removed before the time of trouble. Said the angel, “What is that to thee? Follow Jesus, follow the opening providence of God. Have unwavering faith in His promises.” ...

In regard to the office and what our duty is in regard to it, I had no light, but was cited to other visions that God had given. “Look at them carefully; lose not sight of the opening providences of God. Carefully regard all His teachings and obey them.”

I saw that no longer should those connected with the office bear burdens they have borne.... They must be free in mind, and then their health will improve.—[Manuscript 3, 1885.](#)

Through most of May they were in Michigan attending and assisting in the tent meetings. Returning home, James reported,

My health gradually improves, and my spirit is getting perfectly free while freed from the cares of the office, and mingling with the Lord's faithful, scattered ones.—[Ibid., May 29, 1855](#)

### **The Eleven-Week Tour Through New England**

[319]

Rather than the first of May, as anticipated by James White, it was mid-June when the Whites actually got off by carriage on another trip through New England. As they traveled up through Vermont and met with friends of the cause their hearts were cheered.

As he interviewed leading workers he found them eager to move the *Review* office to Vermont and have the responsibility and burden of conducting it, unless the friends of the cause in some more central position would assume this responsibility. White declared:

We shall no longer bear the burdens we have borne in Rochester; neither shall we move the office, east or west. The office is the property of the church. The church must wake up to this matter, and free us from responsibilities that have been forced upon us, and which we have reluctantly taken. We must have freedom and repose, or go into the grave.—[Ibid., August 7, 1855](#)

### **The Review Office to Go to Battle Creek, Michigan**

Having consulted with the brethren in Michigan and Vermont, the two States from which there had been the strongest moral and financial support, on his return to Rochester on August 30 James White was prepared to make the announcement of what seemed to be the consensus of opinion. He did so in early September under the title of "The Office":

We are happy to say that the brethren in Michigan cheerfully take upon themselves the responsibilities of the *Review* office. They will probably move it to that State this fall. Brethren in Vermont are willing and ready to do the same, but regard Michigan to be more

the center of the future field of labor, and are willing that the press should be established in that State.

The *Review* will probably be issued weekly after the press shall be established at Battle Creek, Michigan. It will be our duty and privilege to be freed from the office at present, at least. God has raised up others who are better able to conduct the *Review*, and bear these burdens, than we are.—[Ibid., September 4, 1855](#)

[320]

### A Transition Evidencing the Maturity of the Church

There were substantial brethren of good judgment in both Vermont and Michigan capable of assuming most of the responsibilities of which James White felt he must divest himself. The decision having been made that the press would go to Battle Creek, Michigan, the men there went into action. The *Review* of October 2 placed before the church the steps the Michigan brethren were taking:

1. The *Advent Review* office would remain the property of the church.
2. It would be moved to Battle Creek, Michigan.
3. A financial committee of three would be chosen, whose duty it was to move the office, and publish the *Advent Review*.
4. The church-at-large would be called upon to send their freewill offerings to defray the expenses of moving.
5. There was a call for a plan on which the editorial department of the *Advent Review* would be conducted ([Ibid., October 2, 1855](#)).

The next issue of the *Review*, published two weeks later, carried two significant back page items:

*Special Notice.* Change of Address. For the future, until further arrangements are made, all letters for the Review office should be addressed to Elder James White, Battle Creek, Michigan.

*General Conference.* Providence permitting, there will be a general conference at Battle Creek, Michigan, November 16.

The response from the field was uniform and favorable. The month of November was given over to erecting the little publishing house on the southeast corner of Washington and Main streets in the western edge of Battle Creek, and to moving both the press and the families connected with the *Advent Review* office. The White family moved into a little cottage that they rented for \$1.50 a week. The general conference, which had been called for Friday, November 16, met in the newly constructed house of worship, a building eighteen by twenty-four feet, provided for the Battle Creek congregation of twenty-four (*Ibid.*, [August 22, 1935](#)). It was one of three church buildings erected in 1855. [321]

Actions of the conference included the appointment of Henry Lyon, David Hewitt, and William M. Smith, all of Battle Creek, to be a committee to investigate the financial condition of the *Review* office; and the appointment of Uriah Smith as the resident (or managing) editor, and five corresponding editors. These were J. N. Andrews, of Iowa; James White and J. H. Waggoner, of Michigan; R. F. Cottrell, of New York; and Stephen Pierce, of Vermont. The minutes also recorded:

8. That a vote of thanks be tendered to Brother White for his valuable services as an editor, in spreading the light of present truth.—*Ibid.*, [December 5, 1855](#)

William C. White, who was a child of 14 months when the move was made but grew up knowing well the personnel and hearing the story from his parents, described the beginnings of the publishing work in Battle Creek:

James White, now freed from the cares and responsibilities of ownership, was asked to act as manager of the growing enterprise. Uriah Smith, whose approved ability as a writer and author was generally recognized, was chosen resident editor, which responsibility he carried

for many years. Stephen Belden continued to act as superintendent, and foreman of the typeroom. George Amadon and Warren Bacheller set type and did the presswork.

And now for the first time the workers were granted a stated salary. Before this, they had worked for room and board, a small allowance for clothing, and such other expenses as were deemed absolutely necessary. But so eager were they that the printing office should pay its way, that they cheerfully accepted only \$5 a week for their services.

In the same spirit, and to help make the newly established enterprise a success, James White at first accepted only \$4 a week. Later, he drew \$6, and when the success of the work was assured, \$7 a week.

[322]

With the financial responsibility of the paper in the hands of the publishing committee ... the work began well. The paper was changed from a biweekly to a weekly, [Through 1855, up to the time of the conference, for lack of adequate financial support, the *Review*, Although a weekly through much of 1854, lapsed to a biweekly (see [Ibid., January 9, 1855](#))] and the subscription price was fixed at “one dollar for a volume of twenty-six numbers” (\$2 a year), with special concessions to the ministers and the poor. The paid subscription list, which stood close to 2,500 at the time of the move, grew rapidly, and the enterprise in its new location was assured of success.—WCW, “Sketches and Memories of James and Ellen G. White,” [Ibid., August 22, 1935](#)

### **The Doctrinal Point—Time to Begin the Sabbath**

On Friday evening, the day the conference in Battle Creek opened, those assembled commenced the Sabbath at six o'clock, although the sun had been set for an hour. The next day they closed the Sabbath at sunset. During that Sabbath a change in practice based

on Bible study had been made. It was an interesting and instructive experience in doctrinal development.

As noted in earlier chapters, Joseph Bates was considered the father of the Sabbath truth. As captain of his own vessels, he had sailed far and wide and was acquainted with the matter of time-keeping in different parts of the world. It was his conclusion that time as kept at the equator, with sunset uniformly at 6:00 P.M., was the proper guide to Sabbathkeeping, regardless of season of the year or location. The Scriptures called for evening marking the beginning of the new day, and the words “from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath” ([Leviticus 23:32](#)) were cited in support of this point. The April 21, 1851, issue of the *Review* carried a three-column article by Joseph Bates in support of the six o’clock time.

In the State of Maine in 1847-1848, some took the position that the Sabbath commenced at sunrise, quoting as support, [Matthew 28:1](#): “In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week” (see [The Review and Herald, February 25, 1868](#)). A vision given to Ellen White checked this error in principle, for the angel repeated the words of the scripture “From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.”

There were a few who observed the Sabbath from sundown to sundown (JW to “My Dear Brother,” July 2, 1848; see also [Ibid., February 25, 1868](#)), but the majority stood with Bates, as did James and Ellen White. The charismatic experience in Connecticut in late June, 1848, recounted in chapter 13, seemed to confirm the six o’clock time. Still the matter was not settled conclusively, and in June, 1854, James White requested D. P. Hall in Wisconsin to give study to the matter and come up with an answer ([Ibid., December 4, 1855](#)).

[323]

When this request failed to yield fruit, he turned to John Andrews with the earnest request that he take his Bible and bring evidence to settle the question. Andrews prepared a paper on the matter. As he passed through Battle Creek with his parents in November on his way to Iowa, he left this in the hands of James White. The reading of this paper became the Sabbath morning Bible study at the conference in Battle Creek. From nine texts in the Old Testament and two from

the New, Andrews demonstrated that “even” and “evening” of the Sabbath were identical with sunset (*Ibid.*).

As the paper was read that Sabbath morning, it could be seen that while the six o’clock time advocated by Bates was in principle not incorrect—for it called for beginning the Sabbath in the evening—in detail there was an error. Now with the position of sunset time so amply supported by Scripture evidence, all the congregation, which included the church’s leaders, readily accepted the light and were prepared to shift their practice. All, that is, but two—Joseph Bates and Ellen White.

Bates’s position had been generally accepted and defended. He was the venerable apostle of the Sabbath truth. He was unready to accept what had been presented by the youthful John Andrews, and he would stand in defense of his position. The vision given to Ellen White in 1848, correcting the sunrise time and confirming “evening time,” had nothing to say about the six o’clock time being in error.

Ellen White reasoned that the six o’clock time had been a matter of practice for nearly a decade. The Sabbath so kept had been a great blessing to her, and the angel had said nothing about its being in error. Must a change be made now? Thus matters stood through the rest of the Sabbath and through Sunday as the members met in conference, but this was a rather touchy point of division that was bound to widen as time went on. Then the God of heaven stepped in.

[324] Of what took place, Ellen White wrote:

November 20, 1855, while in prayer, the Spirit of the Lord came suddenly and powerfully upon me, and I was taken off in vision.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:113](#).

Her attention was called to many points, among them the time to commence the Sabbath. She discussed the matter with the angel. This conversation is very enlightening:

I saw that it is even so: “From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.” Said the angel: “Take the Word of God, read it, understand, and ye cannot err.

Read carefully, and ye shall there find *what* even is and *when* it is.”

I asked the angel if the frown of God had been upon His people for commencing the Sabbath as they had. I was directed back to the first rise of the Sabbath, and followed the people of God up to this time, but did not see that the Lord was displeased, or frowned upon them.

I inquired why it had been thus, that at this late day we must change the time of commencing the Sabbath. Said the angel: “Ye shall understand, but not yet, not yet.” Said the angel: “If light come, and that light is set aside or rejected, then comes condemnation and the frown of God; but before the light comes, there is no sin, for there is no light for them to reject.”

I saw that it was in the minds of some that the Lord had shown that the Sabbath commenced at six o’clock, when I had only seen that it commenced at “even,” and it was inferred that even was at six.

I saw that the servants of God must draw together, press together.—[Ibid., 1:116](#).

And they did. The vision set Ellen White and Joseph Bates straight, and they accepted the vision wholeheartedly. The matter of the time to commence the Sabbath was forever settled—settled on the basis of Bible study, confirmed by vision. It was indeed a significant experience in God’s leadings, one that Uriah Smith was later to comment on:

Lest any should say that Sister White, having changed her sentiments, had a vision accordingly, we will state that which was shown her in vision concerning the commencement of the Sabbath was contrary to her own sentiment at the time the vision was given.—[The Review and Herald, August 30, 1864](#).

[325]

### **The Impressive Lesson Taught by this Experience**

Some years later, James White, using the experience as a demonstration of the relation of the visions to Bible study, wrote:

The question naturally arises, If the visions are given to correct the erring, why did she [Mrs. White] not sooner see the error of the six o'clock time? For one, I have ever been thankful that God corrected the error in His own good time, and did not suffer an unhappy division to exist among us upon the point. But, dear reader, the work of the Lord upon this point is in perfect harmony with His manifestations to us on others, and in harmony with the correct position upon spiritual gifts.

It does not appear to be the desire of the Lord to teach His people by the gifts of the Spirit on the Bible questions until His servants have diligently searched His Word. When this was done upon the subject of time to commence the Sabbath, and most were established, and some were in danger of being out of harmony with the body on this subject, then, yes, *then* was the very time for God to magnify His goodness in the manifestation of the gift of His Spirit in the accomplishment of its proper work.

The sacred Scriptures are given us as the rule of faith and duty, and we are commanded to search them. If we fail to understand and fully obey the truths in consequence of not searching the Scriptures as we should, or a want of consecration and spiritual discernment, and God in mercy in His own time corrects us by some manifestation of the gifts of His Holy Spirit, instead of murmuring that He did not do it before, let us humbly acknowledge His mercy, and praise Him for His infinite goodness in condescending to correct us at all.

Then he admonished, reiterating his consistent position on the gift of prophecy in the remnant church:

[326]

Let the gifts have their proper place in the church. God has never set them in the very front, and commanded us to look to them to lead us in the path of truth, and the way to heaven. His Word He has magnified. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are man's

lamp to light up his path to the kingdom. Follow that. But if you err from Bible truth, and are in danger of being lost, it may be that God will in the time of His choice correct you, and bring you back to the Bible, and save you.—[Ibid., February 25, 1868](#)

### The Neglect of the Spirit of Prophecy

But there was another matter of large importance to which the conference addressed itself, and that was a seeming decline of the influence of the Spirit of Prophecy in their midst. Ellen White was to speak of it in reporting the vision given at the close of the conference: “I saw that the Spirit of the Lord has been dying away from the church.”—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:113](#). Looking back a few weeks later, she wrote:

The visions have been of late less and less frequent, and my testimony for God’s children has been gone. I have thought that my work in God’s cause was done, and that I had no further duty to do, but to save my own soul, and carefully attend to my little family.—[The Review and Herald, January 10, 1856](#).

In his report of the conference James White wrote of the concern of those at the meeting for the spiritual welfare of the church. He mentioned that there were “remarks and confessions relative to the evident departure of the remnant from the spirit of the message, and the humble, straight forward course taken by those who first embraced it. Strong desires were expressed, and fervent prayers were offered to heaven, for the return of the spirit of consecration, sacrifice, and holiness once enjoyed by the remnant.”—[Ibid., December 4, 1855](#)

Somehow the sense swept over them that this may have been the result of neglect on the part of the church in its relation to the visions. To avoid prejudicing those they hoped to reach with the third angel’s message through the *Review and Herald*, they had published none of the visions in the paper for nearly five years, and only twice had James White referred to the visions in his articles or

[327] editorials. These exceptions were (1) in October, 1854, when under attack from the *Messenger* party for putting the visions ahead of the Bible, he reprinted an article that had appeared in the first volume of the *Review* on April 21, 1851; and (2) on October 16, 1855, in five brief articles, quite an extended defense of the position of the church in the issue. In one of these he may, in one statement, have gone a little too far in exercising his attempts to show that Seventh-day Adventist doctrines were not dependent on the visions. It seems this led some to conclude—quite contrary to his purpose—that he was downgrading the visions. In the one titled “A Test” he declared:

There is a class of persons who are determined to have it that the *Review* and its conductors made the views of Mrs. White a test of doctrine and Christian fellowship. It may be duty to notice these persons on account of the part they are acting, which is calculated to deceive some.

What has the *Review* to do with Mrs. White’s views? The sentiments published in its columns are all drawn from the Holy Scriptures. No writer of the *Review* has ever referred to them as authority on any point. The *Review* for five years has not published one of them. Its motto has been “The Bible and the Bible alone, the only rule of faith and duty.” Then why should these men charge the *Review* with being a supporter of Mrs. White’s views?—[Ibid., October 16, 1855](#)

James White then called the attention of his readers to his consistent position during the past eight years. He referred to his published statements, beginning with what appeared in *A Word to the “Little Flock”* in 1847. There he had declared:

The Bible is a perfect and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice. But this is no reason why God may not show the past, present, and future fulfillment of His Word in these last days, by dreams and visions, according to Peter’s testimony. True visions are given to lead us to God and to His written word; but

those that are given for a new rule of faith and practice, separate from the Bible, cannot be from God and should be rejected.— [Ibid.](#)

In attempting to make his point, he quoted other statements he had made through the years, which in no way downgrade the visions. But it was strong language he had used in mid-October, and it would appear that this, with the absence of visions in the *Review*, had undercut in the minds of some the importance of the gift of prophecy in the remnant church. This was felt at the conference in Battle Creek right after the move to that city. [328]

At any rate, the conference was led to give consideration to the matter. Among its resolutions was the vote:

9. That Joseph Bates, J. H. Waggoner, and M. E. Cornell be appointed to address the saints on behalf of the conference, on the gifts of the church.—[Ibid.](#), [December 4, 1855](#)

That address, appearing in the same issue of the *Review* as the conference actions, is quite revealing and will be mentioned again shortly.

Now, back to the last meeting of the conference, James White, after writing of the distress of the brethren over the spiritual state of the church, reported:

Our long-suffering and tender Father in heaven smiled upon His waiting children, and manifested His power to their joy. The brethren separated greatly refreshed and encouraged.—[Ibid.](#)

### **The “Conference Address”**

The disquieting situation sensed at the conference led to the action calling for a conference address “on the gifts of the church.” This address opened with penitent words:

To the Dear Saints Scattered Abroad, Greeting: In view of the present low state of the precious cause of our

blessed Master, we feel to humble ourselves before God, and confess our unfaithfulness and departure from the way of the Lord, whereby the spirit of holiness has been grieved, our own souls burdened, and an occasion given to the enemy of all righteousness to rejoice over the decline of faith and spirituality amongst the scattered flock.—*Ibid.*

[329] The address comes immediately to the subject of the gifts of the Spirit in the church and confesses:

Nor have we appreciated the glorious privilege of claiming the gifts which our blessed Master has vouchsafed to His people; and we greatly fear that we have grieved the Spirit by neglecting the blessings already conferred upon the church....

We have also, in our past experience, been made to rejoice in the goodness of our God who has manifested His care for His people by leading us in His way and correcting our errors, through the operations of His Spirit; and the majority of Sabbathkeepers in the third angel's message have firmly believed that the Lord was calling His church out of the wilderness by the means appointed to bring us to the unity of the faith. We refer to the visions which God has promised to the remnant "in the last days."

The relation of the Spirit of Prophecy to the Bible was next dealt with:

Nor do we, as some contend, exalt these gifts or their manifestations, above the Bible; on the contrary, we test them by the Bible, making it the great rule of judgment in all things; so that whatever is not in accordance with it, in its spirit and its teachings, we unhesitatingly reject. But as we cannot believe that a fountain sends forth at the same place sweet water and bitter, or that an evil tree brings forth good fruit, so we cannot believe that that is of the enemy which tends to unite the hearts of the saints, to lead to meekness and humility and holy living, and incites to deep heart-searching before God, and a confession of our wrongs.

Squaring up to the crux of the matter, the authors of the address recognized an attitude that was surely displeasing to God:

While we hold these views as emanating from the divine mind, we would confess the inconsistency (which we believe has been displeasing to God) of professedly regarding them as messages from God, and really putting them on a level with the inventions of men. We fear that this has resulted from an unwillingness to bear the reproach of Christ (which is indeed greater riches than the treasures of earth), and a desire to conciliate the feelings of our opponents; but the Word and our own experience have taught us that God is not honored, nor His cause advanced, by such a course.

[330]

While we regard them as coming from God, and entirely harmonizing with His written word, we must acknowledge ourselves under obligation to abide by their teaching, and be corrected by their admonitions. To say that they are of God, and yet we will not be tested by them, is to say that God's will is not a test or rule for Christians.

There was more in the address, but the main points have here been brought forward. The fruitage of this humble confession and declaration of loyalty to God's leadings was soon evident. Wrote Ellen White of the painful experience and its hopeful outcome:

At our late conference at Battle Creek, in November, God wrought for us. The minds of the servants of God were exercised as to the gifts of the church, and if God's frown had been brought upon His people because the gifts had been slighted and neglected, there was a pleasing prospect that His smiles would again be upon us, and He would graciously and mercifully revive the gifts again, and they would live in the church, to encourage the desponding and fainting soul, and to correct and reprove the erring.—[Ibid., January 10, 1856](#)

The events and experiences at this conference of November, 1855, may well be considered as marking a turning point in Seventh-day Adventist history. With the church accepting the responsibility for its publishing work, and the Spirit of Prophecy now given its rightful place, added blessing attended the labors of the ministers, the publishing enterprise prospered, and the work moved forward.

## Chapter 21—(1856) Working in a Changed Atmosphere

[331]

When the church leaders assembled for the conference in Battle Creek in late November, 1855, it was with a pervading sense that things were not right. The conference address drawn up at the time seemed to hold the key to the distressing situation—the Spirit of Prophecy had not been given its proper place, either in the published word or in the hearts of the believers. During the past five years the *Review and Herald* had not published even one vision given by God to Ellen White, and but very, very little had been said about God communicating with His people to encourage, guard, and counsel them through the visions.

True, in 1851, Ellen White's first little sixty-four-page book, which presented many of the visions of the past seven years, had been published and circulated. But with the intent of not offending the general public, the *Review* had become silent on the visions, and its editor had done no more than maintain the propriety of visions in the last days. Now, with the confessions of neglect and the determination to place the gift in its proper place in the church, the whole atmosphere changed. The minutes of the conference and the conference address were published December 4 in the first issue of the *Review* printed in Battle Creek. This issue carried Uriah Smith's name on the masthead as resident editor, and James White as one of the corresponding editors.

Immediately a change in policy became evident. In the issue of December 18, in a two-page editorial titled "The Testimony of Jesus," James White defended the Spirit of Prophecy in the remnant church. Beginning with [Revelation 12:17](#), he carried through the scriptural support for the continuing ministry of the gift of prophecy till earth's last days, and closed with the Biblical tests of the true prophet.

[332]

This is followed by a communication from Roswell F. Cottrell, of Mill Grove, New York, another corresponding editor, dealing

with the visions in the setting of the criticisms of J. M. Stephenson, who was now rejecting the message he once advocated. Addressing Stephenson, Cottrell declared:

We cannot engage in a faction against those whom God made choice of to introduce the last message to the world.... If the visions are not of God, they will surely come to nought; and we pray God to hasten the day. But we have not been able to discover anything in them which conflicts with the commandments of God—the law and the testimony—which are the test given us by inspiration, by which to try the spirits. Therefore we see no danger from them.—[The Review and Herald, December 18, 1855.](#)

Ellen White commented on Cottrell's article: What a nice piece Brother Roswell wrote! It hit the nail on the head; it will do much good.—[Letter 9, 1856.](#)

The publication of the main features of the vision of November 20 came about like this: Ellen White wrote it out immediately and on Sabbath evening read it to the Battle Creek church. The church in turn voted unanimously that it should be published and made available to the entire body of believers. It was set in type and printed as one article in a two-page sheet, some of the topics being—as given headings in an 1885 reprinting—“Thy Brother's Keeper,” “Time to Begin the Sabbath,” “Opposers of the Truth,” and “Prepare to Meet the Lord.”

The manner in which this little document was looked upon by leading men in the developing church is revealed in a small-type note at its close:

We, the undersigned, being eyewitnesses when the above vision was given, deem it highly necessary that it should be published, for the benefit of the church, on account of the important truths and warnings which it contains.

(Signed)

J. H. Waggoner J. Hart

G. W. Amadon Uriah Smith

Shortly afterward, the material, along with a vision given May 5, 1855, was published in a sixteen-page pamphlet. Although not numbered, it turned out to be *Testimony* No. 1.

### **The Whites and the White Home**

The changed atmosphere since the conference is reflected in a letter Ellen White wrote to Sister Below on New Year's Day, just six weeks after the turnaround in attitudes. The White family were living in their little rented cottage on Battle Creek's west side, rejoicing in the freedom of having a home just for their family. This was the first time they had enjoyed such an experience in the past seven years of their married life. Counting the two young women who helped with the housework and the care of the children, there were seven. James White was 34; Ellen, 28; the three boys, Henry, 8, Edson, 6, and Willie, 18 months. With the parents often away as they served the cause, and Ellen's time so taken up with her writing, the two girls, Clarissa Bonfoey and Jennie Fraser, were an important part of the family.

Since the November conference and the vision on November 20, Ellen had been very much occupied in writing the more general features of the vision for publication, and testimonies to individuals whose cases had been opened up to her. By New Year's Day she had scarcely gotten through, yet she laid this work aside and took time to write a newsy letter to Sister Below. It was a buoyant and interesting letter, with good news and some not so good. In its heart she exclaimed:

I cannot express my gratitude to God for what He has done and is still doing for us. For weeks our peace has been like a river. The heavenly dew has distilled upon us morning, noon, and night, and our souls triumph in God. It is easy believing, easy praying. We love God,

and yet our souls pant for the living water.—[Letter 9, 1856](#).

She wrote about the family:

[334]

Jennie and Clarissa are quite well; Clarissa has not been as well as she is now for eight years. Jennie is much better than she has been since she had the ague. The children are quite rugged. Edson, you know, has been generally poorly, but he is coming up; is quite tough. James enjoys better health than he has for some time back. We praise the Lord for this.—[Ibid.](#)

As for herself, she was on crutches and had been since Christmas Eve, when she slipped on the ice and injured her left leg. She told of this:

My health is quite good except a lame ankle. In coming from Sarah's to our house, I slipped and fell, wrenching my foot backward and putting my ankle out of joint. In rising it flew back again, but the bone of my left limb is injured, split, and I am a cripple for the present.... But I will not murmur or complain.... I know that the angels of God must have protected me or I should be suffering with distress from a broken limb.—[Ibid.](#)

She was on crutches for six weeks, but kept up with her usual activities and was to ride that day into the country about thirteen miles. As to their home and plans for the future, she wrote:

The brethren think we ought to have a little house put up. We pay now \$1.50 per week for rent, and have scarcely any conveniences at that. Have to go a great distance for water; have no good shed for our wood. We put a few boards up at our own expense just to cover our wood. We shall make a beginning; cannot tell how we shall succeed.—[Ibid.](#)

Within the next few months they did succeed, purchasing two lots for \$25 each on Wood street some five blocks from the *Review* office. With the help of the brethren they put up a little one-and-a-half-story cottage. Writing later she told of how “from the time we moved to Battle Creek, the Lord began to turn our captivity.”—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 317. She reminisced:

The publication of the *Review*, *Instructor*, and books was commenced under most discouraging circumstances. The friends and supporters of the cause were then very few, and generally poor; and it was by extreme labor and economy that the truth was published. For several years we suffered more or less for want of suitable food and clothing, and deprived ourselves of needed sleep, laboring from fourteen to sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, for want of means and help to push forward the work.—[Ibid.](#), 318.

[335]

She spoke of their developing concept of “present truth,” stating that it was not as clear then as now, and added:

It has been opening gradually. It required much study and anxious care to bring it out, link after link. By care and incessant labor and anxiety has the work moved on, until the great truths of our message are clear.—[Ibid.](#), 319.

As the leading brethren in Battle Creek took over the *Review* office and the publishing of the *Review and Herald*, there were financial matters to settle with James White. For all practical purposes the enterprise was his, simply for the reason there was no other means of conducting the business. The only income were donations from readers of the journals and books, and these had provided just a bare sustenance for the workers and for James White—\$4.08 a week. When money was borrowed for the publishing interests, he alone was responsible for it. At the time of the transfer of the business to the publishing committee in Michigan, there was an outstanding

indebtedness of \$1,000, offset by supplies and book stocks. He turned over the business with no personal financial benefit. At the time there was no provision for stocks of books and pamphlets, and he held these until arrangements were made for a book fund a few months later. Though ill and despairing of life itself, at the time of the transfer of interests in Battle Creek, Ellen White, on January 24, in a letter to Brother and Sister Loveland, reported:

[336]

God has wrought for us in a remarkable manner since the conference. My husband has been much afflicted. Incessant labor has nearly carried him to the grave. But our prayers have ascended to God morning, noon, and night for his restoration. All medicine has been entirely laid aside, and we have brought him in the arms of our faith to our skillful Physician. We have been heard and answered. An entire change has been wrought for him.... We believe without a doubt, if he is careful of the health God has given him, his strength will increase and he will be able to overcome the disease that has fastened upon him.—[Letter 2a, 1856](#).

Then bubbling over with joy, she recited what the new outlook meant to her as the mother of three boys:

Dear sister, it would be impossible for me to go into a recital of the sufferings I have passed through, the anxiety, and the dread thought that I should be left a widow, my dear children without a father's care. The scene has changed. God's hand has mercifully been reached down to our rescue. My husband enjoys good health, and my children are rugged. They never enjoyed so good health before. Little Willie is healthy and very pleasant.

I never took so much comfort with my family as now. Our family has always been so large. But now... I can enjoy the company of my children; they can be more under my own watchcare, and I can better train them in the right way. All of us are united for the blessing of

God, and morning, noon, and night His sweet blessing distills upon us like the dew, making our hearts glad and strengthening us to fill our place and glorify our Redeemer.—[Ibid.](#)

For several months they kept close to Battle Creek, James White giving attention to the business interests connected with the transfer of responsibilities to the church and writing editorials and articles for the *Review*. He took up what had come to be called the “compromise with Stephenson and Hall” in Wisconsin and declared:

We are now convinced that the *Review* should ever be free from all compromise with those who hold error, and should ever have been as free to speak out, when necessary, on those subjects which bear on the “age to come” as it now does.—[The Review and Herald, February 14, 1856.](#)

From time to time he spoke freely of the visions and their place in the church, and the *Review* was open to items from Ellen White’s pen.

### Ellen White Revives her Drowned Baby

[337]

As summer approached the brethren in Battle Creek felt that a general conference should be held in late May, and the call went out for it to open on Friday, May 23. The call was accompanied by a generous offer from the members of the Battle Creek church to “entertain all who come for the worship of God, according to their best ability” ([Ibid., May 1, 1856](#)). In the day or two before the conference there was a flurry of activity in the White home. Rooms were cleaned, beds were improvised, and provisions were stocked.

Late one afternoon Willie, now 20 months old, was having a delightful time playing boat with a large tub of mop water in the kitchen, pushing a stick around in the well-filled “lake.” As Jennie Fraser slipped out the back door to get some chips for the fire, she asked, “Willie, what are you doing?” Returning to the kitchen, she saw one little foot sticking out of the dirty water. Pulling the

apparently lifeless body out of the water, she ran to the mother, screaming, "He's drowned! He's drowned!"

Taking Willie, the mother asked, "Was the water hot or cold?" With the answer "It was cold," Ellen ordered, "Send for the doctor and call James." John Foy ran for the doctor, and Jennie for James.

Ellen reached for scissors and headed for the front door. She put Willie on the lawn, cut the wet clothes from his body, and then rolled him on the grass as the sudsy water gurgled from his nose and mouth. Occasionally she lifted the child and looked for signs of life.

James was soon by her side. "Take that dead baby out of that woman's hands," a neighbor urged James.

"No," he replied. "It is her child, and no one shall take it away from her." After about twenty minutes as Ellen held Willie up she saw a little flicker of an eyelid and a little puckering of his lips. Ordering Jennie to heat thick cloths, she took Willie into the house. Soon he was in his wicker crib, wrapped in warm cloths frequently changed to impart maximum heat to the body of the recovering child ([Spiritual Gifts, 2:207, 208](#); [The Review and Herald, January 9, 1936](#); [The Signs of the Times, December 3, 1885](#)).

A vivid illustration of the perseverance that characterized Ellen White's work! To this perseverance may be credited the life of one she years later was instructed had been born to be her helper, and indirectly, this biography, authored by his son.

## Chapter 22—(1856) Soul-shaking Experiences for the Ministers and Laity

[338]

As those in Battle Creek assembled for the conference Friday afternoon, May 23, 1856, Joseph Bates was chosen moderator. Preaching through the meeting was done by Bates, Hart, Waggoner, White, and John Byington. White reported that:

There were more Sabbathkeepers present Sabbath morning than could be seated in the “House of Prayer” and it became necessary to adjourn to the tent before the hour of preaching.—[The Review and Herald, June 12, 1856.](#)

Bates spoke that morning. As White continued the report he called attention to the last meeting of the conference held Tuesday morning in the “House of Prayer“:

On Second-day, the twenty-sixth, meetings were held to transact business, which were spirited and harmonious. The meeting has left a cheering and most blessed influence on the minds of those who attended it, especially those who remained over Third-day and witnessed the manifest power of God in correcting and comforting His people.”—[Ibid.](#)

Here again James White made reference in a veiled way to a vision given to Ellen White. More openly she wrote of it in *Testimony* No. 2, which was shortly to be sent out:

At the conference at Battle Creek, May 27, 1856, I was shown in vision some things that concern the church generally.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:127.](#)

As published in the sixteen-page *Testimony* pamphlet, the subjects given are:

[339]

“The Two Ways,” in which she wrote of the glory and majesty of God, and was shown a road “narrow and rugged” leading to eternal life; and another “broad and smooth” leading to eternal death.

“Conformity to the World,” in which believers were shown to her much like the world in “dress, conversation, and actions,” failing to “enter through the strait gate and narrow way.”

In the heart of this article she declared:

I was shown the company present at the conference. Said the angel: “Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus.” Solemn words were these, spoken by the angel.—[Ibid., 1:131, 132.](#)

“Wives of Ministers” dealt with the ways in which the wife of a minister might be a help to her husband, careful in the influence she exerted; an example in conversation, deportment, and dress; or how the husband’s influence could be injured by complaining and murmuring when brought into strait places and the husband deterred in his work.

This vision is best remembered for the record Ellen White made of the solemn words of the angel indicating the shortness of time, as the angel declared that there were those at the conference who would live to see Jesus come. At this distance this portion of the vision must be understood in the conditional nature of God’s promises, and the forbearance of God that man shall be saved. There are examples of such in the Word of God, one of which was the message God sent Jonah to give to Nineveh.

Of the delay in Christ’s coming, Ellen White declared in 1868:

The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready.—[Testimonies for the Church, 2:194.](#)

Addressing the General Conference in session in 1903, she wearily declared:

I know that if the people of God had preserved a living connection with Him, if they had obeyed His Word, they would today be in the heavenly Canaan. [See F. D. Nichol's *Ellen White and her critics*, or a document, "the question of the 1856 vision," available from the White Estate or the Sda E.G. White research centers, for a more detailed presentation on this point.]—[The General Conference Bulletin, 1903, 9.](#)

[340]

*Testimony* No. 2 was soon in the field and being thoughtfully read with appreciation, as wrote Asenith Southworth, of Vermont:

I feel grateful for the *Testimony for the Church* No. 2. I found it meat in due season. God will have a pure church, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He has placed the precious gifts in the church for the benefit of His people. Praise His holy name.—[The Review and Herald, November 27, 1856.](#)

There was a receptive mood for the counsel and instruction God gave through the visions. The church in Round Grove, Illinois, closed its letter to the general conference held in Battle Creek with these words:

We would humbly say that we are thankful that Israel's Keeper slumbereth not, but has manifested His care in these last days in *all* His ways of mercy that He has ever done to guide, instruct, and correct His people. O may we be not the people who shall be left *without a vision*, nor be unwilling or negligent to acknowledge them.

While we say we thank the Lord for His gifts to the church, we would pray for the continuation of them until we all come to a full stature of men and women in Christ, and be made *perfect*.—[Ibid., May 29, 1856.](#)

### The Use of Tobacco

[341] In 1856 there were a number of Sabbathkeeping Adventists still plagued with the use of tobacco in one form or another. An article in the *Review* in the issue of February 7, taken from the Vermont *Chronicle*, was a compilation of statements by physicians and clergymen, including Dr. Rush, Dr. Mussey, Dr. Harris, Dr. Stevenson, Dr. Alcott, and Dr. Warren, with words added from John Quincy Adams, Governor Sullivan, and the Reverend Mr. Fowler. Then on April 10, an article written by one of the corresponding editors, J. N. Andrews, drove the matter home in an article he titled “The Use of Tobacco a Sin Against God.” But it was James White who in an indirect way indicted a good many of his fellow church members in a short editorial he titled “How This Looks!” This was inspired by the incoming mail:

“I want to stop my paper, for I am not able to pay. I like the paper, but am too poor to pay for it.”

Let me inquire, “Do you use tea, coffee, and tobacco?”

“Yes, we have used these things a long time, and the habit has become strong; and I don’t think it is a sin to use these daily comforts that taste so well.”

But how do you get them? You are poor, too poor to pay \$2 for fifty-two visits from the *Review*.

“Well, we think we must have tobacco, tea, and coffee, so we try to raise the money some way.”

This is the condition of many professed children of our long-suffering God, in whom is the perfection of greatness and purity.—*Ibid.*, [June 12, 1856](#)

It took time to lead people to recognize the importance of following sound health principles.

### A Profitable Trip into the Field

During 1856 James and Ellen White were able to get out into the relatively nearby communities for meetings on a few weekends. One such tour had a surprising ending. James White stated that “our late

visit with the brethren at Hastings, Grand Rapids, and Bowne was refreshing and cheering to us, and we trust will result in some good to the brethren.”—[Ibid.](#), July 24, 1856. At Hastings, meetings were held in the courthouse. Ellen White wrote to Stockbridge Howland and his wife of what happened:

We started for our journey intending to remain four days at Hastings and then return home. But Sunday as we were going to the courthouse ... two brethren met us and said they had come for sixteen miles on foot to get us to go to Bowne, that some were anxious to be baptized and as they had only hear done [Brother Frisbie], they wanted a new gift.... We sent an appointment for that place, then went to Grand Rapids, and from Grand Rapids to Bowne.—[Letter 1, 1856.](#)

[342]

She wrote of a company of believers there, seventeen in number, two of them “strong in the faith.” She told the story:

These brethren never heard but one man talk the truth, and they had read our publications, been convinced, and within three months seventeen Sabbathkeepers were raised up. They are substantial souls, some of them or all used tobacco. One brother had just bought two pounds; he read the piece in the *Review*, he laid aside his tobacco, and has tasted none since.

This ought to shame those who profess the third angel’s message, and have professed it for years, yet need to be often exhorted about their tobacco. A number of these brethren have left off the use of tobacco.—[Ibid.](#)

On Sabbath four were baptized, and on Sunday two decided for the truth and others were convinced. For James and Ellen White it was a thrilling experience.

### The Laodicean Message

The Sabbathkeeping Adventists had taken the position that the messages to the seven churches in [Revelation 2 and 3](#) pictured

the experience of the Christian church down through the centuries. It was their conclusion that the message to the Laodicean church applied to those they now termed nominal Adventists, those who had not accepted the seventh-day Sabbath. In a short editorial in the *Review* of October 9, James White raised some thought provoking questions that he introduced by stating:

The inquiry is beginning to come up afresh, “Watchman, What of the night?” At present there is space for only a few questions, asked to call attention to the subject to which they relate. A full answer, we trust, will soon be given.—[The Review and Herald, October 9, 1856.](#)

Of the eleven questions he asked, it is the sixth that zeroed in on the Laodiceans.

[343]

6. Does not the state of the Laodiceans (lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot) fitly illustrate the condition of the body of those who profess the third angel’s message?—[Ibid.](#)

The last question lays the matter open:

11. If this be our condition as a people, have we any real grounds to hope for the favor of God unless we heed the “counsel” of the True Witness? [[Revelation 3:18-21](#) is quoted.]—[Ibid.](#)

It is clear that the truth of the matter was just dawning on the mind of James White. The next issue of the *Review* carried a seven-column presentation of the seven churches, under that title. In his opening remarks he declared:

We must agree with some modern expositors that these seven churches should be understood as representing seven conditions of the Christian church, in seven periods of time, covering the ground of the entire Christian age.—[The Review and Herald, October 16, 1856.](#)

He then took up the prophecy, dealing with each church separately. Coming to the seventh, the Laodicean, he declared:

How humbling to us as a people is the sad description of this church. And is not this dreadful description a most perfect picture of our present condition? It is; and it will be of no use to try to evade the force of this searching testimony to the Laodicean church. The Lord help us to receive it, and to profit by it.—[Ibid.](#)

After he devoted two columns to the Laodicean church, his closing remarks made a strong appeal:

Dear brethren, we must overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, or we shall have no part in the kingdom of God... Lay hold of this work at once, and in faith claim the gracious promises to the repenting Laodiceans. Arise in the name of the Lord, and let your light shine to the glory of His blessed name.—[Ibid.](#)

The response from the field was electrifying. Wrote G. W. Holt [344] from Ohio on October 20:

Yes, I do believe that we who are in the third message with the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are the church this language is addressed to; and we cannot be too soon in applying for tried gold and white raiment, and eyesalve, that we may see.—[Ibid.](#), [November 6, 1856](#)

From the Northeast a new voice was heard on the subject, that of Stephen N. Haskell, of Princeton, Massachusetts. As a first-day Adventist he had begun to preach at the age of 20; now three years later he was in the third angel's message. A thorough Bible student, after having seen White's brief initial editorial introducing the question of the seven churches, he chose to write an extended piece for the *Review*:

The subject referred to has been one of deep interest to me for some months past.... I have for some time been led to believe that the message to the Laodiceans belongs to us; i.e., to those who believe in the third angel's message, from many reasons which I consider to be good. I will mention two.—[Ibid.](#)

This he does, devoting two columns to his conclusions. As he closed he declared:

A theory of the third angel's message never, no never, will save us, without the wedding garment, which is the righteousness of the saints. We must perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.—[Ibid.](#)

As James White continued his editorials on the message to the Laodicean church the concepts the Sabbathkeeping Adventists were now reading in the *Review* were startling, but on thoughtful, prayerful consideration they were seen to be applicable. The letters to the editor showed quite general agreement and indicated that a revival was under way. That the stirring message was not the outgrowth of excitement was attested to by the first article in *Testimony* No. 3, published in April, 1857, titled "Be Zealous and Repent." It opens, [345] "The Lord has shown me in vision some things concerning the church in its present lukewarm state, which I will relate to you."—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:141](#). In this Ellen White presented what was shown to her of Satan's attacks on the church through earthly prosperity and possessions.

### The Trip into Ohio and Iowa

[The Review and Herald, November 6, 1856](#), the issue that carried the first responses to the Laodicean message, announced that "Brother and Sister White design spending several weeks in the West, and wish to be addressed at Round Grove, Whiteside County, Illinois." Elon Everts and Josiah Hart, acquaintances from New England, were residing there. Soon after the Whites arrived, a conference was appointed by these two residents at "the Hittleson schoolhouse

on Sabbath and First-day, December 6 and 7.”—[Ibid., November 27, 1856](#)

The invitation “Will all the Sabbath brethren in the State, as far as possible, attend?” was a broad one, and illustrates the extent to which the third angel’s message had penetrated Illinois. It was a triumphant meeting; in his report, James White observed: “If the brethren in Illinois wake fully up to the work, we shall endeavor to join them with a tent next summer.”—[Ibid., January 1, 1857](#)

This was a time when “the West” with its good farmland was opening up to settlers. This lured many families from their rocky New England farms to the promise of a more comfortable and easy life. The Everts and Harts, with whom the Whites had associated in Round Grove, were examples. Two other families with whom they were well acquainted—the Andrews and Stevens families of Paris, Maine—had moved to Waukon, Iowa, and the J. N. Loughborough family had joined them. This removed from the work two young and fruitful ministers. These and their close associates were dissatisfied with moving the *Review* office from Rochester to Battle Creek, and they did not join James White and others on the matter of the Laodicean message. While she was at Round Grove a vision was given to Ellen White on Tuesday, December 9. She wrote:

I was shown that the company of brethren at Waukon, Iowa, needed help; that Satan’s snare must be broken, and these precious souls rescued. My mind could not be at ease until we had decided to visit them.—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 160.](#)

Ellen White was insistent. To reach Iowa, the Mississippi River had to be crossed, either by boat or on the ice, and it was now early winter. Observing Ellen White’s convictions, Brethren Hart and Everts were impressed to take the Whites by sleigh. Ellen White picks up the story:

[346]

It was then good sleighing, and preparations were made to go with two horses and a sleigh; but as it rained for twenty-four hours, and the snow was fast disappearing, my husband thought the journey must be given up.

Yet my mind could not rest; it was agitated concerning Waukon.

Brother Hart said to me, "Sister White, what about Waukon?" I said, "We shall go." "Yes," he replied, "if the Lord works a miracle."

Many times that night I was at the window watching the weather, and about daybreak there was a change, and it commenced snowing. The next evening, about five o'clock, we started on our way to Waukon—Brethren Everts and Hart, my husband, and myself. Arriving at Green Vale, Illinois, we held meetings with the brethren there.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1888\)](#), 330.

At Green Vale a severe snowstorm struck, delaying the journey nearly a week. On Monday, December 15, James White reported, "We hope to be able to break through, and pursue our journey ... in a few days."—[The Review and Herald, January 1, 1857](#). In his next report he told of their continued journey as the roads opened, and how as they stopped at the hotels they held meetings introducing the third angel's message. But they had to turn down invitations to hold meetings in the villages. Their mission, he wrote, was "to visit brethren and sisters who had moved from Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New York, about thirty in number."—[Ibid., January 15, 1857](#)

Among these thirty, in addition to those named above, were the Butlers, Lindsays, Meads, and Lamsons. The young ministers in the group had found the work in the cause hard, the separation from family difficult, especially for the wife and mother, and there was no plan for regular financial support. It seemed that the enemy was stepping in to thwart the work of God just at a time when the outlook was most promising.

[347] As they neared the Mississippi River they made many inquiries about crossing. No one thought it could be done. The horses were breaking through the crusted snow at almost every step. The ice on the river was mostly composed of snow, and there was about a foot of water flowing over it. Ellen White recounted the breathtaking experience:

When we came to the river, Brother Hart arose in the sleigh and said, "Is it Iowa, or back to Illinois?" ...

We answered, "Go forward, trusting in Israel's God."

We ventured upon the ice, praying as we went, and were carried safely across. As we ascended the bank on the Iowa side of the river, we united in praising the Lord. A number of persons told us, after we had crossed, that no amount of money would have tempted them to venture upon the ice, and that several teams had broken through, the drivers barely escaping with their lives.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1888\), 330, 331.](#)

Dubuque was six miles from the crossing, and the travelers spent the Sabbath, December 20, there. In the evening Elon Everts hung up a chart and presented a short and appropriate message. Waukon was four days' sleighing away, and they pressed on. "I never witnessed such cold weather," exclaimed Ellen White. She wrote:

The brethren would watch each other to see if they were freezing; and we would often hear, "Brother, your face is freezing, you had better rub the frost out as soon as possible." "Your ear is freezing": or "Your nose is freezing."—[Ibid., 331.](#)

Ellen found little time to write, but on Wednesday as they neared Waukon, she got off a little note addressed "Dear Friends at Home."

Here we are fourteen miles this side of Waukon. We are all quite well. Have had rather tedious time getting thus far. Yesterday for miles there was no track. Our horses had to plow through snow, very deep, but on we came.

O such fare as we have had on this journey. Last Monday we could get no decent food and tasted not a morsel with the exception of a small apple from morn till night. We have most of the time kept very comfortable, but it is the bitterest cold weather we ever experienced....

[348]

Children, be thankful for your comfortable home. We often suffer with cold; and cannot keep warm sitting before the stove even. Their houses are so cold, and your mother suffers with cold in her head and teeth all the time. Wear two dresses all the time.... Last night we slept in an unfinished chamber where there was an opening for the stovepipe running through the top of the house—a large space, big enough for a couple of cats to jump out of.—[Letter 4, 1856.](#)

Of their reception in Waukon later that day she wrote:

We reached Waukon Wednesday night, and found nearly all the Sabbathkeepers sorry that we had come. Much prejudice existed against us, for much had been said concerning us calculated to injure our influence. We knew that the Lord had sent us, and that He would there take the work into His own hands.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1888\), 331.](#)

Years later Loughborough gave a vivid description of the meeting of the travelers with the believers in Waukon.

As Brother Hosea Mead and I were working on a store building in Waukon, a man looking up saw me, and inquired, “Do you know a carpenter around here by the name of Hosea Mead?”

I replied, “Yes, sir, he is up here working with me.”

Brother Mead said, “That is Elon Everts’ voice.” Then he came and looked down, and Brother Everts said, “Come down; Brother and Sister White and Brother Hart are out here in the sleigh.”

As I reached the sleigh, Sister White greeted me with the question “What *doest* thou here, Elijah?”

Astonished at such a question, I replied, “I am working with Brother Mead at carpenter work.”

The second time she repeated, “What *doest thou* here, Elijah?”

Now I was so embarrassed at such a question, and the connecting of my case with Elijah, that I did not know what to say. It was evident that there was something back of all this which I should hear more about.

The third time she repeated the question, “*What doest thou here, Elijah?*”

[349]

I was brought by these bare questions to very seriously consider the case of Elijah, away from the direct work of the Lord, hid in a cave.... The salutation most thoroughly convinced me that there was going to come a change, and a “*go-back*” from the labor in which I was then engaged.—[Pacific Union Recorder, August 4, 1910](#) (see also WCW, in [The Review and Herald, January 23, 1936](#)).

Sabbath and Sunday they discussed the Laodicean message. All accepted the new light. Monday they discussed the move to Battle Creek, explaining the involvements. This reestablished confidence. At one of the meetings Ellen White was taken off in vision, and in vision solemnly repeated the words “Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord.” These words brought consolation and hope. Among those powerfully affected was Mary Loughborough, who in days past had been left at home alone while her husband was away preaching, and she was tempted to murmur. She confessed her bitterness of spirit in a powerful testimony and urged her husband to return to his ministry.

At another meeting John Andrews renewed his consecration to God and to service in the Lord’s cause. The few days James and Ellen White spent in Waukon were not in vain, nor were they soon forgotten. White reported:

Should we undertake to give a full description of the triumphant meetings at Waukon, we should fall far short of doing justice to the subject. We close our remarks by adding that these meetings were the most powerful we had witnessed in years, and in many respects the most wonderful we ever witnessed.... We were ... many times

paid for facing the prairie winds and storms on our long and tedious journey to northern Iowa.—[Ibid.](#), [January 15, 1857](#)

## Chapter 23—(1857) A Year of Many Visions

[350]

Three pages of the *Review and Herald* published on January 1, 1857, carried letters from ministers and laymen addressed to the editor. Eight of the twelve were a response in one way or another to the proposal made by James White a month earlier that the message to the Laodicean church had its application in the experience of the Sabbathkeeping Adventists. Five weeks later, an overwhelming percentage of the letters indicated a concern and a willingness to accept the divine reproof and profit by it. This was typical of the response.

By mid-January, James and Ellen White, somewhat rested from the strenuous journey to Waukon, Iowa, were ready to move into the field visiting the churches “in the different States.” The first was at Hillsdale, some thirty-five or forty miles southeast of Battle Creek. They were there for the weekend of February 13 to 15 to attend a conference called by J. H. Waggoner to meet in Waldron’s Hall. The first report of the meeting is found in the *Review and Herald* of March 19, in the form of a letter written by Louisa M. Morton to friends in Wisconsin. They, with her, had been in sympathy with the dissidents in Wisconsin who were turning their backs on the third angel’s message. She was visiting in Michigan and chanced to attend the Hillsdale meeting. She wrote what she observed, describing the conference and a vision given to Ellen White.

### The Vision at Hillsdale, Michigan

The way opened for me to attend a conference at Hillsdale. There were two hundred Sabbathkeepers present, all firm believers in the third angel’s message. The messengers present were Brethren White, Holt, Waggoner, and Cornell.

[351]

I must say I was very much surprised when I heard the evidence presented in favor of present truth. They

had Bible to prove every view they presented; and more than all, the Holy Spirit bore witness to the same. I realized more than ever the fulfillment of the Saviour's words "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.... And he will show you things to come."

At the last meeting Sister White was taken off in vision. It was the most solemn scene I ever witnessed. It has made an impression on my mind that can never be erased while reason and life remain.

When she came out of vision she gave one of the most thrilling exhortations I ever heard. She repeated these words often: "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord, and heal all your backslidings." I am confident that no one could speak as she did without receiving instruction from that Teacher who spake as never man spake.—[Ibid., March 19, 1857](#)

It was James White's custom when a vision was given to Ellen in a public gathering to inquire if a physician were present who could examine her while in vision and report his findings to the people. On this occasion Dr. Lord was in the audience. A description of what took place was given some years later by A. F. Fowler and his wife, residents of Hillsdale:

We were present when Sister E. G. White had a vision in Waldron's Hall, Hillsdale. Dr. Lord made an examination, and said, "Her heart beats, but there is no breath. There is life, but no action of the lungs. I cannot account for this condition."—Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Fowler, Hillsdale, Michigan, January 1, 1891, in GSAM, p. 209.

To this is added the testimony of another eyewitness:

I was present when Sister White had the above-named vision in Waldron's Hall, Hillsdale. In addition

to the above statement, I heard the doctor say that Sister White's condition in vision was "beyond his knowledge." He also said, "There is something supernatural about that."—C. S. Glover, Battle Creek, Michigan, January 19, 1891, in GSAM, p. 209.

[352]

This was the first vision in which Ellen White was shown that the Laodicean message included the Advent believers, and she hastened it into print as the first article in *Testimony* No. 3, announced in the *Review and Herald* of April 30.

The article, titled "Be Zealous and Repent," opens:  
*Dear Brethren and Sisters,*

The Lord has shown me in vision some things concerning the church in its present lukewarm state, which I will relate to you. The church was presented before me in vision. Said the angel to the church: "Jesus speaks to thee, 'Be zealous and repent.'" This work, I saw, should be taken hold of in earnest. There is something to repent of. Worldly-mindedness, selfishness, and covetousness have been eating out the spirituality and life of God's people.

The danger of God's people for a few years past has been the love of the world. Out of this have sprung the sins of selfishness and covetousness. The more they get of this world, the more they set their affections on it; and still they reach out for more.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:141](#).

After writing of the condition of the church as revealed to her, she declared:

Oh, how precious was this promise, as it was shown to me in vision! "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Oh, the love, wondrous love of God! After all our lukewarmness and sins He says: "Return unto me, and I will return unto thee, and will heal all thy backslidings." This was repeated by the

angel a number of times, “Return unto me, and I will return unto thee, and will heal all thy backslidings.”—[Ibid., 1:143.](#)

### Visiting the Churches in Eastern Michigan

[353] From Hillsdale, James and Ellen White pushed on to the east, visiting six churches during the next three weeks. Midweek, at the Saline church, they had a deeply spiritual time as a vision was given to Ellen White. Reported M. E. Cornell: At Saline the Lord was with us. The testimony for the Laodiceans was presented with good effect. The church was much cheered by the exhortations of Sister White, and on the last day of the meeting the Lord reached down His hand in power to correct wrongs and direct and encourage us all. We truly felt that it was good to be there and know that the Lord was returning to His people.—[The Review and Herald, March 26, 1857.](#)

At the five other churches visited in eastern Michigan, the experience of introducing the Laodicean message resulted in revivals.

### The Concept of the Investigative Judgment Dawns

Before we relate other events in the early part of 1857, we should pause to observe the dawning consciousness of another important truth, the investigative judgment. Among the letters published in the January 1, 1857, issue of the *Review* was one of more than average length from Elon Everts, of Round Grove, Illinois, bearing the date of December 17, 1856. If correctly dated, this letter was written while he and Josiah Hart were taking the Whites by sleigh from Round Grove, Illinois, to Waukon, Iowa, and they were blocked by snowdrifts for several days at Green Vale, Illinois. The Whites had spent some time in Round Grove; there the Laodicean message had been discussed and was well received. As they traveled together it was inevitable that there should be considerable discussion of a point of interest on which Everts dwelt in his letter written for publication in the *Review*. It started out:

*Dear Brethren,*

I am passing through a solemn train of thought. The question with me is “Where are we?” I answer, “More than twelve years past the proclamation, ‘The hour of his judgment is come’” ([Revelation 14:6, 7](#)). We have been the same length of time in the cleansing of the sanctuary ([Daniel 8:14](#)).

I inquire, “What was the cleansing of the sanctuary under the first covenant?” It was the day of judgment. What did it typify? The work in the antitypical sanctuary, which has been going on since A.D. 1844.—[The Review and Herald, January 1, 1857](#).

Building on this, Everts entered into a well-reasoned conclusion that “it appears ... that the righteous dead have been under investigative judgment since 1844.”—[Ibid](#). He declared: [354]

My dear brethren, from the scriptures referred to I solemnly believe that the judgment has been going on in the heavenly sanctuary since 1844, and that upon the righteous dead.—[Ibid](#).

Getting back to Battle Creek in early January, 1857, James White picked up the matter and set it forth in an editorial of four and a half columns, which he titled “The Judgment.” With abundance of Scripture evidence he dealt broadly with the subject and wrote:

It appears that the saints are judged while some are living, and others are dead.... The fact that *all* who have part in that [first] resurrection are “blessed and holy” shows that decision is passed on all the saints before the second coming of Christ.

Tying the judgment in with the message to the Laodicean church, White argued:

It is most reasonable to conclude that there is a special call to the remnant, and a special work to be performed by them, and for them, preparatory to the decisions of the judgment in regard to them, and that

their salvation depends upon fully obeying the calls and counsel to them. And we most solemnly believe that this preparatory call and work is brought to view in the testimony to the Laodiceans, and parallel portions of the Word of God.—[Ibid., January 29, 1857](#)

### A Power Press for the Review Office

For five years the *Review and Herald* had been printed on a press owned and operated by Sabbathkeeping Adventists. The printing of each sheet was virtually a “custom job”—the type was inked, a sheet of paper laid on it, and then the lever pulled, making the impression. The same was true of all other publications put out between 1852 and 1857. Wrote James White in March:

[355]

With our hand press, it takes three days of each week to print the *Review and Herald*. Should the circulation of the *Review and Herald* be doubled (which we may hope it soon will be), there would be no room for the *Instructor*; and a large amount of work ... would be shut out.—[Ibid., March 19, 1857](#)

There was another pressing need clearly seen by anyone who attended a church service in Battle Creek. The congregation was still meeting in the diminutive “house of prayer”—a building eighteen by twenty-four feet, constructed in 1855. Coming to grips with the two urgent needs, the Battle Creek church chose a committee to call “a general conference” to open on Friday, April 10, and to continue three or four days. Because of the limited meeting space, a very cautious invitation was extended, and that principally to the preachers in the State, corresponding editors of the *Review*, and to the churches who could send a delegate or two.

The conference opened at three o’clock Friday afternoon, and appropriate services were held Sabbath. But it would be hopeless to care for the crowds if there was preaching on Sunday, so the brethren turned to business. Joseph Bates was chosen to preside. First attention was given to the matter of a power press.

Two resolutions were passed. First, “that such a press be obtained for the *Review* office,” and second, “that all business pertaining to

the purchasing [of] the press, et cetera, be confided to the hands of the publishing committee” ([Ibid.](#), [April 16, 1857](#)).

It was thought that such a press could be secured for something less than \$2,500. As to the meeting house, the record gives a little background:

The subject of a meetinghouse in Battle Creek, sufficiently large to accommodate such conferences as it will probably be necessary to convene from time to time at this place, was next considered. The necessity for this was very sensibly *felt* by most of those present. It was therefore

*Resolved*, That a house that will conveniently seat about three or four hundred people is much needed in this place and should be erected as soon as possible.—  
[Ibid.](#)

### Plans for a Trip East

The securing of the power press was the priority item, and steps were taken to purchase it in Boston. This meant that James White and his wife would be making a trip east. He could not think of this without using the opportunity to meet with believers en route, so he published the following under “Appointments,” a careful reading of which reveals a camp meeting concept in embryo: [356]

We design leaving for the East in a few weeks, and if the brethren in New England think best to hold one or more general tent meetings, we should be happy to meet with them. On our return, probably about the first of July, we should be happy to join such a meeting in the State of New York.

Although our principal labors are in fields where present truth has not been preached, yet one general convocation once a year, in the tent of those who keep the truth, may be the means of much good to the church.—  
[Ibid.](#)

The next week he announced appointments in northeastern New York and Springfield, Massachusetts, in late May, soon to be followed with plans for meetings in June in Vermont, New York, and Pennsylvania.

This journey east was by train. They moved rather quickly from appointment to appointment in the schedule that took them across New York State and Massachusetts. At Boston, James White bought the power press, then they visited Vermont and Maine and returned home through New York State. He was able to work in some evangelistic tent meetings en route. His report of work in Morristown, Vermont, reads:

The thirteenth and fourteenth [of June], we joined the brethren in their general tent meeting which was held in Morristown. The gathering was large. We spoke twice on the Sabbath on the subject of the seven churches and the judgment with some freedom.... First-day morning the plain testimony reached the feelings of most present, and there was some freedom.

At half past ten we went to the tent where hundreds were assembled to hear. We presented to the intelligent and candid audience every text in the New Testament which mentions the first day of the week, also every text which mentions the Sabbath of the Lord. Good order was preserved in the tent, and strict attention was given to the subject.—[Ibid.](#), [June 25, 1857](#)

[357]

As to the Sunday afternoon meeting, he reported:

We spoke on the messages of [Revelation 14](#) with freedom, then Mrs. White spoke nearly half an hour to the large and very attentive congregation with much freedom.—[Ibid.](#)

Ellen White was now 29 years of age and was beginning to speak to large non-Adventist audiences. This is a phase of her work that would develop rather rapidly. The outlook in conservative New England at the time was rather discouraging, and James reported:

We were more than ever convinced that but little can be accomplished in New England at present. Brethren Sperry, Hutchins, and Phillips will probably visit the West this summer, and hold some tent meetings in Michigan in the Vermont tent.—[Ibid.](#)

### Vision at Buck's Bridge, New York

One week later they were at Buck's Bridge, New York, for week-end meetings in "the house of prayer." The little church structure was erected by John Byington and his associates in 1855 at about the time the house of prayer was erected in Battle Creek. White reported:

The comfortable place of worship seemed inviting. It is an easy place to speak. It is a very plain but comfortable place to worship. The house was nearly filled with Sabbathkeepers. We spoke to them on the Sabbath.—[The Review and Herald, July 16, 1857.](#)

Sunday morning James White spoke to a full house, and on that occasion a vision was given to Ellen. James referred to the experience by saying, "The Lord manifested His great goodness and unbounded mercy in our midst."

In the audience that morning was 22-year-old Daniel Bourdeau from Vermont, a new believer, having come from the Baptist Church. He later reported his observations that day as James White offered to anyone present an opportunity to examine his wife while she was in vision:

June 28, 1857 [actually June 21], I saw Sister Ellen G. White in vision for the first time. I was an unbeliever in the visions; but one circumstance among others that I might mention convinced me that her visions were of God.

To satisfy my mind as to whether she breathed or not, I first put my hand on her chest sufficiently long to know that there was no more heaving of the lungs than there would have been had she been a corpse. I then

took my hand and placed it over her mouth, pinching her nostrils between my thumb and forefinger, so that it was impossible for her to exhale or inhale air, even if she had desired to do so. I held her thus with my hand about ten minutes, long enough for her to suffocate under ordinary circumstances. She was not in the least affected by this ordeal.

Since witnessing this wonderful phenomenon, I have not once been inclined to doubt the divine origin of her visions.—D. T. Bourdeau, Battle Creek, Michigan, February 4, 1891, in GSAM, p. 210.

The last stop on their eastern tour was at Ulysses, Pennsylvania, where they joined William S. Ingraham for a tent meeting held July 4 and 5. Both James and Ellen White were deeply troubled by the lack of financial support for the ministers where they had made recent stops. They were also concerned, as noted by James White, for the low state of the church because of fault finding, which was destroying “the spiritual life of the people of God in central New York,” and for “tedious church trials,” in which brethren had “picked at straws,” which had “driven the spirit of the present truth almost out of the land” (*Ibid.*, July 16, 1857). On Monday, July 6, a vision was given to Ellen White. She wrote concerning it:

There have been so many church trials among the brethren in the State of New York that God has not had the least to do with, that the church have lost their strength, and they know not how to regain it. Love for one another has disappeared, and a faultfinding, accusing spirit has prevailed. It has been considered a virtue to hunt up everything about one another that looked wrong, and make it appear fully as bad as it really was.

The bowels of compassion that yearn in love and pity toward brethren have not existed. The religion of some has consisted in faultfinding, picking at everything bearing the appearance of wrong, until the noble feelings of the soul are withered. The mind should be elevated to dwell upon eternal scenes, heaven, its

treasures, its glories, and should take sweet and holy satisfaction in the truths of the Bible.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:164.](#)

In four pages she deplored the situation in New York and northern Pennsylvania and wrote of what could be done to bring about a change. “Look away from the unworthiness of self, and exalt Jesus,” she urged. “Talk of faith, of light, and of heaven, and you will have faith, light, and love, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”—[Ibid., 1:168.](#)

Thursday, July 9, they were back home from their itinerary of eight weeks. The new press was there in Battle Creek, purchased with funds largely furnished by individual \$100 gifts and pledges. In the *Review* dated July 30, 1857, James White joyously reported:

This number of the *Review* is printed on the power press. Up to this time everything connected with this enterprise has gone off most pleasantly and prosperously. The cost of the press, and getting it in running order by hand power [there was a handle on the flywheel], is \$1,950. But we must have an engine immediately, which will swell the entire cost to near \$2,300.

A three-horsepower steam engine turned the press for the October 8 issue of the *Review*. Later White wrote with a note of triumph:

It works admirably; and our press work, no accident preventing, will henceforth be accomplished by steam which never tires. The Lord’s blessing has thus far seemed greatly to attend the enterprise. The brethren are requested still to remember in their prayers the prosperity of the cause both at the office and abroad.... May every stroke of the engine and every revolution of the press be instrumental in sending forth that, and that only, which shall be light and food to benighted and perishing souls.—[The Review and Herald, October 15, 1857.](#)

### The August Vision at Monterey, Michigan

[360] While the believers in Battle Creek were making a start in erecting a new meetinghouse, the members in Monterey had finished their house of prayer, and James and Ellen White were there Sabbath and Sunday, August 22 and 23, for meetings with the church and believers from nearby towns. James White spoke twice on Sabbath and twice on Sunday to congregations that filled the building. In his report of the weekend meetings he stated in characteristic fashion: “The Lord manifested Himself powerfully both days.”—[Ibid., September 3, 1857](#). Ellen White wrote of the experience in an article that took first place in *Testimony* No. 4, titled “Young Sabbathkeepers.”

August 22, 1857, at the house of prayer in Monterey, Michigan, I was shown that many have not yet heard the voice of Jesus, and the saving message has not taken hold of the soul and worked a reformation in the life. Many of the young have not the spirit of Jesus. The love of God is not in their hearts, therefore all the natural besetments hold the victory instead of the Spirit of God and salvation.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:154](#).

It was a startling message, portraying the needs of the young people in the church, comparing “themselves among themselves” and while doing this, neglecting “the only perfect and true standard” and pattern, Jesus, having largely lost sight of Him. She repeated the words of the angel to her:

“If such should be ushered into the City of God, and told that all its rich beauty and glory was theirs to enjoy eternally, they would have no sense of how dearly that inheritance was purchased for them. They would never realize the matchless depths of a Saviour’s love. They have not drunk of the cup, nor been baptized with the baptism. Heaven would be marred if such should dwell there. Those only who have partaken of the sufferings of the Son of God, and have come up through great tribulation, and have washed their robes

and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, can enjoy the indescribable glory and unsurpassed beauty of heaven.”—[Ibid., 1:155](#).

The next nine pages are filled with practical counsel to young Christians, with a very choice nugget in the heart of the article:

It should be the study of every Christian to serve God from principle, and not be ruled by feeling. By so doing, faith will be brought into exercise, and will increase. I was shown that if the Christian lives a humble, self-sacrificing life, peace and joy in the Lord will be the result. But the greatest happiness experienced will be in doing others good, in making others happy. Such happiness will be lasting.—[Ibid., 1:161](#).

[361]

### **The October Visit to Monterey and Another Important Vision**

Regarding plans for the autumn months, James White announced:

We now propose spending three Sabbaths in each month in different places away from Battle Creek, provided we succeed in obtaining a suitable team, and shall remember the churches in Burlington, Colon, Hillsdale, Waverly, Monterey, Caledonia, Portland, Locke, and elsewhere in the State. Shall be glad to hear from brethren in different parts of the State in regard to small conference this fall and winter.—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1857](#).

Writing more specifically, he announced on somewhat short notice:

Providence permitting, we will meet with the brethren at Monterey, Sabbath, October 10, and at Battle Creek, October 17.—[Ibid.](#)

Taking 3-year-old Willie with them, James and Ellen spent Sabbath and Sunday, October 3 and 4, with the believers in Caledonia, then drove on to Monterey for a meeting in the evening, October 8. White reported:

There was a meeting in the schoolhouse near Brother George Lay's, and an expectation to hear preaching. We went to the house feeling that we had nothing for the people. We told brethren on the way that we could not decide on any subject, and wished them to select.

[362]

We sang a hymn, and had great freedom in prayer; sang again, but felt perplexed as to duty. In this state of mind, knowing not what to do, we gave liberty to others to use the time, when Mrs. White arose and spoke with much freedom. The place was filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Some rejoiced, others wept. All felt that the Lord was drawing near. How sacred the place. Those present will never forget that meeting.

When seated, Mrs. White began to praise the Lord, and continued rising higher and higher in perfect triumph in the Lord, till her voice changed, and the deep, clear shouts of Glory! Hallelujah! thrilled every heart. She was in vision.—*Ibid.*, [October 22, 1857](#)

White recounted that a discouraged brother was in that meeting who had thrown his armor down and was backsliding. White stated:

A most touching and encouraging message was given for him. By the grace of God he raised his head that evening, and he and his good wife are again happy in hope. Monterey church will never forget that evening. At least they never should.—*Ibid.*

In this vision the particulars concerning a number of believers were opened up to Ellen White, and she had scarcely reached home before she began writing letters to some of them—letters of counsel and warning: to the newly married Uriah and Harriet Smith,

concerning their connection with the work, their influence, and the great and solemn privilege of being connected with the publishing of the message to S. Rumery, an eyewitness to the vision regarding a situation in the Monterey church, and the importance of a right attitude toward the cause of God. She reported:

After we returned home I stated to my husband that I was impressed that something of great importance was shown me at Monterey, which was not yet clear to my mind. One night, a little past midnight, I awoke, and all was clear. I arose, and, while my husband slept, wrote.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:239](#).

She held this message until the conference in Battle Creek, which opened Friday, November 6. Then she read it to the 250 believers who gathered. In the meantime she continued to write personal testimonies to individuals shown her in the Monterey vision. To A. Burwell, she wrote regarding breaking loose from the love of the world and walking fully in the light, and of giving financial support to the work of God: “You have no idea of sacrificing for the cause of God,” she wrote. “A sacrifice does not increase, but decreases.” [363]

I was shown in vision at Monterey that God was calling upon those who have this world’s goods to sacrifice of their substance. A few have listened to the call, but many will go away sorrowful like the young man who came to Jesus to know what he should do to inherit eternal life. At the answer of Jesus, “Sell all that thou hast,” he was sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

This is like the faith of many of the Sabbathkeepers. They submit to keep the Sabbath, to go along with this unpopular people. They can dwell upon the truth; but when Jesus says, Sacrifice for the truth, sell that thou hast, lay up treasure in heaven, they are sorrowful. Their idol has been touched.—[Letter 2, 1857](#).

## The Battle Creek Conference

James White was enthusiastic in his report of the conference in Battle Creek that lasted from Friday to Sunday, November 6 to 8. It was held in the newly finished house of worship—a building twenty-eight by forty-two feet and capable of seating three hundred.

Services on Sabbath commenced at nine o'clock and, with only a forty-minute intermission, ran until dark. Sunday was a full day, and Monday was given to the transaction of the business of the conference. But back to the thrust of the conference:

The subject of the unity and gifts of the church was presented, which seemed to have a place in the hearts of the people. Many expressed themselves happy to see this subject taking its proper place in the church. During this meeting Mrs. White read a recently received testimony for the church, which was received as the voice of the Lord to His people.—[The Review and Herald, November 12, 1857](#).

This testimony was published in the *Review and Herald* in late November, introduced by a note from James White that indicates the delicate way in which the publication of such messages was being entered upon:

[364] The following testimony was read before 250 persons at the conference recently held at Battle Creek. A call was made for its publication for the benefit of the saints scattered abroad, and when a vote was taken, at least two hundred persons rose up. When the call was made for those who objected to its publication to rise, none arose. There were many present not acquainted with such testimony, who were excused from acting before the vote was taken.

This testimony occupies nine pages only of the tract of thirty-six pages just issued, entitled *Testimony for the Church* No. 4.—[Ibid., November 26, 1857](#)

The entire message read to the conference may be found today in [Testimonies for the Church, 1:170-178](#), under the title “The Rich Young Man.”

## The Vision of the Shaking

There were other visions given to Ellen White in late 1857. One of the last was at their home at Battle Creek on Friday, November 20. In that vision she was given instruction for John and Mary Loughborough, who were with them, and then scenes of far-reaching significance relating to future events. Of this she wrote:

I was shown the people of God, and saw them mightily shaken. I saw some with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale, and marked with deep anxiety which expressed their internal struggle. There was firmness and great earnestness expressed in their countenances, while large drops of perspiration rose upon their foreheads, and fell. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God's approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest anxious look settled upon them.—[The Review and Herald, December 31, 1857.](#)

This now appears as a chapter in volume 1 of the *Testimonies*, titled "The Shaking," pages 179-184, and in [Early Writings, 269-273](#). Ellen White asked the meaning of the shaking that she had seen. She was shown that "it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans."

This straight testimony some will not bear. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God's people.

[365]

I saw that the testimony of True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance, and all that truly receive it will obey it and be purified.—[The Review and Herald, December 31, 1857.](#)

In the vision she was carried quickly through the experience of the saints, and in symbolic representation shown the victory of those

who could not be shaken and their irrepressible joy in welcoming their Lord as He descends from heaven to deliver His waiting people.

Thus the curtain drops on the “year of many visions.”

## Chapter 24—(1858) The Great Controversy Vision and Broader Concepts [366]

The vision at Lovett's Grove, Ohio, on a Sunday afternoon in mid-March, 1858, was one of great importance. In this the theme of the great controversy between Christ and His angels on the one side and Satan and his angels on the other, was seen as one continuous and closely linked chain of events spanning six thousand years. This vision has put Seventh-day Adventists into a unique position with clear-cut views of the working of Providence in the history of our world—a viewpoint quite different from that held by secular historians, who see events of history as the interplay between the actions of men, often seemingly the result of chance or natural developments. In other words, this vision and others of the great conflict of the ages yield a philosophy of history that answers many questions and in prophetic forecast gives the assurance of final victory of good over evil.

For the setting of this vision, we must go back to the turn of the year and notice some of the intervening activities. There had been a very favorable response to the reading of the Ellen G. White testimony at the conference held in Battle Creek the preceding November, with a strong standing vote calling for its publication. Also at that conference, James White had made a stirring presentation on “the unity and gifts of the church.” This, it was reported, “seemed to have a place in the hearts of the people” (*Ibid.*, November 12, 1857), with many expressing their pleasure on seeing this subject taking its “proper place in the church.”

In response, White re-presented the subject in four *Review and Herald* articles carrying through the turn of the year. Also, the December 31 issue and the second published in January carried articles by him entitled “A Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Present Truth.” These warmed the hearts of the believers. [367]

In the same issues were numbers 8 and 10 of a twenty-eight-part series by Uriah Smith titled “Synopsis of the Present Truth.”

These were some of the first *Review* articles to be accompanied by illustrations. Woodcuts made by Uriah Smith himself, through the skillful use of his woodcarving tools, depicted the beasts and images seen by Daniel and John in prophetic vision.

Notice was given of the progress in publishing tracts in French and German (*Ibid.*, [December 24, 1857](#)), soon to be available to those who wished to spread the third angel's message to the people of other countries and languages. J. H. Waggoner, in a series of four significant articles, was holding before readers the "nature and tendency of modern spiritualism." Among the appointments were those for J. N. Loughborough and James White, who were now often associated in ministering on weekends in nearby churches (*Ibid.*, [December 24, 1857](#); *Ibid.*, [January 28, 1858](#)). Ellen White, of course, accompanied them.

### Meetings in Ohio

S. W. Rhodes, laboring in Ohio, announced in the *Review* that a conference would be held in Green Spring, to begin at 2:00 P.M., Friday, February 26. James White appended a note:

It is our design to be at the conference at Green Spring the twenty-sixth, and to meet in conference with the brethren in Gilboa, March 6 and 7. We may spend three or four weeks in Ohio.—*Ibid.*, [February 18, 1858](#)

James and Ellen White, traveling by carriage with two new converts, Mr. and Mrs. Tillotson, met the Gilboa appointment. The church there was delivered from darkness through a vision given to Ellen White. They were at Lovett's Grove the next weekend, March 13 and 14. Meetings were held in the public schoolhouse and attended by converts brought into the message through the fruitful ministry of G. W. Holt (*Ibid.*, [March 25, 1858](#)). James White reported the experience:

[368]

March 13 and 14 we enjoyed freedom with the young church at Lovett's Grove. Brother Holt's labors have been greatly blessed in this place. He thinks about forty are keeping the Sabbath in this place. A few weeks

since there were none. We enjoyed great freedom with these brethren.

On First-day God manifested His power in a wonderful manner before the crowded assembly. Several decided to keep the Lord's Sabbath and go with the people of God.—[Ibid.](#)

### The Great Controversy Vision

As Ellen White told the story of the meeting held that Sunday afternoon, she reported:

At Lovett's Grove the Lord met with us, and His blessing rested upon us. First-day afternoon there was to be a funeral at the schoolhouse where our meetings were held. My husband was invited to give a discourse on the occasion. The people could not all get into the house. My husband was blessed with freedom, and the power of truth seemed to affect the hearers.

When he closed his remarks, I felt urged by the Spirit of the Lord to bear my testimony. As I was led to speak upon the coming of Christ and the resurrection and the cheering hope of the Christian, my soul triumphed in God. I drank in rich draughts of salvation. Heaven, sweet heaven, was the magnet to draw my soul upward, and I was wrapt in a vision of God's glory. Many important things were revealed to me for the church.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:265, 266.](#)

The vision lasted for two hours (WCW, in [The Review and Herald, February 20, 1936](#)), the congregation in the crowded schoolhouse watching with intense interest all that took place. When the vision ended, the friends and relatives of the deceased, along with a portion of the congregation, bore the casket to the cemetery. Others remained to hear Ellen White relate some of what was shown to her, in the vision, of the glorious reward of the faithful.

Many matters were opened up to her. A portion of the vision was for the instruction and encouragement of the new believers in Ohio,

some of whom were parts of families divided in the acceptance of the message:

[369]

### **Counsels for New Believers**

I saw that those who profess the truth should hold the standard high, and induce others to come up to it. I saw that some would have to walk the straight path alone. Their companions and children will not walk the self-denying pathway with them.

Patience and forbearance should ever characterize the lives of those lone pilgrims following the example of their blessed Master. They will have many trials to endure, but they have a hope that makes the soul strong, that bears them up above the trials of earth, that elevates them above scorn, derision, and reproach. Those who possess a hope like this should never indulge a harsh, unkind spirit. This will only injure their own souls, and drive their friends farther from the truth. Treat them tenderly. Give them no occasion to reproach the cause of Christ; but never yield the truth to please anyone. Be decided, be fixed, be established, be not of a doubtful mind.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:266](#).

Basing her remarks on the vision, she gave some practical counsel concerning the attitudes that should be taken toward close relatives who were unbelieving:

But if your companions and children will not come, if you cannot win them to yield to the claims of truth, make their lives here as pleasant as possible; for all they will ever enjoy will be this poor world. But let not your duty to them interfere with your duty to God. Pursue a straightforward course. Let nothing they may do or say provoke an angry word from you.

You have a hope that will yield you consolation amid the disappointments and trials of life. Your companions and children who will not be induced to tread the narrow,

cross-bearing pathway with you, have not this divine consolation. They should have your pity, for this world is all the heaven they will have.—[Ibid.](#), 2:266, 267.

Another phase of instruction given to her will be understood in the light of a comment made by James White in his report of the Lovett's Grove experience. He wrote: "We regard the cause in Ohio in a prosperous condition. There is much wealth among the brethren which we fear will drown many of them in perdition."—[The Review and Herald, March 25, 1858](#). Continuing her counsel, Ellen White wrote: [370]

I was shown that all who profess the present truth would be tested and tried. Their love for Jesus' coming will be proved, and manifested to others, whether it is genuine. All, I saw, would not stand the test. Some love this world so much that it swallows up their love for the truth.

As their treasures here increase, their interest in the heavenly treasure decreases. The more they possess of this world, the more closely do they hug it to them, as if fearful their coveted treasure would be taken from them. The more they possess, the less do they have to bestow upon others, for the more they have, the poorer they feel. O the deceitfulness of riches! They will not see and feel the wants of the cause of God.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:267](#).

The philosophy of benevolence was revealed to her:

I saw that God could rain means from heaven to carry on His work, but He never would do this. It is contrary to His plan. He has entrusted men on earth with sufficient means to carry forward His work, and if all do their duty there will be no lack. But some will not heed the call for their means.—[Ibid.](#), 2:267, 268.

Then Ellen White was shown the response that should come from the hearts of those entrusted with means:

I saw that they should cheerfully say, Here, Lord, is the little of earth's treasures Thou hast lent me; take any portion of it; take it all, it is Thine. Let me do my part in saving my fellowmen, and let me be raised up with the redeemed to dwell with Thee forever.

Tremblingly will such disciples lean upon the strong promises of God. Earth fades before their vision. Heaven magnifies, and no sacrifice is too dear for them to make for the far more, the exceeding, and eternal weight of glory.—[Ibid., 2:270](#).

### **A View of the Agelong Controversy in its Broad Sweep**

In one brief paragraph Ellen White introduced what is thought of today as the principal topic of the March 14 vision!

In this vision at Lovett's Grove, most of the matter of the great controversy which I had seen ten years before was repeated, and I was shown that I must write it out.—[Ibid.](#)

[371] Most likely it was scenes from this vision that she dwelt upon as she addressed the people in the schoolhouse after the funeral was over. She reported that “great solemnity rested upon those who remained.”—[Ibid., 2:271](#). And it was a solemn experience to Ellen White herself, for she was shown, in connection with the instruction to write out the vision of the controversy, that “I should have to contend with the powers of darkness, for Satan would make strong efforts to hinder me, but angels of God would not leave me in the conflict, that in God must I put my trust.”—[Ibid., 2:270](#).

What did this mean? She was to learn before ever she reached home. Monday the Tillotsons drove them in their comfortable carriage to the railroad station at Freemont, where the next day they took the train for Jackson, Michigan. At this point Ellen White picks up the account:

While riding in the cars we arranged our plans for writing and publishing the book called *The Great Con-*

*troversy* immediately on our return home. I was then as well as usual.

On the arrival of the train at Jackson, we went to Brother Palmer's. We had been in the house but a short time, when, as I was conversing with Sister Palmer, my tongue refused to utter what I wished to say, and seemed large and numb. A strange, cold sensation struck my heart, passed over my head, and down my right side. For a while I was insensible; but was aroused by the voice of earnest prayer.

I tried to use my left arm and limb, but they were perfectly useless. For a short time I did not expect to live. It was the third shock I had received of paralysis, and although within fifty miles of home, I did not expect to see my children again. I called to mind the triumphant season I had enjoyed at Lovett's Grove, and thought it was my last testimony, and felt reconciled to die.—[Ibid.](#), 2:271.

As earnest prayer was continued in her behalf, she soon felt a prickling sensation in her arm and leg, and she praised God that she could move them a little. Writing of it, she declared, "The Lord heard and answered the faithful prayers of His children, and the power of Satan was broken." Three months later in a vision given to her in Battle Creek there was opened up to her what was really behind the distressing experience suffered in the Palmer home.

[372]

I was taken off in vision. In that vision I was shown that in the sudden attack at Jackson, Satan designed to take my life to hinder the work I was about to write; but angels of God were sent to my rescue, to raise me above the effects of Satan's attack. I saw, among other things, that I should be blest with better health than before the attack at Jackson.—[Ibid.](#), 2:272.

The night after the stroke was one of great suffering, but the next day she seemed sufficiently strengthened to continue the journey by train to Battle Creek. On arrival home, she was carried up the steep stairs to the front bedroom in their Wood Street home. She reported:

For several weeks I could not feel the pressure of the hand, nor the coldest water poured upon my head. In rising to walk, I often staggered, and sometimes fell to the floor. In this condition I commenced to write *The Great Controversy*.

I could write at first but one page a day, then rest three; but as I progressed, my strength increased. The numbness in my head did not seem to becloud my mind, and before I closed that work, the effect of the shock had entirely left me.—[Ibid.](#)

As she wrote of the vision in her 1860 autobiographical work *My Christian Experience, Views, and Labors in Connection With the Rise and Progress of the Third Angel's Message*, she stated that in the Lovett's Grove vision "most of the matter of the great controversy which I had seen ten years before was repeated." Is this a reference to a particular vision in 1848, as it seems to imply? Or does it refer to phases of many visions received in the late 1840s, in which she witnessed segments of the conflict between Christ and His angels and Satan and his angels? A number of these presented the ultimate triumph of the righteous and the final destruction of sin and sinners. The absence of a contemporary reference to a specific, all-inclusive great controversy vision in 1848 would seem to point to the latter.

[373] Many of the visions of the late 1840s gave glimpses and at times rather detailed accounts of controversy and the triumph of God's people over the forces of Satan.

### **Ellen White Tells the Story at the General Conference in May**

While engaged in writing the great controversy story, Ellen White had an opportunity to relate what had been shown to her to some four hundred believers assembled in Battle Creek for the general conference called for May 21 to 24. James White wrote of this in recounting the happenings of the conference on Sunday, May 23:

During the forenoon, Sister White related a portion of the views she has had concerning the fall of Satan,

the plan of salvation, and the great controversy between Christ and His angels, and Satan and his. It abounded in startling facts and vivid descriptions. And when the course of the narration had brought us down to the days of the first advent, the humiliation, the suffering, and finally the crucifixion of the Saviour, especially then did not only the silent tear but even the audible sobs of many in the congregation announce their hearts were touched by the sufferings of the Son of God for rebellious man.

When we view the great controversy as now going forward—its field the world, its subject man—we see not how anyone can long hesitate upon which side to enroll himself. And at least the justice of that sentence is very apparent, which condemns those who will persist to the end on the side of the power of darkness, to the same ruin which overwhelms the first rebel and his worthy sympathizers.—*The Review and Herald, May 27, 1858.*

But she was not finished with her account. In the evening she continued her narrative until nearly ten o'clock; then the people, deeply stirred, wanted to say something. There was a testimony meeting until nearly eleven, which was closed off only by giving everyone present an opportunity to express their response by standing to their feet.

A month later it was reported that the forthcoming book was “in the press,” meaning that the publishers had received some of the copy and were setting type. By mid-August Ellen White had completed her writing, and the book was printed—*The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels, and Satan and His Angels*. It was introduced by a twelve-page statement from the pen of Roswell F. Cottrell that had appeared in the *Ibid.*, [February 25, 1858](#), under the title “Spiritual Gifts.” For this wider use, Cottrell amplified it somewhat.

[374]

The E. G. White text opens with the words:

The Lord has shown me that Satan was once an honored angel in heaven, next to Jesus Christ. His countenance was mild, expressive of happiness like the other

angels. His forehead was high and broad, and showed great intelligence. His form was perfect. He had a noble, majestic bearing.—[Spiritual Gifts, 1:17](#).

No one can mistake that Ellen White is here describing what she had seen—true, in vision, but nevertheless a very real experience. And so it is through the entire volume, with such expressions as “I was shown,” or “I saw,” or the equivalent, averaging once for each page of the book. The account passes from Creation very briefly down through the experiences of Old Testament history, touching those points prominent in the conflict between the forces of good and of evil. It traverses in more detail the life and ministry of Jesus and the experience of the apostles. At this point Ellen White goes beyond the Bible records and describes the apostasy, at times in symbolic representations. Then she moves into a brief chapter on the Reformation, describing what she saw of the ministry of Martin Luther and Melanchthon. This represented the conflict through post-Biblical centuries, and bridged the story to the Advent movement. Twenty chapters fill the last half of the book and trace the history, past and future, to the new earth. In this little volume there emerged for the first time the concept that links features in world history and church history as a part of the picture of the conflict of the ages.

[The Review and Herald, September 9, 1858](#), carried on its back page, under the title “Spiritual Gifts,” the notice that the book was ready. It read:

This is a work of 224 pages written by Mrs. White, with an introductory article on the perpetuity of spiritual gifts by Brother R. F. Cottrell. Price 50 cents.

[375] A listing of the forty-one chapters followed, in which eighteen lines were devoted by James White in advertising the book. The little volume was well received and became a part of the regular stock of denominational publications. This first writing of the great controversy may be read in a facsimile reprint of *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume I, and in *Early Writings*, where it constitutes the third and major section of the book.

### The Choice of Title for the Forthcoming Book

James and Ellen White agreed upon the title for the anticipated book as they traveled homeward from the Ohio appointments. It is probable that the idea of the title came from a little volume of 167 pages received at the *Review* office from its author, H. L. Hastings, of Rochester, New York. That title read *The Great Controversy Between God and Man: Its Origin, Progress, and Termination*. (Neither then nor now have there been any copyright restrictions on book titles.) Uriah Smith gave editorial notice to the Hastings book in the *Ibid.*, [March 18, 1858](#), and described its contents. Ellen White's approach to the subject and breadth of coverage, based on the visions of the late 1840s and 1858, is very different from that represented in the Hastings book.

### A Startling and Thought-Provoking Object Lesson

In mid-March, while on the trip to Ohio, it seems that Ellen White sent to Uriah Smith a solemn message for the church, to be published in the *Review*. The two-column article, which made reference to several visions, appeared in the issue of April 15 under the title "A Warning." In it Ellen White reviewed the experience of a family of some means who had moved from New England to Illinois about the year 1855, there to engage largely in farming. There were three, the father, mother, and a grown daughter. Her article opens:

Brother Smith: As I consider the responsibilities and dangers of the people of God, I am led to fear for many, and I wish to set before them the following, which I consider a most solemn warning.

As it became evident a few years since that the burden of the third message would be in the West, a brother, who had much of this world's goods, resolved to move west with his family, and thus introduce the work in the West.

He went with one intention, his wife with another. His intention was to proclaim the truth, but her intention was to have all their means laid out in house and lands, that the means not only be secured, and kept from

the cause of God, but that her husband's time be also employed in building, planting, sowing, et cetera.

He was convinced of his duty to dispose of a portion of his means to advance the cause of God, but it was a great sacrifice for him to make, for he loved this world, and he was easily persuaded by his wife and daughter to gratify their desire and love of their earthly treasure and retain it. He disobeyed the call of God to gratify his wife and daughter, and was too willing to excuse or cover up his love of the world under a show of duty to his family.—[Ibid., April 15, 1858](#)

While this family was professing to be looking for the coming of Jesus and to be a part of His peculiar people, Ellen White was shown that they were investing in large land holdings, showing that this world was their home and their treasure was here on earth. And the wife was holding the husband back from doing what he knew to be his duty. Wrote Ellen White:

I was shown the wife of our brother, that she was engrossed in the spirit of this world, and loved and worshiped it; that she must unfasten her grasp, that she was a stumbling block in her husband's way, she was holding him back, and was unwilling that he should sell and give alms, also unwilling that he should go out to talk the truth to others. I saw that unless she got out of her husband's way, cut loose from the world, and distributed to the necessity of God's cause, the Lord would visit the family with judgment, and move her out of the way.—[Ibid.](#)

The message of warning was not heeded; while she was in the midst of making improvements to stay in this world, disease and affliction came, and her life record was closed. Soon after this James and Ellen White visited the place of their residence and found the husband struggling for freedom of soul. Ellen White was there given  
[377] a vision, and light began to shine in upon the benighted father, but still the victory was not won:

As our brother would come up to the point to give up the world, and get it out of his heart; as he would lay his farm upon the altar, and say he would sell a part, or *all* of it, then the daughter would act the same part the mother had done, to pull him back, and she would plead for their treasure here.—[Ibid.](#)

There could be no mistaking that God was in earnest with those rich in this world's goods, who claimed to have surrendered their lives to Him and yet tenaciously clung to their earthly treasures:

Before I left that place I was shown in vision that God had taken the mother away, ... and unless the father and daughter submitted to God, unless they cut loose from the world and had their affections weaned from it, God would step over the threshold again in judgment. I was astonished at what was shown me in vision.

I saw that this brother loved this world more than he ever thought he did, and that it was a snare to him—it deceived him. I saw that he was so close and snug in deal, it really carried him beyond the bounds of strict truth and honesty. Said the angel, “The deceitfulness of riches causes many, many of its possessors to stumble over their riches to perdition, while only a few with the unrighteous mammon will make friends, and finally be received into everlasting habitations.”—[Ibid.](#)

In the vision she was shown the selfish character of the daughter. If her father, whether he lived or died, should leave her a few thousand dollars, “it would be enough to ruin her, and displease God.” All this, with anguished soul, she related to the father.

Again a vision was given to Ellen White aimed at saving the man. Of this she wrote:

Last summer [1857] I was again shown this brother's case, that he was not moving fast enough, that he was not using his means to advance the cause of God as fast as he should. The next news I heard was that he

[378]

was dead, and had left his large property to his daughter. Nothing was bestowed upon the cause of God.—[Ibid.](#)

He was 51 years of age. In a subsequent vision, Ellen White was shown Satan's strategy:

I saw that Satan had it just as he wanted it at his death, that nothing be left to the cause of God... I saw that it was the design of Satan to keep all the means from the ranks of the truth that he could, and to use it as a stumbling block for souls. He is willing that those who profess the truth, and are snug, selfish, and covetous should have means in their possession, for they idolize it. They nourish it, and it will prove their ruin; for they lay up treasure on earth, and lose their treasure in heaven.—[Ibid.](#)

As Ellen White brought the account of this startling object lesson to a close, she gave the reason for hastening it into print:

As I have seen that the reward of covetousness thus far upon this family should be a warning to the church, I cannot withhold from the people of God what has been shown me respecting them.—[Ibid.](#)

### **M. B. Czechowski, the Converted Catholic Priest**

On the back page of the *Review* of April 15, 1858, in which Ellen White sounded the warning cited above, James White addressed an appeal, "To the Benevolent." It gave a brief account of the experience of a conscientious converted Catholic priest with a knowledge of persecution and travel and poverty—a man versed in seven languages. Now a bookbinder by trade, he attended a tent meeting in Findlay, Ohio, and joined the Sabbathkeeping Adventists. He found his way to Battle Creek, was taken in by James White, and was employed at binding up volumes of back issues of the *Review and Herald*. Early collections of denominational literature benefited by his skillful work, including that assembled by James White, now

rebound for continuous service as a part of the library of the Ellen G. White Estate. White's editorial appeal closed with this paragraph:

It was recently suggested that he should now go to northern New York, and teach the present truth to his old and warm friends. His heart leaped with joy at the thought of taking his Bible and the French tracts (one on the Sabbath, and the other on the Advent), and with his family return to Mooers, where he has a house and ten acres of land and a horse. He owes on his place \$50. His name is M. B. Czechowski. He must have help now. We will be one of thirty to raise \$150 at once. The sum must be raised before our conference. We make the beginning.

[379]

James White \$5.00

Ellen G. White \$5.00

Four weeks later the sum had swelled to \$58.50, and there was an urgent call for more. Sabbathkeeping Adventists were to hear more of Czechowski as he became a laborer in the cause. A few years later, under the auspices of another religious group, he crossed the Atlantic, carrying the Sabbath truth to some of the countries of Central Europe.

The appeal of James White for the support of this man reflects the dire financial needs of the emerging church without a treasury, whose ministry was precariously supported by chance gifts from those to whom they ministered. At the same time, as noted in the story told by Ellen White above, there were those who could well support the growing work. Relatively few, however, did. A system of regular financial support, desperately needed, was yet a year away.

[380] **Chapter 25—(1858-1859) Financial Support for the Cause of God**

The back page notice in the [Ibid., September 30, 1858](#), signed by James White and J. N. Loughborough under the heading “Appointments” gave plans for meetings in Ohio and New York State in late September and most of October.

Immediately following was a two-paragraph, rather illuminating notice signed by James White, laying out plans for a tour through New England. The notice suggested the very frail financial status of the cause, and the absence of organizational structure to direct the work. Leaders of the emerging church usually depended both on invitations to visit the field and the gifts of those who benefited from their ministry, to cover expenses. Note the wording:

Brother and Sister White design spending October 23 and 24 at Buck’s Bridge; the evening of the twenty-sixth near Rouse’s Point, where Brethren Taylor and Whipple may appoint; the thirtieth and thirty-first, in Vermont, where Brethren Bingham and Churchill may appoint; November 6 and 7, near Washington, New Hampshire, where brethren may appoint; thirteenth and fourteenth, at Worcester, Massachusetts.

If brethren in New England desire meetings as above, they will please give appointment of the definite place in the *Review* immediately, and address us at Hubbard’s Corners, Madison County, New York. If they wish the labors of Brother J. N. Loughborough, they will please address him at the same place, and he will probably accompany us to the above-named places.

As it turned out, the brethren in the East did want the Whites to come and invited Loughborough to come with them. When the tour was completed in mid-December, James White could report:

Our wants were all cared for, our traveling expenses met, and we received the most affectionate and courteous attention.—[Ibid., December 23, 1858](#)

[381]

Earlier in the year Loughborough had run a back page note in the *Review* announcing cancellation of plans because of lack of financial support:

Brother White and I had designed holding some four or five conferences in the State of New York this spring. But we would here state that our lack of means prevents our complying at present with the wishes of the brethren in this matter.—[Ibid., April 1, 1858](#)

The three-month-long fall tour taken by the Whites from Battle Creek east to Portland, Maine, and return, was a major part of their travels through the last half of 1858. Loughborough was with them for nearly all the appointments. Few details are given by White, except the names of the places visited. In later years, Loughborough, recounting history he was familiar with, mentioned the vision given to Ellen White in Mannsville, New York, in the public schoolhouse.

The meeting was so well attended that to accommodate the crowds, oak planking obtained nearby was brought in and placed from seat to seat across the aisles, providing an audience in a solid block, with no open aisles. Loughborough was the speaker at that meeting. He later reported:

The Lord gave freedom in the discourse. Sister White followed with a powerful talk. As she began to speak, their boy, W.C. (then about 4 years old), wanted to go out. The only way to do this was for Brother White to raise a window in the back part of the house. After putting the boy out, he followed him through the window.

While he was out with the boy, Sister White spoke with great freedom. As she seated herself in her chair, she gave the three shouts of *glory*, and was in vision before that great crowd of people. When Brother White

[382]

returned to the room, she was in the vision. He explained her condition to the people, who looked on with deepest respect. After coming out of the vision, she again spoke for a few minutes to that solemn and heart-touched audience.—[Pacific Union Recorder, January 26, 1911.](#)

The next morning, October 21, she wrote with pencil a testimony, based on a part of what was revealed in the vision, to Stephen and Mary Haskell in Massachusetts. Then she requested Loughborough to make a good copy with pen and ink to be sent to them. As he copied this, his mind went back two years to the time when he and R. F. Cottrell held a tent meeting in Princeton, Massachusetts. He had met the Haskells there, and he recalled that Haskell was pressing the matter of the nonuse of pork. Because of its prohibition in Leviticus Haskell felt it should be made a test of church fellowship. Now Loughborough was tracing the lines from Ellen White's penciled testimony:

I saw that your views concerning swine's flesh would prove no injury if you have them to yourselves; but in your judgment and opinion you have made this question a test, and your actions have plainly shown your faith in this matter. If God requires His people to abstain from swine's flesh, He will convict them on the matter.

He is just as willing to show His honest children their duty, as to show their duty to individuals upon whom He has not laid the burden of His work. If it is the duty of the church to abstain from swine's flesh, God will discover it to more than two or three. He will teach His *church* their duty.

God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that. Angels of God are doing the work committed to their trust. The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with Him unitedly.... I saw that the angels of God would lead His people no

faster than they could receive and act upon the important truths that are communicated to them. But some restless spirits do not more than half do up their work. As the angel leads them, they get in haste for something new, and rush on without divine guidance, and thus bring confusion and discord into the ranks. They do not speak or act in harmony with the body.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:206, 207.](#)

[383]

It was apparent that the time had not yet come to advocate certain positions in the matter of a reform in diet; this would come in its proper time and in its proper setting. In the second printing of this testimony, James White appended a significant note:

This remarkable testimony was written October 21, 1858, nearly five years before the great vision in 1863, in which the light upon health reform was given. When the right time came, the subject was given in a manner to move all our people. How wonderful are the wisdom and goodness of God! It might be as wrong to crowd the milk, salt, and sugar question now, as the pork question in 1858.—JW, note to second edition, [Ibid., 1:206.](#)

### **The Support of the Ministers**

The church was growing; as it spread to the West, families of means accepted the message. For some it was difficult to grasp their responsibility in giving financial support to the cause they loved. During the years 1857 and 1858, the situation became desperate. There was no church organization; there was no church treasury. Those who felt called to enter the ministry faced great sacrifices, for they were dependent upon the gifts placed in their hands as they moved from place to place heralding the message. Dedication and sacrifice were called for.

John Loughborough, after being pried loose from Waukon, Iowa, in early January, 1857, by the visit of the Whites, held tent meetings in Illinois. He reported, concerning financial support:

I then returned to Waukon, Iowa, having received for my four months' labor my board, lodging, and traveling expenses, and about \$15 in money.—[Pacific Union Recorder, September 8, 1910.](#)

This did not leave him much to take home to his wife, Mary, in Waukon. James and Ellen White pressed him to come to Battle Creek, and here James White found some help for the family. Loughborough wrote:

[384]

At that time an effort was being made to secure humble homes for some of the approved, yet poor, ministers. Some persons had now accepted the truth who had means. In the west part of Battle Creek Brother White found opportunity to obtain a lot and cottage for the writer for \$400. Aside from about \$150 that I paid, he raised the money from willing brethren who could invest \$25 each.—[Ibid.](#)

When means became more plentiful and ministers were paid a salary, Loughborough contributed more to the cause through gifts to special enterprises than he received in financial help in securing a home ([Ibid.](#))

But back to Loughborough's account of the situation in 1857:

That winter of 1857-1858 was a hard winter, not on account of the scarcity of provisions, but because of the low price of the abundance of grains raised the summer previous....

As I recount what I received for my labors in Michigan for the whole six months of the winter of 1857-1858, let it be borne in mind that our attention had not yet been called to the matter of "reform in diet." That light came in the view given to Sister White in Otsego, Michigan, June 6, 1863.

For the whole winter of 1857-1858 I received three ten-pound cakes of maple sugar, ten bushels of wheat, five bushels of apples, five bushels of potatoes, one ham,

one half of a small hog, one peck of beans, and \$4 in cash. This with the small profit on our boarders [three *Review* office employees] brought me through the winter in better condition than other of our ministers.—[Ibid.](#), [October 6, 1910](#)

Through the *Review* of April 8, 1858, M. E. Cornell called attention to money due from church members who had secured books from the ministers, promising to pay in a short time. He prodded them:

If they have forgotten it, we trust that this friendly hint, together with the reproving Spirit, may bring it to their remembrance. We would assure you, dear friends, these debts are not forgiven, and will not be, until at least you manifest feeling enough in regard to it to write to us, or in some way inform us why you do not cancel so sacred an obligation. We *must* make our returns to the publishing office. Their repeated calls, together with the continual wants of our families, have hitherto rendered it impossible to forget these little dues.—[The Review and Herald, April 8, 1858.](#)

[385]

Cornell was one of the most fruitful soul winners in the cause at that time. He closed his appeal with these words:

Messengers must sacrifice their worldly interests, and wear out their very lives in ministering in spiritual things, and it is all right; we complain not; and if necessary, minister also in carnal things, even to those who are less needy than ourselves, but it would at least be some relief to hear from them.—[Ibid.](#)

A few weeks earlier at a conference in Illinois, considering the evangelistic thrust that should be made in the coming summer, the brethren developed a plan to bring in an evangelist. Josiah Hart, of Round Grove, a man of some means, surrounded by others in like financial circumstances, reported in the *Review*:

The subject of removing Brother Ingraham and family west was next considered. Brethren Berry and Newton, residing at Crane's Grove, Stephenson County, offered to maintain his family one year, and find a house, or if it should be necessary to build a house, they will give a piece of land, the church at large promising to aid him in building. It was voted to extend a call to Brother Ingraham to come west, but definite arrangements were postponed till his arrival.—*Ibid.*, April 8, 1858

But this seemed to be the exception to what generally happened around the field. In early April, James White, looking toward the summer of 1858 and thinking of the rapidly opening West, named the States of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, as promising fields of labor. He declared:

It would require from \$300 to \$500 to sustain such an enterprise [the tent in Iowa] in a manner to accomplish the most good. Where are the brethren who are ready with their hundreds, their fifties, their twenty-fives, or their tens? Where?

[386]

Satan seems to have the control of the purses of the church, with very few exceptions. Repeated disappointments are saddening and discouraging our preachers. They have generally moved out expecting to be sustained by their brethren in their arduous work; but their brethren have often failed to do their duty. They have looked on apparently unmoved, and have seen one after another of our preachers break down in health through overlabor, and deprivation for want of means, while they have continued to hug their earthly treasures to their hearts.

Disappointment has been the sad lot of our preachers, and now several of them are much sunken down in poverty, broken-down health, and discouragement. We suggest to our preaching brethren that it might be best to avoid taking responsibilities which the church should bear. Let the brethren feel the responsibilities

which justly rest upon them. Spare your strength and health.—[Ibid.](#), April 8, 1858

Then he suggested a plan that could provide regular support:

Should the church freely hand out to sustain the cause the amount of the annual taxes on their property, there would be in the Lord's treasury double the amount wanted to sustain the cause in all its departments.—[Ibid.](#)

Through the summer there was little improvement in the matter of financial support for ministers and their families. Evangelists J. B. Frisbie and S. W. Rhodes worked among the communities in central and eastern Michigan, often in places where there were companies of well-established believers. In closing their report for the *Review*, they made a revealing statement:

A word on sacrificing and we close. Times are hard, and what will be done? We met with scores of brethren who tell the same thing: "I want to help but cannot, because times are hard, and I have not means": and some will begin to talk of selling some or all of their land; but there are no buyers at present.

We dare not advise what others' duty may be; but this we do know, that the work of God must not stop. There is means enough among Sabbathkeepers that can be spared, and it would be a blessing to those who have more than they need, to sacrifice and help now; for the time will come when their help will not be needed.

When some say, Come again, we are glad to see you, don't stay away so long next time, et cetera, they must remember that the preachers must be cared for, or they must labor with their hands to support their families. We are not alone in this. It will cost something to be saved, and to save others; and should it cost all, it will be cheap enough.

The amount received before we arrived at Monterey was \$3.85. Our expenses to that time had been \$4.12,

[387]

so that had we returned home from Wayland, what we received would have fallen somewhat short of meeting our expenses. We do not state this to complain, but that the church may think of these things. Brethren have done much better in times past; but we speak of our last trip and the hard times.—[Ibid., September 2, 1858](#)

James and Ellen White were also struggling. While some of the ministers had to drop out from time to time and labor with their hands to support their families, James White found as he traveled among the believers that there were those in need of Bibles and other books. He bought supplies and carried some with him, or supplied them from Battle Creek. These he sold at a profit. The *Review* of May 13, 1858, carried this back page notice:

We have for sale *Cruden's Concordance, Nelson on Infidelity, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*.—JW.

and

We have a supply of English Bibles, three sizes.—  
JW.

With the publication of *The Great Controversy* in the summer of 1858, Ellen White had a little income. But as reported in the [Ibid., November 25, 1858](#), “what little profit there was on it was all solemnly dedicated to the Lord, and \$25 out of it had already been given to one of the Lord’s needy servants [M. B. Czechowski].”

### The Promise of a Way Out

[388] Things had reached a state where a permanent plan had to be found to provide financial resources for the growing church. It was in these circumstances (according to J. N. Loughborough, who was to become known somewhat as a historian among the pioneers, and at the time was very closely associated with James and Ellen White) that “Sister White stated to her husband, ‘The Lord has shown me that, if you will call the ministers together, and have J. N. Andrews come down from Waukon, and hold a Bible class, you will find that

in the Scriptures there is a complete plan to sustaining the work of the ministry.”—[Pacific Union Recorder, October 6, 1910](#).

James White did call for Andrews to come to Battle Creek for such a study, which took place in mid-January, 1859. [Depending on his memory for the dates of this circumstance, Loughborough fixed it early in 1858. Contemporary records place it early in 1859.] White, who had planned to spend most of January on a trip north, stayed by in Battle Creek. Loughborough wrote concerning the conclusions of the study:

The Bible class was held in Battle Creek for two days, and at the end of it our brethren said, “The tithing system is just as binding as it ever was.” They said, however, in first introducing it, “Let us call it Systematic Benevolence on the tithing principle.”—[Ibid.](#)

As the details of this development are presented it is important to keep in mind that the church was without organization but was held together by strong leaders, one of whom possessed the special guidance of the Holy Spirit. These, working together close to the publishing office, kept in touch through the *Review* with the churches and with scattered believers throughout the East and the Midwest. The steps taken by the Battle Creek church provided an example to the other churches. The framework of an organizational structure was coming into being. At this point, however, the leaders of the cause could speak in an official way only for the Battle Creek church, of which they were members. Progressive actions of the Battle Creek church were carefully reported in the *Review and Herald* and thus carried to all Sabbathkeeping Adventists.

### **The Development of the Plan of Systematic Benevolence**

As reported by J. N. Loughborough, several workers, including J. N. Andrews, who was summoned for the purpose, met for two days in Battle Creek to study a Bible-based system of finance for the emerging church. The plan developed was brought to the Battle Creek church in a business meeting the following Sunday night. James White reported:

[389]

The Battle Creek church assembled January 16 in the evening to consider the subject of a system of benevolence which would induce all to do something to sustain the cause of present truth, and thereby fully sustain the cause, and at the same time relieve some who have given beyond their real ability.

Brethren Andrews and Frisbie were present, and spoke upon the subject. Others also freely expressed their views; all seemed deeply interested in the subject.

Brethren Andrews, Frisbie, and White were chosen to prepare an address on Systematic Benevolence, founded upon the declarations of Holy Scripture.—[The Review and Herald, February 3, 1859.](#)

Two weeks later, January 29, after the hours of the Sabbath were passed, the church came together to hear the reading of the address. The report was adopted by a unanimous vote, and it was voted to publish it in the *Review and Herald*.

### The Address

The address carried a heading giving the proper setting of the matter: “From the Church of God at Battle Creek, to the Churches and Brethren and Sisters in Michigan.” It opened with the words: *Dear Brethren and Sisters,*

We wish to call your attention to a plan of Systematic Benevolence to support the proclamation of the third angel’s message, which may be in harmony with the plain declarations of Holy Scripture.—[Ibid.](#)

With the citing of New Testament support, a scriptural framework was assembled for the projected procedures, and it was suggested that “we gather from these facts some instruction relative to our own duty.” The pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church could have gone more easily to the Old Testament and brought in the obligation of the tithe, but at this juncture, regardless of the attractiveness of the tithe, they were not sure that it was not one of those *ceremonial* obligations that ceased at the cross. In the occasional mention of

organization they were looking to the New Testament with its seven deacons, not to the Old Testament with the appointment by Moses of the seventy. In finance they were looking to the New Testament and Paul's counsel in [1 Corinthians 16:2](#) that "upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, "rather than to Malachi's direction to "bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house" ([Malachi 3:10](#)). They conceded that the tithing system was a good plan, and it did have a strong bearing on the conclusions reached and set before the church. Here is the argument set forth in the address:

[390]

If Paul found it essential to complete success that method should be observed in raising means for benevolent purposes, it is certainly not unreasonable to conclude that we should find the same thing beneficial in promoting a similar object. As Paul wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we may rest assured that his suggestions were not only safe to follow, and calculated to ensure success, but also that they were in exact accordance with the will of God. We shall not therefore displease Him by adopting the suggestions of His servant Paul.—[Ibid.](#)

The next paragraph delineated the points supported by Scripture, which it was thought should form the basis for the plan Sabbath-keeping Adventists ought to follow:

"Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." This implies: 1. A stated time for the business, viz., the first day of the week. 2. The concurrent action of each individual, for he adds, "Let every *one* of you" lay by him in store. 3. This is not a public collection, but a private act of setting apart for the Lord a portion of what one possesses. 4. The amount to be given is brought home to the conscience of each individual by the language, "as God hath prospered him."—[Ibid.](#)

The next point made was “How may we reduce to practice these excellent suggestions?” It was thought that with few exceptions the following plan could be adopted:

[391]

1. Let each brother from 18 to 60 years of age lay by him in store on the first day of each week from 5 to 25 cents. 2. Each sister from 18 to 60 years of age lay by her in store on the first day of each week from 2 to 10 cents. 3. Also, let each brother and sister lay by him or her in store on the first day of each week from 1 to 5 cents on each and every \$100 of property they possess....

The lowest sums stated are so very small that those in the poorest circumstances (with very few exceptions of some widows, infirm, and aged) can act upon this plan; while those in better circumstances are left to act in the fear of God in the performance of their stewardship, to give all the way up to the highest sums stated, or even more, as they see it their duty to do.—*Ibid.*

To implement the plan, the pioneers suggested: Each church may choose one of their number whose duty it shall be to take the names of those who cheerfully act upon this plan, and also the sums they propose to give each week, and collect these sums on the first of each month, and dispose of them according to the wishes of the church. Those scattered, and not associated with any church, can act for themselves or for their households, in the same manner.—*Ibid.*

This plan, developed by leading men in the church, became known from the outset as “Systematic Benevolence.” They were pleased that it placed the burden of church support in an equitable way upon all believers. In time refinements and developments in applying and servicing the plan were made. As for the Battle Creek church, to which this plan was primarily addressed:

J. P. Kellogg was ... chosen collector and treasurer for the Battle Creek church, and Elder James White was

chosen corresponding secretary to correspond with the brethren scattered abroad who may wish to address him upon the subject of Systematic Benevolence.—[Ibid.](#)

A week later, White reported to the readers of the *Review* that forty-six in Battle Creek had already signed up, declaring what they intended to do. It looked good to him, and he stated:

It is time that *all* shared the blessings of the cheerful giver. God loves such.... Let this work of giving be equally distributed, and let the cause be fully sustained, and all share the blessing. This system carried out properly will serve to unite in prompt action, in sympathy and love, the waiting people of God.—[Ibid., February 10, 1859.](#)

[392]

White was cheered by the response of some of the churches. The first to respond was Hillsdale, Michigan. They also had a question:

Brother I. C. Vaughn writes from Hillsdale, Michigan, that the church in that place “are acting on the Systematic Benevolence plan, and like it much,” and inquires, “What is to be done with the money at the end of the month?”—[Ibid., March 3, 1859.](#)

White rather quickly came up with a practical answer. This related to the very purpose of instituting the plan. He responded:

We suggest that each church keep at least \$5 in the treasury to help those preachers who occasionally visit them, and labor among them. This seems necessary.... Such is the scarcity of money, that our good brethren very seldom are prepared to help a messenger on his journey. Let there be a few dollars in every church treasury. Beyond this, the debt on the tent enterprise, et cetera, claims the proceeds of Systematic Benevolence in this state [Michigan].—[Ibid.](#)

The back page of the February 10 issue of the *Review* carried an announcement that blank, ruled books were being prepared at the *Review* office “for the use of those who act as collectors and treasurers,” and they could be had for 15 cents. White urged a response from believers in other States, and some soon began to appear in the *Review and Herald*.

Almost from the first the close relation of Systematic Benevolence to the tithe was observed. This appeared first in the details of how to reckon the obligation of the property holder. The basic plan, which called for 1 to 5 cents to be paid each week on every \$100 of property, embodied a tithing principle, as explained in more detail in early 1861. James White, in a little-known and short-lived printed sheet, referred to the Systematic Benevolence as the tithe:

We propose that the friends give a tithe, or a tenth of their income, estimating their income at 10 percent of what they possess.—[Good Samaritan, January, 1861](#).

[393] The basis for this determination of the tithe was soon explained in the *Review and Herald*:

We meant just what the churches are adopting in Michigan [referring to his statement published in the *Good Samaritan*]; viz., they regard the use of their property worth the same as money at 10 percent. This 10 percent they regard as the increase of their property. A tithe of this would be 1 percent, and would be nearly 2 cents per week on each \$100, which our brethren, for convenience sake, are unanimous in putting down....

Next come the personal donations. Let the young men who have no taxable property come up nobly here, also the young women.—[The Review and Herald, April 9, 1861](#).

Systematic Benevolence was early endorsed by Ellen White, and she linked it with the tithe. First she assured the church in June, 1859, “The plan of systematic benevolence is pleasing to God” ([Testimonies for the Church, 1:190](#)), and then in January, 1861, in

a *Testimony* article entitled “Systematic Benevolence,” she wrote: “Rob not God by withholding from Him your tithes and offerings.” The article closed with [Malachi 3:8-11](#) quoted in full ([Testimonies for the Church, 1:221, 222](#)). At the outset there was no separation of tithes from offerings. The demand for funds was mainly for the support of the ministers and the evangelistic outreach.

Some years later, in an article published in the *Testimonies* entitled “Tithes and Offerings,” Ellen White wrote of Systematic Benevolence:

The special system of tithing was founded upon a principle which is as enduring as the law of God. This system of tithing was a blessing to the Jews, else God would not have given it them. So also will it be a blessing to those who carry it out to the end of time.—  
[Testimonies for the Church, 3:404, 405.](#)

There were developments through the years, as the work of the church broadened, that called for a separation of funds into two groups, “tithes” and “offerings.” Also the precise use of the tithe, sacred to the support of the ministry of the church, was repeatedly brought to the attention of the leaders and members.

[394]

## Chapter 26—(1859) Through 1859 With Ellen White's Diary

Ellen White would not have started to keep a diary on the first day of January, 1859, if she was not planning to publish an account of her experience. She had started on the manuscript early in 1858. A back page note in the *Review and Herald* in late March, in very small type, provides a clue:

I now design publishing a book of two or three hundred pages, containing a sketch of my Christian experience up to this time, my views, and a Bible argument on the perpetuity of spiritual gifts. My friends who have received letters from me containing views, exhortations, or a statement of events of my experience worthy of publication in such a work are invited to return them to me immediately by mail to Battle Creek, Michigan.—[The Review and Herald, March 25, 1858.](#)

When the little book *My Christian Experience, Views, and Labors* came out two years later, she mentioned that in its preparation she had to depend in many instances on her memory, for she had not kept a “journal,” but the letters she had written that were returned to her at her request were a great help. As she endeavored to reconstruct her life story she sensed the importance of a day-by-day record of her experience and activities. She purchased a little black, leather-bound diary, lightly lined and three by five inches in size, for this purpose. This diary is rich in the information it contains about her life and work.

[395] As 1859 dawned, Ellen had just turned 31; James was 37; Henry, 11; Edson, 9; and Willie, 4. They were living in a modest one-and-two-thirds-story cottage on Wood Street, facing Champion Street, in the west end of Battle Creek. Recently two major additions had been made to the house, one on the south side, the other on the north side.

Ellen's father and mother were living with them. James's parents had been persuaded to leave Maine; they lived just across Wood Street in a little cottage where Grandfather White cobbled shoes. Also living with the Whites were Jennie Fraser and Adelia Patten, two young women brought into the family to carry the burdens of housework and to take charge of the children when James and Ellen White were visiting churches and holding conferences. The two older boys attended the Battle Creek public school. The publishing house on Main Street was six short blocks toward the city to the east. Across from the *Review* office and to the north was McCamly Park. The newly erected house of worship was just west of the park facing Washington Street and the park.

As attested by many of the entries in the little 1859 diary and by frequent obituaries in the *Review*, these were times of great ignorance in health matters and in combating disease. Tuberculosis, bilious fever (appendicitis), typhoid fever, smallpox, and malaria were often listed as diseases that took the lives of many—particularly children, teenagers, and those in their 20s.

### The January Trip to Wright, Michigan

James and Ellen White intended to spend most weekends away from Battle Creek visiting and strengthening Michigan churches. The 1859 diary indicates their success in doing so. In its final December issue, the *Review and Herald* carried this word under the heading "Appointments":

Providence permitting, there will be a conference at Wright, Ottawa County, Michigan, commencing January 21 at 1:00 P.M. and hold over Sabbath and First-day. Brother and Sister White and Brother Loughborough may be expected.—[Ibid., December 30, 1858](#)

Plans called for leaving Battle Creek the first week in January in order to get in some stops as they traveled by carriage and sleigh, north and west.

The year opened on Sabbath, the little diary page is filled with a neatly written pen-and-ink account of the happenings that day in [396]

Battle Creek:

**Sabbath, January 1, 1859:**

It is the commencement of the new year. The Lord gave James liberty Sabbath afternoon in preaching upon the necessary preparation for baptism, and to partake of the Lord's Supper. There was much feeling in the congregation. At intermission all repaired to the water [the nearby Kalamazoo River, two blocks from the church], where seven followed their Lord in baptism. It was a powerful season and of the deepest interest. Two little sisters about 11 years old were baptized. One, Cornelia C., prayed in the water to be kept unspotted from the world.

In the eve the church followed the example of their Lord and washed one another's feet, and then partook of the Lord's Supper. There was rejoicing and weeping in that house. The place was awful, and yet glorious, on account of the presence of the Lord.—[Manuscript 5, 1859](#). [All E. G. White diaries have been copied and introduced into the regular manuscript file of the White Estate. The 1859 diary as copied appears in four numbered documents, each covering one quarter of the year.—Author.]

Ellen White spent Sunday morning getting clothing ready for the anticipated three-week-long journey. John Loughborough and his wife and their 10-month-old daughter would be with them. Monday, Ellen was at the publishing house, where she had set aside a quiet corner in the library in which to write. She usually spent part of the morning and part of the afternoon writing. Her letter Tuesday, January 4, signals the picking up of the work on her book of experiences:

Went to the office. Wrote a number of letters to different ones who were acquainted with our experience. Wished them to call up the events and write them to us. Wrote to Brother Hastings, of New Ipswich,

New Hampshire, Brother Collins, of Dartmouth, Massachusetts, Noah Lunt, of Portland, Maine, and Brother Nichols, of Dorchester, Massachusetts. Wrote a vision given me for Brother Bates.—[Ibid.](#)

Friday, January 7, was a bitterly cold day, but the travelers had to be on their way if they were to spend Sabbath at Otsego. James White was not with them. Work held him in Battle Creek. He thought to leave later and catch up with them—hopefully by the next weekend—but John Andrews was in Battle Creek for the Bible study on the matter of proper support for the ministry, and it turned out that James did not get away at all. She wrote on Friday, January 14, at Allegan, of her disappointment: [397]

Expected James. A letter came that he is not coming because Brother Andrews was expected. The church are all disappointed.—[Ibid.](#)

The next week Ellen White and the Loughboroughs pressed on with their journey, traveling over “log ways” and “plank roads” en route to Grand Rapids. Marshy land had to be traversed. Timber was plentiful and roads in some areas were “paved” with planks—and in some cases with tree trunks laid side by side at right angles to the road and covered, not always too well, with earth. Ten miles of this was described by Ellen White as “very bad and rough.”

Wednesday night they were at the Cramer home, but Ellen White noted that she slept but little, for Mrs. Cramer gave birth to a daughter during the night, and hastened to say, “Mother and child are comfortable.” It took all day Thursday to drive to Wright. The new father went with them as a guide. The roads were good, but food was short, and the diary for January 19 records:

Have no milk for Teresa [the Loughboroughs' 10-month-old child.] She cries. Oh, that we may be as earnest for the bread of life as she is for temporal food! She will not be satisfied. May our earnest cries go up to God for His salvation.—[Ibid.](#)

They were well entertained by the Root family—"an excellent family," noted Ellen White. Frisbie and Rhodes were there for the conference, but James White, to Ellen's sorrow, was not. "Am very sorry," she wrote on January 20. "Our labors should be together." The next day she added:

[398]

I have felt so homesick on the journey. I fear that I have not been willing to sacrifice the company of my husband and children to do others good. I desire a willingness to make a whole sacrifice and crucify every selfish feeling. I feel a lack of the Spirit of God. Have had a weeping time before the Lord.—*Ibid.*

Monday they returned to Grand Rapids, two days' travel away from home. The record of Tuesday's travels reads:

**Tuesday, January 25, 1859:**

It looks like a storm. I feel rather cast down. My teeth troubled me through the night. We rode fourteen miles from [Grand Rapids] to Brother Hardy's. Brother Cramer did not give us the right directions, and we went four miles out of our way. Did not arrive at Brother Hardy's until dinnertime. It was snowing fast. We were heartily welcomed by the family. A good dinner was soon in readiness for us of which we thankfully partook.

This is a colored family, but although the house is poor and old, everything is arranged in neatness and exact order. The children are well behaved, intelligent, and interesting. May I yet have a better acquaintance with this dear family.

Wednesday they reached home, and the diary entry closed with these words of gratitude:

Joyfully, we again met our family. Little Willie seems overjoyed to meet us again. Poor child, he has been very sick in my absence. Is now better, but looks miserable. My husband has been sick, but the Lord has preserved their lives. With gratitude to God I take my

place in my family again. There is no place to be so dearly prized as home.

The entry for the next day, Thursday, January 27, reads:

Rested but little the past night. Was so thankful and happy to meet my family again and to be in the society of my husband and children I could not sleep.

On Friday there was a family get-together at the noonday meal: Had the privilege of sitting at the table with my husband's father and mother and my father and mother. We enjoyed the interview much.

The next week, Friday, on February 4, Ellen went downtown with Augusta Bognes and Joseph Bates and purchased a coat for Bates. Sunday, February 6, she was at work on the story of her life; visiting her mother, she got some facts concerning her experience. The following Wednesday she was writing to her twin sister, Elizabeth, to her sister Mary, and to the Folsoms, of Somerville, Massachusetts. She was reaching out for information that would aid her with the biographical account. [399]

Sunday, March 6, was an interesting day, with a visit with Martha Byington, who now lived nearby. Ellen also began making a dress. She cut it out and started to sew, then, running into perplexities, "took it all to pieces and made it over." In the afternoon Loughborough came for an interview, and in the evening there was a meeting at the church. Of this she wrote:

After it was time to close, the subject of voting was considered and dwelt upon. James first talked, then Brother Andrews talked, and it was thought by them best to give their influence in favor of right and against wrong. They think it right to vote in favor of temperance men being in office in our city, instead of—by their silence—running the risk of having men of nontemperance put in office.—[Ibid.](#)

An interesting discussion followed. On Tuesday, March 8, J. N. Andrews, who for a few days had been in Battle Creek and spoke

in the church both Sabbath morning and afternoon, was leaving for home. Ellen White noted concerning his parting visit:

I got together a few things for him to take home. Send Angeline a new calico dress, nine shillings, and a stout pair of calfskin shoes. Father gives the making of the shoes and the making of a pair of boots for Brother John Andrews.

I send the little boy a nice little flannel shirt and yarn to knit him a pair of stockings. I send Sister or Mother Andrews a nice large cape, well wadded, for her to wear. I made a bag to put them in, of towel cloth.

Wrote three small pages to Sister Mary Chase [James's sister]. In it wrote a recipe obtained from John.

[400] Sabbaths were important days in the White home, especially when the parents were in Battle Creek. The diary entry covering the activities of Sabbath, March 19, is typical:

Attended meeting in the forenoon. Brother Loughborough preached with great liberty upon the sleep of the dead and the inheritance of the saints. Tarried at home in the afternoon. Read to the children, wrote a letter to Brother Newton and wife, encouraging them in spiritual things. In the evening attended meeting for Communion and washing feet.

A break came in the weather in Battle Creek in late March. Her diary for Thursday, March 24, reads:

Arose early. Assisted my husband and Brother Richard [Godsmark] in taking up a currant bush to plant in our garden.... It is a cold, blustering day. Brother Richard and wife will suffer [on their return trip home] unless they are warmly clothed. I lend them cloak, mittens, and necktie [scarf] to protect them. The weather is very changeable, but in the new earth there are no chilling winds, no disagreeable changes. The atmosphere is ever right and healthy.

With the arrival of spring she found it hard to keep her mind off the garden. Wednesday, March 30, the weather was warmer again, and she was in the garden for a time. She noted in her diary:

Set out the raspberry bush. Went to Manchesters' for strawberry plants. Got some currant bushes.... Sent off three letters.

This was followed the next day by the planting of "a patch of strawberries," and then she turned to her writing. But she was back in the garden two weeks later. On Monday, April 11, she wrote:

Spent most of the day making a garden for my children. Feel willing to make home as pleasant for them as I can, that home may be the pleasantest place of any to them.—[Manuscript 6, 1859](#).

### The Battle Creek Home

Judging by Willie's memory of his boyhood home, she succeeded in this. He later wrote about the six-room cottage:

It was one and two thirds stories high, and faced east on Wood Street.... The front room on the first floor was both parlor and sitting room. Back of this was a small bedroom to the north, and to the south a kitchen, which was used also as a dining room. [401]

Upstairs the front room was broad and roomy, about eight feet high in the center and sloping to four feet at the north and south sides. There were two windows on the east. Back of this large front room were two bedrooms and the stairway.

The moving in was quickly accomplished, and almost immediately a twelve-foot lean-to was built on the south side. This was known through the years as the boys' room. Later a similar lean-to was built on the north side. This room served many purposes. For a short time it was the residence of my mother's parents, Robert and Eunice Harmon; later on, after they had moved to a cottage of their own, it was occupied by

my father's parents, John and Betsy White. James and Ellen White greatly enjoyed having their parents near them.—WCW, "Sketches and Memories of James and Ellen White," *Ibid.*, February 13, 1936

W. C. White spoke of a well dug on the property line so that several families might be served. Its clear, cool water left a lasting impression on his mind. He recalled:

### The Home Program

With but little variation, the daily program of the White family was something like this:

At six o'clock all were up. Often Mother had been writing for two or three hours, and the cook had been busy in the kitchen since five o'clock. By six-thirty breakfast was ready. Mother would frequently mention at the breakfast table that she had written six, eight, or more pages, and sometimes she would relate to the family some interesting portions of what she had written.

Father would sometimes tell us of the work in which he was engaged, or relate interesting incidents regarding the progress of the cause, east and west.

At seven o'clock all assembled in the parlor for morning worship. Father would read an appropriate scripture, with comments, and then lead in the morning song of praise or supplication, in which all joined. The hymn most frequently used was:

[402]

Lord, in the morning, Thou shalt hear  
 My voice ascending high;  
 To Thee will I direct my prayer,  
 To Thee lift up mine eye.—*Church Hymnal*, No. 39.

This or some other song of a somewhat similar character was sung with hearty vigor, and then Father prayed. He did not "offer a prayer": he *prayed* with earnestness

and with solemn reverence. He pleaded for those blessings most needed by himself and his family, and for the prosperity of the cause of God. Anyone present not accustomed to such seasons of prayer would be deeply impressed with the seriousness and solemnity of the occasion....

When Father was away from home, Mother conducted the family worship. If both were gone, the one in charge of the home led out. The worship hour was as regularly observed as the hours for breakfast and dinner.—*Ibid.*

W. C. White continued in his memory account:

After Father had left the house, Mother enjoyed spending half an hour in her flower garden during those portions of the year when flowers could be cultivated. In this her children were encouraged to work with her. Then she would devote three or four hours to her writing. Her afternoons were usually occupied with a variety of activities, sewing, mending, knitting, darning, and working in her flower garden, with occasional shopping trips to town or visits to the sick.

If there was no evening meeting, between seven and eight o'clock or later, the whole family would assemble again for worship. If the day's work permitted us to be called to prayers early, we listened to Mother as she read some interesting and instructive article from religious papers or books. Then Father, if present, read a chapter from the Bible and prayed, thanking God for the blessings of the day, and committing the family to God's care for the night.—*Ibid.*

[403]

In fulfilling their rather general pastoral duties, James and Ellen White were at the newly established church at Wright, Michigan, for meetings Sabbath, April 30, and Sunday, May 1; they stayed over until Monday, May 2. Ellen White's diary entry for that day shows them in an interesting role:

We met together again to break bread and wash the saints' feet. It had never been practiced by them, but husband set the example to the men and I to the sisters, then all heartily engaged in it. It was an interesting occasion. The solemnity of the place made it still more profitable. There was weeping and rejoicing, humbling before God altogether. It was a season long to be remembered. Husband never talked more ... appropriately than when breaking the bread, and sobs and groans were heard from the congregation.—[Manuscript 6, 1859](#).

In his *Review* report James White stated that nearly one hundred believers assembled that Monday morning, and that nearly all took part. He commented, "It was a blessed sight to see this large body of young Christian Sabbathkeepers heartily engage in the ordinances of the Lord's house."—[Ibid., May 12, 1859](#)

### Writing Personal Testimonies

Ellen White dreaded writing and sending messages to various individuals regarding what had been revealed to her concerning waywardness, sins, and mistakes. Souls were at stake, and the work of reproving sin was a delicate task. It is not easy for people to receive and accept reproof. The first letter written in 1859, on New Year's Day, was a testimony. It pointed out the importance of approaching God with reverence. Two days later she addressed a family in Battle Creek concerning their lack of solemnity and watchfulness.

Some letters were easier to write, as was one addressed to Stephen Pierce in Vermont sometime before, answering a number of questions he had asked. Here are some of the questions and her answers:

[404]

You inquire what the faith of Jesus is. I have seen that the brethren and sisters have not understood the faith of Jesus in its true light. They have taught that it is healing the sick, et cetera. It is not healing the sick, merely, but it is *all* the teachings of Jesus in the New

Testament. "The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." I saw that it was the whole New Testament which relates to Jesus....

You inquire if we should pray for none that are sick except those in the third angel's message, or pray for all that shall make application, et cetera. [James 5](#) is our rule to follow. "Is any sick among you? let him call," et cetera. It is those that are among us. God had shown me those who keep God's commandments are to have nothing to do [in anointing and special prayer] for the sick of those who are daily trampling them underfoot, unless it is in some special case where souls are convicted of the truth and are decided to move out upon it. The partition wall between commandment keepers and those who trample them underfoot should be kept.

Your next question: The elders referred to in James are not merely those who have been ordained, but aged persons, those also who have experience and judgment in the things of God—those whose lives are circumspect.—[Letter 4, 1857](#).

In general, the writing of personal testimonies, which called for great care in the use of words, drew heavily on Ellen White's strength and in 1859 depressed her painfully. One matter that concerned her was the Laodicean message and the fact that it had not produced more lasting fruitage. On Sabbath, May 14, she listened to a sermon by Loughborough on the subject. She wrote in her diary:

It enlightened my mind some concerning the message to the Laodiceans. Light seemed to break into my mind that since the message to the Laodiceans has gone forth the delay that we are now in is to develop character, to bring out what is in the heart, and separate the precious from the vile.—[Manuscript 6, 1859](#).

Two weeks later she wrote further of the point in her diary:

Attended meeting all day. Felt pressed in spirit to bear a straight testimony upon pride, love of fashion.

God is separating His people from the world. He is purifying them unto Himself, and those who will not heed reproof, who choose to possess their own way, to manifest the evil passions of the heart, will be left behind. God will have a pure and a holy, self-denying, cross-bearing people.

The message to the Laodiceans looks clearer to me. I see God will not do His work of spewing out until character is developed, His professed people proved, tested, and tried. Now God is proving His people to see if they will obey Him.—[Ibid.](#)

### **The Battle Creek General Conference**

In several notices in the *Review* James White sent forth to believers “east, west, north, and south,” a general invitation to attend a general conference at Battle Creek, Friday, June 3, to Monday, June 6. He was especially eager for a good attendance, for it was his plan to promote Systematic Benevolence. The people were told to make provision for their own entertainment. “It will be impossible,” he wrote, “to supply all with beds, or all their horses with stable room. Our sleeping rooms will be given up to females to be made as comfortable as possible, in camp meeting style. The brethren will have the next-best chance in our barns, in the tent, or on unoccupied floors in our houses. Blankets and buffalo robes will be in good demand. Those who will need them must bring them.”—[The Review and Herald, April 21, 1859.](#)

There was a good response. Reporting the conference, Uriah Smith declared:

And those who came showed their interest in the matter not only by the pains they took to come, but also by the liberal provision they made for taking care of themselves and others during their sojourn with us.—[Ibid., June 9, 1859](#)

Of the quality of the meeting and its spiritual impact, he wrote:

We can tell you of a conference such as makes the hearts of God's people glad, brightens their hope, revives their courage, and renews their strength. We can tell you of a conference without one unpleasant feature from beginning to end; of a meeting where there was a steady and rapidly increasing interest from its very commencement to its very close.—[Ibid.](#)

[406]

Because he was eager to have the largest possible representation present for the consideration of the plans for the financial support of the growing church, James White called for a business session to convene immediately after the Sabbath. Joseph Bates chaired the meeting. The address from the Battle Creek church prepared in January setting forth the broad plans for Systematic Benevolence was read and freely discussed. Waggoner declared he had seen the plan in operation and "it worked well. Andrews said he heartily approved of the plan. Steward compared it to taxes that people pay, even when they are increased. Cornell declared that "nothing could be brought against the position taken." Byington remarked that God is a God of order and he thought it to be a good plan. Rhodes had only one objection, and that was that "the individual amount called for by the system was too small."

The record of the meeting stated:

Moved by Brother Loughborough that the address be adopted by the conference. Unanimously carried.—[Ibid.](#)

This marked another step toward organization by the emerging church.

### The June Vision

But Ellen White was ill and discouraged. She wrote in her little diary on Friday, June 3:

A number came from Monterey and stopped with us. Am sorry that I cannot enjoy their company. I

have no health and my mind is completely depressed.—  
[Manuscript 6, 1859](#).

For Sabbath, June 4, she recorded:

Was very sick and much discouraged. Unable to attend meeting. All report that it was the best meeting they ever attended.—[Ibid.](#)

[407] She did go to the meeting in the tent on Sunday, but was too feeble to enjoy it. Then a change came, apparently at about midnight (she does not name the day). She soon wrote of the experience in introducing the pamphlet *Testimony* No. 5.

She mentioned that her disease of the heart had a tendency “to depress” her spirits and “destroy” her “faith and courage.” Often as she retired at night she realized that her life could be cut short at any moment. She reported that it was in this state that she fainted at midnight, presumably Sunday, June 4:

Brethren Andrews and Loughborough were sent for, and earnest petitions were offered to God in my behalf. The depression, the heavy weight, was lifted from my aching heart, and I was taken off in vision, and shown the things which I now present before you.—  
[Testimonies for the Church, 1:185](#).

First she was instructed in regard to her personal experience. At times she had thought that her work was done and it would be sweet relief to rest in the grave ([Manuscript 6, 1859](#)). She was in almost constant pain and depressed. “I saw,” she wrote, “that Satan had been trying to drive me to discouragement and despair, to make me desire death rather than life.”—[Ibid., 1:185](#).

I was shown that it was not God’s will that I should now cease from the work and lie down in the grave; for then the enemies of our faith would triumph, and the hearts of God’s children would be made sad. I saw that I should often feel anguish of spirit, and should suffer much; yet I had the promise that those around me would

encourage and help me, that my courage and strength might not fail while I was so fiercely buffeted by the devil.—[Ibid.](#), 1:185, 186.

She was shown that the Laodicean message applied “at the present time.” She added:

I saw that this message would not accomplish its work in a few short months. It is designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their backslidings, and to lead to zealous repentance, that they may be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel.—[Ibid.](#), 1:186.

She was given instruction on how God leads His people step by step in the development of character. Then the vision turned to the topic the conference had been considering that very evening. Of this she wrote:

[408]

The plan of systematic benevolence is pleasing to God. I was pointed back to the days of the apostles, and saw that God laid the plan by the descent of His Holy Spirit, and that by the gift of prophecy He counseled His people in regard to a system of benevolence. All were to share in this work of imparting of their carnal things to those who ministered unto them in spiritual things. They were also taught that the widows and fatherless had a claim upon their charity.... God is leading His people in the plan of systematic benevolence.—[Ibid.](#), 1:190, 191.

The vision went on to give instruction in several practical lines.

### **Testimony for the Church No. 5**

Mid-June found Ellen White well along in getting the counsels based on the vision of June 4 into print in *Testimony* No. 5. She wrote of it:

The Lord visited me again in great mercy. I am preparing a tract which will probably be ready as soon as orders can reach me. The subjects of the tract are: Testimony to the Laodiceans—Systematic Benevolence—The Talents, [Matthew 25](#)—The Unjust Steward, [Luke 16](#)—Copartnership With Unbelievers, and Slack Management of Worldly Matters—Idle Words—Oath-taking—Meetinghouse Buildings, et cetera.

I want all the friends of the cause to have it, pay, or no pay. Those who choose may send 10 cents a copy; others may send more or nothing, as they choose. Let the poor who have no money be sure to send. Address Ellen G. White, Battle Creek, Michigan.—[The Review and Herald, June 16, 1859.](#)

The records indicate that this vision marked a turning of the tide in Ellen White's health. She wrote in her diary for Monday, June 6:

Attended meeting in the morning. It was a meeting of deep interest. I had opportunity to bear my testimony. It was the best meeting of all, and when the people left, all united in saying it was the best conference they ever attended.

[409] This entry closes with the notation "At dinner we had thirty-five." The next day there is just one short line: "We are all much worn out."

The entries in her diary for the next two months picture Ellen White a busy wife and mother in the home, attentive of her children, busy sewing for them and others, a compassionate neighbor, at times going shopping with some of the women in the church. It included, of course, accounts of her attending weekend meetings with her husband and ever drawn to her writing.

### **The Autumn Trip East**

On Wednesday, August 17, she left by train with her husband for a three-month tour through the Eastern States. Her diary carries day-by-day accounts of conferences and meetings held, of old friends

met, of comforting the bereaved, of preaching to large audiences, and, where presented, of the adoption of Systematic Benevolence. They were back home Monday, November 21. Ellen White's diary entry written Sunday, November 20, at Monterey, Michigan, was her last for 1859. She was home again, and there was no time for the diary. James White summarized the eastern trip this way:

The first ten weeks of our journey, till Brother Loughborough joined us, we traveled two-thousand miles, preached fifty times, and transacted business, from the sale of a penny tract up to a much larger sum, to the amount of \$1,000. We returned with better health and courage to labor in the cause of truth than we had had for the past ten years.—[Ibid., December 8, 1859](#)

The E. G. White diaries and diary journals yield valuable biographical, family, and denominational information. And the letters that were called back to aid Ellen White in telling her life story have provided an important part of the file of the early Ellen G. White communications.

[410]

## Chapter 27—(1860) The Opening of the Year of Little Joy

As He and Ellen returned home in late November, 1859, James White wrote in generalities for the *Review* of the three-month trip east, reporting that both health and courage were at a high point. Perhaps he was thinking more of the advancement of the work in the States they had been visiting and what they were hearing of the work in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Ohio than what they faced in Battle Creek. During the last two or three weeks of the long journey, Ellen had frequently been quite ill. By the turn of the year she was pregnant.

James faced financial problems as the business agent of the publishing house—a concern that had no more in the way of organization than a publishing committee. Steps had been taken in 1855 to transfer the business from the shoulders of James to the church, but the church was without name or organization and, from a business standpoint, was illusive. This left White to carry full business, financial, and administrative responsibility personally.

The new year was but one day old when, before dawn, James and Ellen White underwent a heart-rending experience. She wrote of it:

Early this morning we were called up to go to Brother Loughborough's. They think their child [Teresa] is dying. Dress hastily and go to the afflicted family. The little one was dying.

Oh, how sad the sight, a mother witnessing the last agonies of her loved one, her only child. We prayed for sustaining grace for the father and mother, that they might be perfectly reconciled to the will of God, that the little one's name was enrolled in the Lamb's book of life, to be called forth immortal at the resurrection of the just.

[411]

We witness the dying struggle. The little eyes are closed, no more to look on earthly things. The little prattling tongue has ceased. Her troubles are ended. Quietly will she rest until the Life-giver calls her from her dusty bed.

This is a dark, dreary world. The whole human family are subject to disease, sorrow, and death.—  
[Manuscript 1, 1860.](#)

John and Mary Loughborough were particularly close to James and Ellen White. For nearly two years they had been residing in Battle Creek, and usually the two ministers went out together to hold meetings in the churches. Frequently Mary was in the White home for a visit with Ellen. In January, 1859, Ellen had spent most of the month traveling by carriage and sleigh with John and Mary and little Teresa as they journeyed in Michigan as far north as the new church in Wright, Michigan. Teresa was then 10 months old.

### **The Lure of the West**

With the thrilling reports of how the message was being received in Iowa, it was difficult for James White to think of nothing less than hastening west to see for himself and to take part in the evangelistic thrust. Leaving the publishing interests in the hands of the able staff in Battle Creek, he and Ellen were off for meetings in Lisbon, Iowa, February 25 and 26, expecting to spend the next ten or twelve weeks in Iowa and Wisconsin.

But just before leaving Battle Creek, James lit a fuse that smoldered for a time and then set off an explosion. With the growth of the church there was an accelerating realization, particularly on the part of White, of the dire necessity of organization of some type. He had strong support from the light given to Ellen during the previous six years calling attention to the vital need of “gospel order.” Church property had to be held in a manner that would be legally secure. Money to advance the publishing work had to be borrowed. While the lenders were quite willing to accept notes signed by James White, considering it loans for which he was personally responsible, he could not be satisfied with that.

[412] On the *Review* editorial page of February 23, the same issue that carried the notice of their appointments in Iowa, he introduced two items. The first entitled “Bills! Bills!” and the second “Borrowed Money.” The first had to do with money owed for subscriptions to the *Review*, which amounted to \$1,881. This the publishing house could carry, as explained by James White, only as “several warm friends of the cause have lent money to this office, without interest, to the amount of \$1,500.”—*Ibid.*, February 23, 1860. He called for relief by prompt payment from the subscribers. He followed this by the item on “borrowed money,” opening with the declaration:

To those who have so kindly and generously lent money to this office, we wish to say, that as an individual, we do not wish to be considered in any way responsible for it. We act simply as publishing agent by the direction of the publishing committee.... There are no reasons why we should be responsible for borrowed money, used for the benefit of this office, which is the property of the church at large. This property is not insured, and therefore, in case of fire, would be a total loss. Those who consider it proper to let their money remain in the office under these circumstances will do so at their own risk.—*Ibid.*

Then White laid before the church the pressing need for an organization that would safeguard investments and loans:

We hope, however, that the time is not far distant when this people will be in that position necessary to be able to get church property insured, hold their meeting-houses in a proper manner, that those persons making their wills, and wishing to do so, can appropriate a portion to the publishing department. Till this can be brought about, we must do the best we can; but we wish it distinctly understood that we bear no individual responsibility in the matter.—*Ibid.*

He cited a recent experience as an illustration, making his point crystal-clear:

A sister in Vermont proposed to let the office have the use of \$100, without interest, as several others had done. The money was sent, and also a note filled out for us to sign. We refused to write "James White," but in its place wrote "Advent Review and Sabbath Herald Office," and sent it back to Vermont. In a few weeks the note was returned and the money called back. This was all done in good feeling.

[413]

White turned to the church, appealing for helpful suggestions:

We call on preachers and leading brethren to give this matter their attention. If any object to our suggestions, will they please write out a plan on which we as a people can act.—[Ibid.](#)

The swelling discussion carried through the columns of the *Review*, sparked by this statement, continued for seven months. Some cried that to organize, to choose a name, or to turn to the world in any way for financial security was to plunge into Babylon. In each response James White urged his protesting brethren: "Please write out a plan on which we as a people can act."

### **The Tour in the West**

As evangelists labored in Iowa, Ohio, and Wisconsin, they held their meetings in courthouses, often in churches when not closed to them, and in private homes. While on this tour White observed:

The great work seems to be west. There, broken fragments of society have crowded in, and not being fully organized and settled, are in a more favorable condition to hear the truth than in older portions of the country. And many have not realized their high expectations of the West, and in their disappointed state of mind are better prepared to hear of the "better country."

We believe that the message will yet be spread far and wide, but at present we think that great efforts

should be made in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois.—[Ibid.](#), [April 19, 1860](#)

His first report of the tour was enlightening in its detail:

We are now at Lisbon, Iowa, at the home of Brother and Sister Wilson. This is Brother and Sister Cornell's headquarters—a good resting place for pilgrims.

[414]

We left Battle Creek at 3:00 P.M., changed cars at midnight at Chicago, reached the Mississippi River at 7:00 A.M., crossed the ice on foot, walking behind the baggage drawn on a sleigh by four men, the ice being too weak to bear up horses; and felt relief when we stepped upon Iowa soil.—[Ibid.](#), [March 6, 1860](#)

The first night they were cordially received by a family of believers living near Lisbon. Here Ellen was taken severely ill, vomiting and raising blood. But in twenty-four hours she seemed quite recovered, and they were able to go on into Lisbon. After weekend meetings in which Ellen White was able to participate, they made their way to Anamosa, sixteen miles distant, where Cornell was holding meetings. Sabbath and Sunday, March 3 and 4, James White spoke in the courthouse five times.

In Iowa they found the mud deep and travel difficult, but the interest to hear the message was great. "Iowa seems," wrote James White in his first report, "to be a very encouraging field of labor."—[Ibid.](#) Ellen White stood at the side of her husband, often speaking for a few minutes following his addresses.

### Letters to the Children

As year followed year, James and Ellen White, working as a team, found their parental responsibilities increasing. Instead of infants, Willie was now almost 6 and the two older boys were entering their teens. While on such trips as this in the West, the mother took pains to keep in touch with the boys by frequent letters. Some of these have been preserved.

From Anamosa, Iowa, on Sabbath, March 3, she wrote to Willie:

I have just finished a letter to your brothers, and will write a few lines to you. I should so love to take you, my sweet Willie, in my arms; but no, this cannot be. But I hope we shall be returned home safely and we can see you all again in our own happy home.

Willie, you must be a good boy. You must overcome an impatient spirit. To be impatient is not to be willing to wait, to want everything you desire in a moment. You must say to yourself, "I'll wait." "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Willie, if you would be happy, you must rule well your own spirit. Be obedient to Jennie, love your brothers, and be good all day.... When you go to your grandfather's, you must not act rough and boisterous, but gentle and mild. When the boys go to the office, you must try not to be lonesome. Make yourself contented and happy. Don't fret, but learn to be patient, my dear boy. We love you very much and will now say goodbye for the present. Your Mother.—[Letter 2, 1860](#).

[415]

In a letter addressed to Henry and Edson written from Iowa City on March 14, she discussed at some length the forming of good characters. Near the close she admonished:

Do not give way to fretful, unkind feelings; but remember that the Lord reads even the thoughts of the hearts, and nothing is concealed from His all-seeing eye. Right acts, right thoughts will be remembered in heaven; and every victory you gain when tempted to do wrong, every temptation manfully resisted, will be recorded in heaven. Don't forget, dear children, that evil deeds and wrongs are faithfully recorded, and will bring their punishment unless repented of and confessed, and washed away by the atoning blood of Jesus. It is easier to go in an evil way than to do right; for Satan and his angels are constantly tempting to do wrong.

But there is One who has promised to hear the needy when they cry. Go to God when tempted to speak or act wrong. Ask Him in faith for strength, and He will give it. He will say to His angels, There is a poor little boy trying to resist the power of Satan and has come to Me for help. I will aid him. Go stand by.—[Letter 1, 1860](#).

### **At Knoxville, Iowa**

Their appointments for meetings at Dayton and Knoxville had to be postponed because the Cedar River was filled with broken ice. They arrived at Knoxville for the last weekend in March. There they found Moses Hull. Of their reception James White wrote:

Just before we reached Knoxville, the cry of “Mormons” was raised against us, and a strange enthusiasm seemed to seize some of the people in the place, as if inspired by Satan. Some talked of tar and feathers, and some of our friends even feared that we might be ill-treated. It was said that Mrs. White should not speak in Knoxville.

[416]

But all that we witnessed of any account was a sort of hellish grin on the countenances of some, which disappeared after we had each talked a few times in the old courthouse. Before we left we were treated with respect both in the place of meeting and when meeting the citizens on the streets. We can excuse the people who are deceived and imposed upon, but not those ministers who raise the cry “Mormons” to keep the people from hearing us.—[The Review and Herald, April 12, 1860](#).

White reported a church there of about one hundred. For their meetings another fifty attended from other places, nearly all of these having come into the message during the previous eight months. With the encouraging outlook in western Iowa, James White urged that two tents be purchased for evangelistic work during the coming summer. He secured pledges for about half of the \$1,000 that would

be needed, and, so that there would be no delay, he advanced money to secure the tents. He closed his report, stating:

We spoke seven times in four days, with some freedom. Mrs. White spoke in exhortation as many times with freedom. Brethren Snook and Brinkerhoff were set apart to the work of the gospel ministry by the laying on of hands. It was a season of deep interest.—[Ibid.](#)

We will hear again of Snook and Brinkerhoff, in connection with an apostasy in Iowa.

Not mentioned in this report was a significant vision given to Ellen White at Knoxville, one that brought great sadness to her heart. There was opened before her the spiritual condition, weaknesses, and deficiencies of friends and associates in Battle Creek, particularly of some key individuals in the *Review* office. Six personal testimonies of various lengths, based on this vision, are on file, one running to eleven pages and another nineteen pages.

The first was written on April 15. Note some of the opening lines:

Dear Sister -----,

I have been shown something I dare not withhold. In the last vision given at Knoxville, some things were shown me concerning individual cases. I was shown your case. I saw ...—[Letter 5, 1860.](#)

Dear Brother ----- and Sister -----,

While at Knoxville, some things were shown me in regard to the cause of God and especially in regard to the messengers and their wives. I was shown ...—[Letter 6, 1860.](#)

Dear Brother -----,

While at Knoxville, Iowa, some things were shown me in regard to the state of things in the office and at Battle Creek. I saw that there were grievous things in the office.—[Letter 8, 1860.](#)

[417]

As these letters and three others of similar character were written, Ellen White was putting the finishing touches on *Spiritual Gifts*,

Volume II, her autobiographical account. She also prepared a general statement for publication covering many of the points in the six personal testimonies. She inserted them at the close of the first printing under the title “Testimony for the Church.” It opened:

I have been shown that Satan has not been stupid and careless these many years, since his fall, but has been learning. He has grown more artful. His plans are laid deeper, and are more covered with a religious garment to hide their deformity. The power of Satan now to tempt and deceive is tenfold greater than it was in the days of the apostles. His power has increased, and it will increase, until it is taken away. His wrath and hate grow stronger as his time to work draws near its close.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:277](#).

She wrote of the work of the angels in protecting the children of the Lord and described the conflict between the good and evil angels:

I saw that the angels of God are not to force or bend the will of the individual they watch over. They are to gently chide, warn, and guard. Satan can never force back these holy angels from their charge. None can do this but the individuals that they are watching over...

But if individuals continue to retain their own will, choose their own course, and have their own way, the angels leave them in sadness. Then Satan comes in to control the will, and bend the mind, and smiles in hellish triumph at his success.—[Ibid., 2:277, 278](#).

[418] In this vein she discussed the indifference of those who were relaxed and enjoying their ease and supposed security, and the difficult place her husband was placed in by God’s call to him to “take responsibilities and to risk something on the success of this message” ([Ibid., 2:280, 281](#)). She added:

God would be pleased if others would feel the same interest, and move with the same energy, but many will

not venture. I saw that God was displeased with those who do not take the burden themselves, and then stand ready to murmur at the one upon whom He lays the heavy burden....

I saw that the blessing of the Lord has rested upon every essential move that has been made to advance His cause, and steadily has the work progressed. One difficulty after another has been surmounted. It is because God's hand was in the work. I saw that some do not realize that selfishness is at the bottom of their murmuring. God's humble instrument moves too fast for their faith, and his venturing out as he has done has reproved their slow and unbelieving pace. And there has been satisfaction taken in watching and finding fault. Hints have been thrown out, doubts expressed, which have had their influence. Their faith was not strong enough to keep pace with him....

I was shown that the work was not left in the hands of anyone upon earth. Angels of God have charge of the work, and they counsel and direct God's people through chosen agents, and thus the work moves forward.—[Ibid.](#), 2:281, 282.

She mentioned the way some people related to the messages: I saw that individuals would rise up against the plain testimonies. It does not suit their natural feelings. They would choose to have smooth things spoken unto them, and have peace cried in their ears. I view the church in a more dangerous condition than they ever have been.—[Ibid.](#), 2:284.

She referred to the visions and her experience in presenting the messages to the people and how they were received:

It has been a matter of great perplexity to me to know what course to pursue with messages given me for individuals. I have often written messages of reproof for different ones, and given them to these persons, and they have laid them away, and have said nothing about

them. Their course has shown in many instances that they were not affected by the messages, and they have continued to have a bad influence in the church, who were ignorant of the reproof given.

My course is now clear to wrong the church no longer. If reproofs are given I dare not commit them alone to the individuals to be buried up by them, but shall read what the Lord has seen fit to give me, to those of experience in the church, and if the case demands, bring it before the whole church.... I shall keep these things secret no longer. God's people must know what the Lord has been pleased to reveal, that they be not deceived and led astray by a wrong spirit.—[Ibid., 2:293, 294.](#)

### **Spiritual Gifts,, Volume II, Comes from the Press**

Sometime in the summer the first printing of Ellen White's work, *Spiritual Gifts,, Volume II*, came from the press. It carried the extended title *My Christian Experience, Views, and Labors in Connection With the Rise and Progress of the Third Angel's Message*. Two hundred and ninety-five pages were devoted to her life story up to the date of publication. Only four hundred copies were printed and sent out at this time, with a closing note requesting that "if any find incorrect statements in this book" they should "inform the author." The finished book was promised about October [Ibid., 2:295](#)). The Review of September 18 announced that this volume of 304 pages was ready. Later printings carried more material.

### **A Fourth Son Is Born**

On Thursday, September 20, Ellen White gave birth to a fourth son. It must be they expected a girl, for the child went without a name for nearly three months. Ellen White's reference to the experience is brief:

September 20, 1860, my fourth child, John Herbert White, was born. When he was three weeks old, my

husband felt it to be his duty to travel west.—[Ibid.](#),  
[2:294](#) (see also [Testimonies for the Church, 1:244](#)).

She cherished the thought that with a new babe demanding her care, she would be at home more. What satisfaction this gave her!

[420]

## Chapter 28—(1860) Initial Steps in Church Organization

While Ellen White had written and published at some length on the need of order in managing the work of the church (see [Early Writings, 97-104](#)), and while James White had kept this need before the believers in addresses and *Review* articles, the church was slow to move. What had been presented in general terms, was well received, but when it came to translating this with something constructive there was resistance and opposition. James White's brief articles in February aroused not a few from complacency, and now a great deal was being said.

J. N. Loughborough, working with White in Michigan, was the first to respond. His words were in the affirmative, but on the defensive:

Says one, if you organize so as to hold property by law, you will be a part of Babylon. No; I understand there is quite a difference between our being in a position that we can protect our property by law and using the law to protect and enforce our religious views. If it is wrong to protect *church* property, why is not wrong for individuals to hold any property legally?—[The Review and Herald, March 8, 1860](#).

James White had closed his statement in the *Review*, laying the matter of the need of organization of the publishing interests before the church with the words "If any object to our suggestions, will they please write out a plan on which we as a people can act?"—[Ibid., February 23, 1860](#). The first minister laboring out in the field to respond was R. F. Cottrell, a stalwart corresponding editor of the

[421] *Review*. His immediate reaction was decidedly negative:

Brother White has asked the brethren to speak in relation to his proposition to secure the property of

the church. I do not know precisely what measure he intends in this suggestion, but understand it is to get incorporated as a religious body according to law. For myself, I think it would be wrong to “make us a name,” since that lies at the foundation of Babylon. I do not think God would approve of it.—[Ibid., March 22, 1860](#)

Cottrell was experienced and influential, his message, published in James White’s absence, set the pace for a long drawn-out battle.

The matter seesawed back and forth through the next six months, with some reference to it in most of the issues of the *Review*. Then came the call for a general conference at Battle Creek opening Friday, September 28, to consider safeguarding the work through some type of organization. Because of the importance of the conference, its business proceedings are reported in great detail in the issues of the *Review and Herald* for October 9, 16, and 23. The business meetings began September 29 immediately after the Sabbath, with Joseph Bates called to serve as chairman. Having in mind the debate that had been running in the *Review*, those attending the conference moved immediately into a lengthy discussion. It was clear that most looked negatively on any steps toward organization. Meetings continued through the evening after the Sabbath and Sunday morning and afternoon, ending finally with the adoption of the following:

We recommend to the conference the organization of a publishing association that may legally hold the *Review* office.—[Ibid., October 16, 1860](#).

With relief, James White stood and said, “This is just what I have been pleading for, for the last six months.”—[Ibid., October 23, 1860](#). On Monday at sunrise, the conference met to adopt a constitution built upon this action. First, White made some remarks, “expressing his gratitude for the candor and good feeling and unity and regard for the principles of right, manifested by those present” ([Ibid.](#)). The first of the ten articles adopted that Monday morning read:

This Association shall be denominated *The Advent Review Publishing Association*, the object of which shall be the publication of periodicals, books, and tracts, calculated to convey instruction on

Bible truth, especially the fulfillment of prophecy, the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.—[Ibid.](#)

The balance of the document was given over to details of organization and staffing and an outline of duties of various officers. But the business of the conference was not over.

### **Adopting a Denominational Name**

A Brother Bracket stood to his feet and spoke:

I now move that we adopt a name, as we must have a name if we are to organize so as to hold property legally.—[Ibid.](#)

Cautiously the conference moved into this highly sensitive area. Brother Poole feared that to adopt a general name would hurt them as a people. J. B. Frisbie was opposed to a sectarian name but saw the need for some uniformity of the terms by which the body of Sabbathkeepers would be known. Moses Hull thought that the churches in various places might be known as “the church worshiping on the seventh day in such and such places.” James White stated that he did not see how they could get along without some name, and they could not hold property without a name. The law was specific on that point. He could not see that this would be going into Babylon. M. E. Cornell was articulate in expressing his feelings:

The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus is a distinguishing feature between us and the other denominations.... It looks to me too that the gifts of the church are lost sight of, and are not held in so important a light as they should be, if we give way to so much fear of our becoming Babylon merely by adopting a name. There is confusion in the names already chosen; and if something is not done here, churches will go on choosing different names still. A general name will bring us into unity and not confusion.—[Ibid.](#)

T. J. Butler, speaking of the church, took the position that God who had framed and devised this building declared it to be “the

church of God,” and he said, “If God has named us as parents have a right to name their children, does it not denote a lack of modesty to try to slip out and take no name, or another?” [423]

The discussion continued in earnest terms through the morning hours till eleven o’clock, when a recess seemed in order. The minutes of the discussion after lunch read:

The question again brought before the meeting, “Shall we adopt some name?” Some who had previously been averse to such a step here signified their change of opinion, and their readiness to cooperate with their brethren in this course.—*Ibid.*

Brother Sperry was willing to lay his prejudices on the altar, believing that God would give wisdom. Stephen Belden, employed in the *Review* office, expressed his feeling that going without a name would be like publishing books without titles, or sending out a paper without a heading.

James White then took the floor and apologized for some of the brethren who seemed to be afraid of a name. The *Review* reported some of his comments:

He had been in the same position once. In times past when we were comparatively few, he did not see the necessity of any such steps. But now large bodies of intelligent brethren are being raised up, and without some regulation of this kind will be thrown into confusion.

He then gave a review of the past, mentioning the opposition which had been manifested by some all the way along, first against publishing a paper, then against issuing pamphlets, then against having an office, then against the sale of publications, then against church order, then against having a power press. It had been hard to bring the minds of some of the brethren to the necessity of these things; but they had all been essential to the prosperity of the cause.—*Ibid.*

The motion to adopt a name was finally put before the delegates, and it carried. The record states, “None dissented, though a few de-

clined to vote.” Turning again to the minutes, we find the story of the outcome, which gave birth to the name by which the Sabbathkeeping Adventists would be known.

[424]

### “Seventh-day Adventists” The Name Chosen

Having voted to adopt a name, the discussion now turned on what that name should be. The name Church of God, was proposed and zealously advocated by some. It was objected that that name was already in use by some denominations, and on this account, was indefinite, besides having to the world an appearance of presumption. Brother White remarked that the name taken should be one which would be the least objectionable to the world at large.

The name Seventh-day Adventists was proposed as a simple name and one expressive of our faith and position. After some further remarks, Brother Hewitt [the most honest man in town] [When in 1852 Joseph Bates arrived in Battle Creek to herald the message, he went to the post office and asked for the name and address of the most honest man in town. He was readily directed to the home of David Hewitt. Bates felt that an honest man would readily accept the advent message. After a day together in Bible study, David Hewitt accepted and became the first convert in Battle Creek.] offered the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That we take the name of Seventh-day Adventists.—[Ibid.](#)

This resolution was discussed freely, and the wording was adjusted to “That we call ourselves Seventh-day Adventists.” It was finally acted upon ([Ibid.](#)).

Even so, T. J. Butler, of Ohio, dissented, and Elders Lawrence, Sperry, Andrews, and Ingraham refrained from voting. Now the Sabbathkeeping Adventists had a name, a name that Ellen White was shown carried Heaven’s approval. It had been a momentous conference, clearly influenced by the Spirit of God.

### Led by God in the Switch of Travel Plans

Ellen White's physical recovery after the birth of the fourth son on September 20, 1860, just before the conference, was slow. But it seemed she was well enough three weeks later to allow James to leave for Iowa and Wisconsin for a trip that had been planned and that would take him from home for nearly seven weeks.

It was at the conference in late September that plans were laid that eventually took James White on this trip. J. N. Loughborough was to make the trip west, visiting the churches, while James White was to travel to the east. But three days before the two ministers were to leave Battle Creek, James was greatly distressed in mind concerning the plans. Taking Cornell with him, he went to Loughborough's home to try to settle the matter. Unitedly they sought counsel of the Lord, and their minds were impressed with the need of switching the plans: Loughborough would go east and White west. Loughborough wrote of the experience:

[425]

On the evening of October 6, Brother White in company with Elder Cornell, came to my house, and said, "I feel strangely in regard to our proposed trips. I do not feel free about going east. I do not know what it means." We all engaged in a season of prayer over the matter. As stated in [Testimonies for the Church, 1:244](#), "Then the clouds parted, and the clear light shone. My husband [Elder White] felt that the Spirit of the Lord was directing him west and Brother Loughborough east. After this they felt clear as to their duty, and moved accordingly."

We knew nothing as yet of the fanaticism that was developing in Wisconsin. How the Lord directed to check this fanaticism is thus expressed in [Ibid., 1:228, 229](#): "In Wisconsin there was a wrong to be corrected. The work of Satan was taking effect, and would destroy souls if not rebuked. The Lord saw fit to choose one who had had experience with fanaticism in the past, and had witnessed the working of Satan's power."—[Pacific Union Recorder, January 25, 1912](#).

Loughborough later confessed that he did not know how he could have met the situation in Wisconsin, for he had had no experience in dealing with fanaticism. He commented, “We could now clearly see the providence of the Lord in leading to the change of the previous arrangements.”—[Ibid.](#), February 8, 1912

### **The Husband and Father Away from Home**

James left Battle Creek on Tuesday, October 9. From Chicago he got off a short note home; his word “Arrived at Chicago well and safe,” coming on Thursday, was reassuring. Friday, Ellen got a letter off reporting that she was “doing well,” still staying in bed in the parlor, and thought she would for another week, for she was “yet a cripple.” She confided:

[426]

You may be assured I miss your little visits in my room, but the thought you are doing the will of God helps me to bear the loss of your company.—[Letter 10, 1860.](#)

She wrote some family news:

Our nameless little one grows finely; weighed him last Wednesday. He then weighed ten pounds and one quarter. He is well. Willie is reading to Sister Benedict. He has lessons every day and I can see he progresses fast. My hand trembles so; fear you cannot read it. In much love, your Ellen.—[Ibid.](#)

She also wrote, “I shall expect a letter as often as once a week, and will write you if able, as often,” and she urged, “Let not dependency weigh down your spirits and do not feel anxious about home.”

The letter she received a day or two later from James was posted at Eddyville, Iowa, on October 11. In it he declared:

I am well. The coat is good this cold morning. I think I shall improve wonderfully in spirits and health out here. O for a closer walk with God. He is my hope and confidence. Tell dear Henry, Eddy [Edson], and

Willie that I love them and pray for them. Hope Eddy will learn to be careful and good.

On Monday, October 22, she wrote to James. He had been gone nearly two weeks.

Thought I would pen a few lines. My health is improving. The children are well and obedient. We shall keep help if we can get it for a few weeks. Help is scarce. The little nameless one is fat and rugged, and very quiet. Has not had a cold yet....

She picked the letter up two days later and finished it: I must send this today. I am getting along as fast as can be expected. Have had no pullbacks yet. Come up very slowly. The baby is five weeks old tomorrow, a fat, hearty fellow. He takes so much nurse, I am very hungry most of the time, appetite good. The children are all well....

We have just weighed the yet nameless one. He weighs twelve pounds and a half, good weight. The children are doing well; are quite steady; are not perfect. This we do not expect of children....

[427]

It looks like a long, long time before you return home, but we know you will feel as anxious to get home as we are to have you. We pray for you ... on your journey.... Write me often. I am anxious to hear from you. Yours affectionately, Ellen.—[Letter 11, 1860](#).

In one letter she reported that Mary Loughborough called to see her nearly every day.

In his letter from Dayton, Iowa, written on October 22, James wrote that he still had a long journey, five weeks yet, and added, “I begin to want to see you very much. But I am well and free and am doing well, and if you continue to do well, I shall enjoy this tour.” He closes his letter:

Be careful of your health. Do not want for anything that money will buy. Remember me affectionately to

Henry, Edson, Willie and ----- without a name. Tell them that Father prays for them and loves them very much.... Yours in love, James White.—JW to EGW, October 22, 1860.

Thursday, November 1, he was on the Mississippi riverboat *War Eagle*, en route to points in Wisconsin where, unbeknown to him, there was trouble. Thinking of home, he wrote:

My faith is strong in God, and feel satisfied that I am in the path of duty.... I am happy to have you give so good a report of home, of our dear boys. I love my family and nothing but a sense of duty can separate me from them. If I am in the path of duty, my family will do best to have me here.—JW to EGW, November 1, 1860.

In a letter Ellen wrote to Lucinda Hall on Friday, November 2, she mentioned her continued weakness, of going upstairs on her knees, of having “a long cry now and then,” and added, “It does me good.” Jennie was helping with the baby, but could not do “everything around the house” and tend the baby too. As for the baby, she thought him to be “as large as a child 3 months old.” She [428] urged Lucinda, “Send him a name.”—[Letter 18, 1860](#).

Sunday, November 4, James had just arrived at Mauston, Wisconsin, where the wife of one of the ministers, Elder Steward, claimed God was giving her visions.

Just before he reached Mauston, the folk in Battle Creek had been alerted to the problems there by a letter from Mrs. Steward containing her “visions,” which she sent for publication in the *Review*. “As we read these communications,” wrote Ellen White, “we felt distressed. We knew that they were not from the right source.” She requested the church in Battle Creek to pray for James in this mission, and at home the family earnestly sought the Lord. Recounting the experience, she observed:

We had passed through so many such scenes in our early experience, and had suffered so much from these unruly, untamable spirits, that we have dreaded to be brought in contact with them.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:294](#).

On arriving at Mauston and staying in the Steward home, James wrote of the situation being “a mess” and expressed the fear that fanaticism was taking deep root. But he could not speak understandably till he could take in more of what was going on. He feared he would have to speak plainly before he left, and reported:

I found here a spirit of triumph over those *not holy*. They talk as though they were all, or nearly all, holy here. I have been calmly putting on the check, and it has put one on the lounge crying. Others are as [quiet] as mice.—JW to EGW, November 4, 1860.

In this letter he wrote of being “exceedingly glad to get Henry’s and Edson’s letters. Good boys! I shall soon be home with them. Kiss Willie and Nameless for me.” In his letter written two days later, he exclaimed:

Oh, I do wish you and Bub were here. But in three long weeks I shall see you, Lord will. Take care of yourself and the children. Be careful of yourself. I hope to meet you, both enjoying health. Love to all.—JW to EGW, November 6, 1860.

Little is known of the details of James’s work in Mauston and Marquette. Writing from Janesville, Wisconsin, he stated:

When I hear that you are well, I shall be happy. My Mauston report will probably take off the hair, Marquette take the hide. Steward is no more with us, I think. [The steward family were reclaimed, and the daughter, Mary, became an efficient and highly prized proofreader and copy editor at the review and herald. Near the close of Ellen White’s life she was employed for several years to aid in producing books.]

[429]

There is now great anxiety to see and hear you. The time has come. My health is better than when I left Battle Creek. I count the days when I shall see you and our dear children, only twelve more.—JW to EGW, November 15, 1860.

On Monday, November 19, James White wrote to Ellen:

I was extremely glad to hear from you, and am greatly relieved. Hope to hear from you again before I leave Monroe, so as to get the latest news.—JW to EGW, November 19, 1860.

He closed the letter with the words “I do not ask you to weary yourself with long letters. Your care for me is great. May God help you and the children.”

The same day she wrote James, reporting:

We are as well as usual. Babe is fat and healthy, weighed last Thursday fifteen pounds. He promises to be a very rugged boy.... Babe is quiet and good nights, but I will tell you one thing, he is so hearty it will cost you quite a bill to keep me and him. He eats and throws it up and is just as greedy to eat again. My appetite is good. Food sets well.—[Letter 14, 1860](#).

She closed her letter:

Dear husband, the time of your absence is nearly ended. One week more brings you home. We shall all be rejoiced to see you home again. All is well as usual in Battle Creek, as far as I know.—[Ibid.](#)

About this time James wrote from Mackford, Wisconsin:

I fear that all is not well at home. I have had some impressions as to the babe.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:295](#).

[430] While praying for the family at home, he had a presentiment that the child was very sick. The babe seemed lying before him with face and head dreadfully swollen. When Ellen received the letter three days later, she remarked that if her husband was there he would not have much faith in his presentiment (WCW, in [The Review and Herald, March 5, 1936](#)). But the next day the child was taken very sick with an extreme case of erysipelas in the face and head. A

telegram was dispatched to James at Round Grove, Illinois. When he read it he declared that he was prepared for the news and that they would hear that the child's head and face were greatly affected. He cut short his trip, and in a day or two was home.

In mid-November, Ellen had taken the children by train to the country and stayed with the Glover family. "The boys," she reported in a letter to James written November 19, "had a good, free time in the country. I let them run and race as much as they pleased." It must have been in connection with this trip that the virulent germs of erysipelas, to which infants are very susceptible, were picked up. On Wednesday, November 21, she wrote a short note to James:

*Dear Husband,*

I put a letter in the [post] office yesterday for you and told you that we were all well but Monday night our child has taken sick in the night and all day yesterday was very sick—dangerous. Today not so much distressed, but he is not out of danger. He is a very sick child. I thought you ought to know this and then you could do as you pleased about returning. Sister Benedict was with me all day yesterday. Sat up with the child all night and is with me today.... In haste. Ellen.—[Letter 15, 1860](#).

The heartbreaking sequence was recounted by Ellen White when it was over:

My dear babe was a great sufferer. Twenty-four days and nights we anxiously watched over him, using all the remedies we could for his recovery, and earnestly presenting his case to the Lord. At times I could not control my feelings as I witnessed his sufferings. Much of my time was spent in tears, and humble supplication to God.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:296](#).

Although erysipelas is extremely contagious, and these were days before germs or viruses were known, neither Ellen nor any other member of the family was stricken. It must have been during this

three-week period that the child was given a name—John Herbert White. Ellen White picks up the sad story:

December 14 [Friday], I was called up. My babe was worse. I listened to his labored breathing, and felt his pulseless wrist. I knew that he must die. That was an hour of anguish for me. The icy hand of death was already upon him. We watched his feeble, gasping breath, until it ceased, and we felt thankful that his sufferings were ended.

When my child was dying, I could not weep. I fainted at the funeral. My heart ached as though it would break, yet I could not shed a tear.

We were disappointed in not having Brother Loughborough to conduct the funeral services, and my husband spoke upon the occasion to a crowded house. We followed our child to Oak Hill Cemetery, there to rest until the Life-giver shall come, and break the fetters of the tomb, and call him forth immortal.

After we returned from the funeral, my home seemed lonely. I felt reconciled to the will of God, yet despondency and gloom settled upon me.—*Ibid.*

The year 1860 had opened with James and Ellen White in the Loughborough home witnessing the death of their only child. The year closed with the vivid memories of the death of their own child, a babe of 3 months, casting a gloom that would not soon pass away. It had been a year with but little joy.

## Chapter 29—(1861) Pointed Reproof and Heartfelt Confessions [432]

It had been with some contentment and relaxation that Ellen White had looked forward to the winter of 1860 and into 1861. “I thought I understood my duty,” she wrote later.

I pressed my dear babe to my heart and rejoiced that at least for one winter I should be released from any great responsibility, for it could not be my duty to travel in winter with my infant.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:246](#).

But with John Herbert snatched from them the outlook seemed gloomy. This sense came not alone because of the loss of the child, but because of the condition of the church. Satan was striving to the utmost to hurt the church, and if possible, destroy it. Nor was she alone in her feelings of despair. She wrote:

About this time, my husband, as he reviewed the past, began to lose confidence in almost everyone.... One Sabbath morning, as he was going to our place of worship, such an overpowering sense of injustice came over him that he turned aside and wept aloud, while the congregation waited for him.—[Ibid., 1:247](#).

She explained:

Our happiness ever depends upon the state of the cause of God. When His people are in a prosperous condition, we feel free; but when they are backslidden and there is discord among them, nothing can make us joyful. Our whole interest and life have been interwoven with the rise and progress of the third angel’s message. We are bound up in it, and when it does not prosper, we experience great suffering of mind.—[Ibid., 1:246, 247](#).

[433]

She named the cause of their low state of feelings:

From the commencement of our labors we have been called to bear a plain, pointed testimony, to reprove wrongs and spare not. And all the way there have been those who have stood in opposition to our testimony, and have followed after to speak smooth things, daub with untempered mortar, and destroy the influence of our labors. The Lord would rein us up to bear reproof, and then individuals would step right in between us and the people to make our testimony of no effect. Many visions have been given to the effect that we must not shun to declare the counsel of the Lord, but must occupy a position to stir up the people of God, for they are asleep in their sins.—[Ibid., 1:247](#).

### A Soul-Stirring Vision

James and Ellen White were crushed, and hope died within them in the days following the funeral of John Herbert, Monday morning, December 17. A week went by. On Sunday night, December 23, as they retired, Ellen could not sleep. She suffered a severe pain in her heart and she fainted not once but several times. James hardly knew what to do, but he sent for trusted friends, George Amadon, J. P. Kellogg, and Cyrenius Smith. In response to their earnest prayers, relief came, and she was taken off in vision. Of this she wrote:

I was shown that we had a work to do, that we must still bear our testimony, straight and pointed. Individuals were presented before me who had shunned the pointed testimony. I saw the influence of their teachings upon God's people.—[Ibid., 1:248](#).

She hastened to write out and get into print the messages based on this vision. In five weeks' time this notice appeared in the Review: "*Testimony for the Church*, No. 6, will be ready in a few days."—[The Review and Herald, January 29, 1861](#). The little pamphlet opened with the words:

*Dear Brethren and Sisters,*

The Lord has again visited me in mercy, in a time of bereavement and great affliction. December 23, 1860, I was taken off in vision, and was shown the wrongs of individuals which have affected the cause, and I dare not withhold the testimony from the church to spare the feelings of individuals.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:210](#).

The writing for publication of what was revealed to her in this vision filled sixty-eight pages of the testimony pamphlet and is currently found in [Testimonies for the Church, 1:210 to 252](#). The titles of the articles reveal well the nature of the messages, opening with “Slackness Reproved” and followed by “Duty to Children,” “Systematic Benevolence,” and then “Our Denominational Name.” Among the ten articles that follow, one carries the significant title “Fanaticism in Wisconsin.”

### **Ellen White Alters Her Practice**

The reader will recall that in her distress over the manner in which some influential workers in the cause had kept a knowledge of testimonies of counsel and reproof they had received secret—and had often ignored them—Ellen White concluded that she must make some matters public that she wished might be handled differently. After expressing her perplexity as to the right course to follow and still fulfill her commission, she declared:

My course is now clear to wrong the church no longer. If reproofs are given I dare not commit them alone to the individuals to be buried up by them, but shall read what the Lord has seen fit to give me, to those of experience in the church, and if the case demands, bring it before the whole church.—[Spiritual Gifts, 2:293, 294](#).

She stated that she would keep such things secret no longer, for “God’s people must know what the Lord has been pleased to reveal, that they be not deceived and led astray by a wrong spirit.”—[Ibid., 2:294](#). This is precisely what she did as she penned the articles for

*Testimony* No. 6. Many of the messages had to do with the spirit and actions of close friends, those who had been and were working closely with her and her husband.

[435] In dealing with the subject of organization and pointing out that matters of the church must not be left at loose ends, she declared:

I was shown the wrong stand taken by R. F. C. [Cottrell] in the *Review* in regard to organization, and the distracting influence he exerted. He did not sufficiently weigh the matter.—*Testimony for the Church*, 6:4, 5 (see also *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:211).

An article in the heart of the pamphlet opened:

I was shown that the Spirit of God has had less and less influence upon S. W. R. Rhodes, until he has no strength from God to overcome. Self and self-interest has been prominent with him for some length of time.... He has been exacting, which has encouraged a spirit of faultfinding in the church.—*Ibid.*, 6:27 (see also *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:227).

In the article “Fanaticism in Wisconsin” we read:

God sent His servants to Brother and Sister Steward. They despised correction, and chose their own course. Brother S. was jealous and stubborn, and his future course must be with great humility.—*Ibid.*, 6:31 (see also *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:229, 230).

The next article opened with the words:

I was shown the course of G. W. H. [Holt] and S. W. R. [Rhodes]. Although reproved, they have not corrected their wrongs. The people of God have been affected by their wrong course, especially in the State of New York.—*Ibid.*, 6:36 (see also *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:233).

The article titled “The Cause in Ohio” began:

Since our visit to Ohio in the spring of 1858, G. W. H. [Holt] has done what he could to exert an influence against us; and where he thought he could affect individuals, he has done so by circulating reports to stir up wrong feelings. A message was given me in regard to him and his family when we visited Ohio in the spring of 1858. This testimony was given to him. But very few persons knew that I had a message for him. He rose in rebellion against it, and, like some others who have been reproved, took the position that persons had prejudiced my mind against his family, when the vision pointed out the same faults in his family which I had repeatedly seen for ten years. He said that he believed the visions, but I was influenced by others in writing them.—*Ibid.*, 6:38, 39 (see also *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:234, 235).

[436]

Near the close of the pamphlet Ellen White included counsel regarding evangelistic work in new places:

I saw that when the messengers enter a new place, their labor is worse than lost unless they bear a plain, pointed testimony. They should keep up the distinction between the church of Jesus Christ, and formal, dead professors. There was a failure in P. [Parkville]. Brother J. N. A. [Andrews] was fearful of offending, fearful lest the peculiarities of our faith should appear, and the standard was lowered down to the people....

God’s servants must bear a pointed testimony. It will cut the natural heart, and develop character. Brethren J. N. A. and J. N. L. [Loughborough] moved with a perfect restraint upon them while in P. Such preaching will never do the work that God designs to have accomplished.—*Ibid.*, 6:59-61 (see also *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:248, 249).

The last testimony included two names, rather than initials:

I was pointed back to the meeting in Iowa City. Brother Cornell felt the burden of the cause. S. Everett had a spirit of opposition. His testimony was not in union with the work of God.—*Ibid.*, 6:63 (see also [Testimonies for the Church, 1:250](#)).

In this sixty-four-page pamphlet, *Testimony* No. 6, in which initials and names were used, Ellen White met her objective. All believers could now have a clear view of the situation and could relate to it accordingly. Most of those who were brought to the front, clearly identified by the use of their initials, with a showing of their weaknesses and mistakes, came to see their true condition. Their acknowledgments and confessions during the next few months were published in the *Review*.

[437] It was a bitter and severe experience for Ellen White and for the church, but one she felt she must endure in being true to her calling. When the time came ten years later for the republication of *Testimony* No. 6, Ellen White substituted blanks for the initials, thus allowing the messages to stand for their inherent and continued value, divested of personalities. She loved and respected her brethren. She would not hurt them if they could be spared.

### General Counsel for the Church

The opening article, which as republished in volume 1 of the *Testimonies*, is titled “Slackness Reproved,” covers a number of points, and reins the church up for overlooking sin in its midst. Among the perils threatening the church was the practice of members establishing their own standards, and in so doing entirely failing “to reach the gospel standard set up by our divine Lord” ([Testimonies for the Church, 1:214](#)).

### Steps in Church Organization Commended

Just three months had elapsed since the general conference was held in Battle Creek at which some steps had been taken to organize the publishing work in a formal manner. Two years had passed since the adoption of Systematic Benevolence. In the vision of December

23, 1860, right after John Herbert White's death, the Lord placed His seal of approval on the steps taken in these firm moves toward church order, organization, and the choice of a denominational name. On organization Ellen White wrote:

The people of God should move understandingly, and should be united in their efforts. They should be of the same mind, of the same judgment; then their efforts will not be scattered, but will tell forcibly in the upbuilding of the cause of present truth. Order must be observed, and there must be union in maintaining order, or Satan will take the advantage....

Matters pertaining to the church should not be left in an unsettled condition. Steps should be taken to secure church property for the cause of God, that the work may not be retarded in its progress, and that the means which persons wish to dedicate to God's cause may not slip into the enemy's ranks. I saw that God's people should act wisely, and leave nothing undone on their part to place the business of the church in a secure state.—*Ibid.*, 1:210, 211.

Of those who took a strong negative position against formal organization and the “taking of a name,” and considered it a virtue to leave the temporal matters of the church with the Lord, she gave: the following counsel: [438]

It is only in cases of great emergency that the Lord interposes for us. We have a work to do, burdens and responsibilities to bear, and in thus doing we obtain an experience.—*Ibid.*, 1:212.

Concerning financial support, she stated:

Some have not come up and united in the plan of systematic benevolence.... Rob not God by withholding from Him your tithes and offerings.... I saw that in the arrangement of systematic benevolence, hearts will be

tested and proved. It is a constant living test.—[Ibid.](#), 1:220, 221.

As to the name *Seventh-day Adventists*:

I was shown in regard to the remnant people of God taking a name.... No name which we can take will be appropriate but that which accords with our profession and expresses our faith and marks us a peculiar people. The name Seventh-day Adventist is a standing rebuke to the Protestant world.... The name Seventh-day Adventist carries the true features of our faith in front, and will convict the inquiring mind.—[Ibid.](#), 1:223, 224.

The December 23 vision indicated God's approval of what was done concerning the fanaticism in Wisconsin:

I saw that the Lord especially directed my husband in going west last fall instead of going east as he at first decided. In Wisconsin there was a wrong to be corrected. The work of Satan was taking effect, and would destroy souls if not rebuked. The Lord saw fit to choose one who had had experience with fanaticism in the past, and had witnessed the working of Satan's power. Those who received this instrument of God's choosing were corrected, and souls were rescued from the snare which Satan had prepared for them.—[Ibid.](#), 1:228, 229.

The counsel and reproof were now before the church in a way demanding attention. It would take time for it to bear its full fruit.

[439]

### **Provisionally Saved from Financial Loss**

With the decision at the Battle Creek conference in late September, 1860, to organize the publishing work in a legal way, proper counsel was sought. The decision was made to form a company in which church members would invest, purchasing stock at \$10 per share. Even before the corporation was formed, some funds

began to come in. Battle Creek as yet had no bank, and the monies were deposited with two brokers in the town in the anticipation of building a new publishing house in the spring. The sums involved were substantial. In November, the night after James White had the presentiment of his sick child, he had an impressive dream. He wrote about it:

That night we dreamed that the brokers with whom we had deposited the money from the office were selling shopworn shoes in an inferior store. And as we saw them, we exclaimed, "They have come down!" These words awoke us, and for a moment we felt a little concerned for the Lord's money which was in their hands. But soon both the dream and the presentiment passed from our mind.—[Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White \(1880\)](#), 351.

On returning home in response to the telegram of the child's sickness, James White found the babe in Ellen's arms just as he seemed to see it in the presentiment that had passed from his mind. Four weeks later the funeral of the child was held in the morning. White wrote about the sequel:

In the afternoon we went to the *Review* office, and as we stepped over the threshold, the presentiment and the dream flashed before our mind. We immediately called those with whom we were associated in the publishing work, and related them the dream and the presentiment, and stated that God had shown us in a figure that the money in the hands of the brokers was not safe, and that we should immediately draw it, which we did, to purchase stone, brick, and lumber for the new building.—[Ibid.](#), 252.

By the first of July all the funds had been invested in building materials. A day or two later the two brokers went bankrupt and the citizens of Battle Creek lost \$50,000. White picks up the story:

[440]

Many at Battle Creek knew that we had deposited with these men, and they supposed that we had lost as other had.... The question was frequently asked us, "How much did you lose by these men?" We had the pleasure of responding, "Not one dollar." "Well, you were lucky" was the frequent remark.

The providence of God had cared for this investment that had been solemnly dedicated to the cause. And as we often related the foregoing facts, we felt justified in making the statement that God sent His angel to warn us in season to secure the means which had been devoted to His work.—[Ibid.](#), 353.

The materials thus secured were held until a favorable time to build, and were used in constructing a two-story publishing house of brick.

The legal organization of the publishing association had to await the provisions that were made the next spring by the Michigan legislature.

### A Western Tour

On the return from visits to Monterey, Wright, and Parkville early in 1861, James White, in his report in the *Review*, outlined general plans for the year.

We now design to remain at home but a few weeks, then make a few weeks' tour in Michigan, then visit the West as the brethren may open the way. Then in July leave for an eastern tour.—[The Review and Herald, January 15, 1861.](#)

Two weeks later he announced that he, with Ellen White, would be at the conference at Marion, Iowa, commencing on Friday, February 15, and were open for other appointments in the West for ten or twelve weeks. Duties in Battle Creek and bad weather led to a postponement of the Marion meeting till March 16 and 17. There the meetings were held in the courthouse with about two hundred Sabbathkeepers attending. One man walked eighty miles to be present,

and felt well repaid ([Letter 3, 1861](#)). Although the Whites had expected to be filling appointments in the West till the first of June, they turned back to Battle Creek in early April. The weather was bad and the mud deep; they were disheartened and discouraged ([Letter 5a, 1861](#)).

Even close relatives had turned against them—her sister Sarah Belden, Sarah’s husband, Stephen, and Ellen’s own parents, Robert and Eunice Harmon. In a letter written to Lucinda Hall on April 5, Ellen White opened up her heart: [441]

We expect fierce conflicts with the powers of darkness. We believe the shaking time has come. My cry is, Stay not Thy hand, O God. Let everything be shaken that can be. Let us know who is upon the sure foundation, who is on the Lord’s side.

Never, never did I see my husband so discouraged as now. I have feared he would tear himself from the office and have nothing to do with the business matters there. The trials which occurred last summer have so shaken his confidence in his brethren, especially ministers, that I fear he will never recover from it. He calls to mind the disinterested part he has acted in this cause and then the abuse he has suffered, and his courage fails. Some think it strange that Brother White should feel thus discouraged. But there is a cause.—[Ibid.](#)

She referred to both S. W. Rhodes and G. W. Holt, who were out of the work, and her mind turned to the little testimony pamphlet:

We have studied and prayed and spent many hours of anxiety and sorrow to know just what was our duty in regard to these individuals whose names are mentioned in No. 6. We have spoken because the cause of God demanded it. The cause of God is a part of us. Our experience and lives are interwoven with this work. We have had no separate existence. It has been a part of our very being

The believers in present truth have seemed as near as our children. When the cause of God prospers we

are happy, but when wrongs exist among the people of God we are unhappy, and nothing can make us glad. The earth, its treasures and joys, are nothing to us. Our interest is not here. Is it then strange that my husband, with his sensitive feelings, should suffer in mind?—[Ibid.](#)

She closed this letter, to one of her closest friends outside of the family, with an expression of determination:

[442]

My spirit is stirred within me. I will speak. I will not keep silence. I have girded the armor about me. I am prepared for battle. In the name of the Lord of hosts I will go forth and act any part which God may assign me in this work. The cause is the Lord's. Truth will triumph. God will not leave His children to perish. Pray for us, your unworthy friends, that God may lead us forth victorious.—[Ibid.](#)

### **The Tide Begins to Turn**

At the time *Testimony* No. 6 went into the field in late February and early March, there was considerable turmoil in the churches, caused by resistance to the steps being taken by James and Ellen White to bring about organization. The suspicions and feelings in parts of the field were reflected in the remarks made by a believer in one of the Eastern States to J. H. Waggoner, a corresponding editor of the *Review*:

This person asked me how the *Review* office was held, and by whom owned. I explained to him the circumstances. He appeared to be pleased to get the correct information, and said that a man in the State of New York told him that Elder White was a designing man; that he had induced the friends of the cause to contribute funds to establish the office, they supposing that it belonged to the church; but it now turned out that he owned it all.—[The Review and Herald, March 19, 1861.](#)

Feelings of suspicion, whispered by one to another, contributed largely to the discouragement of James and Ellen White. *Testimony* No. 6 shook the church into an awakening. As ministers and laymen examined their own hearts, an outpouring of confessions were sent for publication in the *Review*, appearing over a period of many months. The first was from corresponding editor R. F. Cottrell in New York State, published in the issue of March 12 and addressed “To the Brethren.” It was he that had set the negative tone in the discussion over organization that swept through the church. It was he that Ellen White first personally addressed in *Testimony* No. 6.

Note Cottrell’s penitent words:

I wish to counteract and remove, as far as possible, the injurious influence of my hasty communication on the subject of legal organization. I did not weigh the matter as I should. I ought to have considered that Brother White had seen the necessity of some measures being taken, and had pondered the subject well, before making the request he did concerning it.

[443]

Then I might have suggested a plan of organization avoiding the evil which I feared, instead of thus confidently and self-complacently recommending that nothing be done. I regret that I did not consider the matter carefully and prayerfully, before writing in a manner not calculated to keep the unity of the Spirit. I hope that none will stumble over this into perdition.

I ask forgiveness of all the dear people of God. I hope that God Himself will forgive me. And I also hope that the lesson that I have thus dearly learned may never be forgotten by me, while there is danger of my falling into a similar error. My determination is to renew my consecration to God and His cause, and strive to press onward till the victory is gained. Brethren, pray for me.—[Ibid., March 12, 1861](#)

The next confession appeared a week later. It was titled “Note From Brother Ingraham“:

Brother Smith: I have received *Testimony for the Church*, No. 6, and have read it through. Its truths are most cutting and the reproofs given are timely. I prize the work much, especially that portion which has reference to myself. I shall heed the instruction given, and by the grace of God bear a plain testimony against evil in every form in the church. God is calling upon the ministry to make straight work in the proclamation of the truth. Let us arise at once and take hold of this great work.—[Ibid.](#), [March 19, 1861](#)

He wrote of his feeling that something had to be done toward legal organization, but when a practical plan was presented, calculated to bring the church into a right position, he “was afraid of it.” Continuing his favorable argument, he asks: “How can a church numbering 144,000, or half that number, be managed in business matters without the strictest adherence to legal proceedings? We must be straight upon this point, or go to pieces.” He asked the [444] pardon of his brethren for not acting in a prompt manner in unison with them.

J. N. Loughborough, who had worked very closely with James and Ellen White but who in *Testimony* No. 6 was reproved for shallow work in evangelism, confessed:

*Dear Brethren and Sisters,*

I would hereby state that I have read *Testimony for the Church* No. 6, especially that portion which has reference to labors in Parkville, Michigan. The testimony covering the first introduction of the truth into that place in a smooth manner is true. I deeply mourn that I have ever been left to thus cripple my testimony, and bring leanness into my own soul. I trust I shall have strength from God in future to bear the straight testimony required by the third angel’s message. In hope of overcoming. J. N. Loughborough.—[Ibid.](#), [April 30, 1861](#)

So it went from issue to issue through the weeks preceding the important conference to be held in Battle Creek, April 26 to 29.

Those attending that meeting came with tender and united hearts. In a letter written May 4 to Lucinda Hall, Ellen White described what took place:

Our conference was interesting from the commencement to the close. I wish you could have been present. It was a stirring, deep-feeling meeting. Ministers and people sought to make thorough work, that they might be fitted up and prepared to engage in this work of God with all their energies. Wrongs were not passed over lightly. They were sought for, dug out, and the individuals were not released until they had made clean work.—[Letter 26, 1861](#).

After giving a little more home news and expressing pleasure that Lucinda, a lover of the garden, was coming soon to see them, Ellen closed her letter, “Lucinda, if you come to see me, bring me some peonies if you have them. In much love.”

It seemed that better days were ahead.

[445]

## Chapter 30—(1861) The Struggle for Church Organization Continues

Without church organization, without appointed responsible leaders, without a creed, the rather loose-knit church was growing more and more unwieldy. Ministers and laymen who had met in Battle Creek in late September, 1860, in response to an invitation signed by four leading brethren and couched in the form of an announcement, set about to form a legal organization to hold the assets and manage the affairs of the publishing work. Out of the meeting came plans for a publishing association—but it could not organize legally until the legislature of the State of Michigan had formulated laws under which they could incorporate. Organizing the publishing work called for the choice of the name *Seventh-day Adventists*. The action of choosing a name set the field buzzing with the cry that the church was going into Babylon.

On May 3, 1861, the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association was incorporated in harmony with laws newly formulated by the Michigan legislature, and on May 23, in Battle Creek, bylaws governing the operation of the corporation were adopted. Officers for the association were chosen as follows: President, James White Vice President, G. W. Amadon Secretary, E. S. Walker Treasurer, Uriah Smith Auditor, J. N. Loughborough

James White was elected editor of the *Review and Herald*, and G. W. Amadon, editor of the *Youth's Instructor*.—[The Review and Herald, May 28, 1861](#).

[446]

At the conference in Battle Creek, April 26-29, 1861, the need of a new and more adequate building to house the publishing interests was discussed, and initial steps were taken to provide it and get the building under way. Before the meeting closed, attention turned to “a more complete organization of the church.” James White pleaded with his brethren in the ministry “to take hold of this work.” J. H. Waggoner said that even before he came to the conference he had “resolved so to do.” A motion made by Moses Hull called upon the

ministers present to prepare an address to the church on the subject of church organization (*Ibid.*, April 30, 1861).

Little wonder that in her letter to Lucinda Hall, Ellen White had occasion for rejoicing. There was another point discussed and an action taken at this conference worthy of notice—a point quite apropos in the light of the speedy acquisition and wholehearted acceptance of a minister who proved to be given to levity:

*Whereas*, In our opinion, remarks calculated to excite mirthfulness tend to grieve the Holy Spirit from our midst, and thus deprive us of the guidance of heaven in our deliberations, therefore

*Resolved*, That we consider it a breach of order to indulge in such remarks, and we request the chairman to call to order any who may use them.

*And whereas*, In view of the solemn time in which we are living, the *holy*, solemn message we profess, the importance of using “sound speech” and “words that shall administer *grace* to the hearers,” and in view of the fact that God’s Word condemns in the most unequivocal terms the use of trifling thoughts and words, even declaring that for “*every idle* word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment,” therefore

*Resolved*, 1. That this conference assembled, both preachers and lay members, covenant together to put away from us, whether in preaching or in social relations, all lightness and trifling. 2. That we recommend to our brethren scattered abroad to pursue a similar course, and rid themselves of this blighting sin which drives the Spirit of God from the hearts of His people.—

*Ibid.*

The accomplishments of this conference might be noted as step two in the struggle for full church organization. Many expressed words of appreciation, such as, “I am thankful for what I have seen and heard and felt during this meeting.”—*Ibid.*

[447]

Uriah Smith, quite free from emotion, in his report of the conference, declared:

God's signal blessing rested down, and at times the house resounded with shouts of praise and thanksgiving. The efforts that were made for freedom, for a bursting of the fetters with which the enemy would fain bind God's people, and for a consolidation of union between hearts which he had long been trying to estrange from each other, together with their results, were indeed encouraging.—[Ibid.](#)

But what brought particular joy to Smith, and in fact to everyone else, was expressed thus:

But most of all had we occasion to rejoice that freedom of spirit seemed to be returning to Brother White, and that he was enabled to testify that hope was again beginning to beam on his pathway. This was occasioned by the work which he saw being done for his brethren; and the happy change in him will be fully effected when the work necessary to be done by and for them is fully accomplished.—[Ibid.](#)

Coming back to the spirit of the conference, Smith declared:

The business meetings were characterized by promptness of action, and the utmost unanimity of sentiment, no dissenting vote being offered on a single question. The same Spirit that reigned through the other exercises of the conference seemed to pervade these meetings also, as may be seen by some of the resolutions offered. If the results and influence of this meeting do not prove as beneficial as those of any heretofore held in this place, our experience thus far has failed to qualify us to judge in this respect.—[Ibid.](#)

Unfortunately, when reports of the conference were given in detail in the *Review*, not all saw it that way, as we shall soon note.

## The Conference Address on Organizing Churches

[448]

An important address on the organization of churches was drawn up by a committee of nine—the ministers who attended the conference—and was written by J. H. Waggoner. It reviewed briefly the history of the church, particularly the holding of “general conferences” here and there with no attempt at equalized representation or to keep minutes of decisions reached. It called for the organization of churches dealt with, for “purity of the membership,” and for members to carry with them proper papers when moving to a new location. It specified that there must be papers certifying to the qualifications of those who ministered. The address closed:

Our object in this is to call your attention to the necessity of a more thorough organization, and invite your cooperation in the effort to effect it. We have seen with deep regret the distrust with which reforms of this kind are viewed, and trust it is for want of understanding the necessities of the case. We have examined it with carefulness and prayer, and hope and pray that you will examine it in the same manner, and believe that you will arrive at the same conclusion.—[Ibid., June 11, 1861](#)

This hope, however, proved to be in vain. While there was unanimity at the conference in Battle Creek, this was not true in the field generally.

With repairs being made on their home, with the laying of plans for the new publishing house, with planning for a trip east to secure moral support for organization and for funds badly needed by the publishing association, James White, as reported by Ellen to Mary Loughborough, was “too busy to know whether he is sick or well” ([Letter 6, 1861](#)). He was yet to discover the extent of the negative feelings in the field, particularly in New York State and Ohio.

## The Eight-Week Eastern Tour

James and Ellen White started on their eastern tour Tuesday, July 23. They spent Tuesday night with friends in Jackson, Michigan, and the next morning were on their way to Eagle Harbor, New York,

[449] where Moses Hull was leading out in tent meetings. A phrase in Hull's report of the meetings gives a hint of the erosion, in certain areas, of confidence in those leading the church. He wrote: "Sister White's testimonies were very pointed, and seemed to remove prejudice which existed against her and her visions."—[The Review and Herald, September 3, 1861](#). As resistance to organization deepened, and criticism of James White for his attempts to lead the church into organization proliferated, Ellen White and the visions came under attack, first covertly and then openly. Church order and spiritual gifts were closely linked together, as was seen as the eastern tour progressed.

### Vision at Roosevelt, New York

From Eagle Harbor the Whites made their way to Rochester and then to Roosevelt, New York. A conference was to be held in the house of worship there over the weekend of August 3 and 4. This was a difficult meeting. White reported that on Sabbath afternoon light began to break through, especially in a season of special prayer "for the afflicted and desponding among us, and for the return of the Holy Spirit to us as a people." He reported:

We had been assembled seven hours without taking food, and the interest of the occasion was such that no one appeared to be faint or weary. God heard the united prayers of His afflicted people, and His Spirit came down upon them. Mrs. White shared largely in this blessed refreshing, and was soon in vision, in which she had messages of comfort for the desponding and afflicted, and of correction for the wayward and erring.—[Ibid., August 20, 1861](#)

In the vision she was shown, among other things, "in regard to church order, and the struggle of our nation, and its effect upon the cause" ([Ibid., August 27, 1861](#)). As they moved through the State and saw what was happening, James White was "stung with the thought that the balance of influence is either against, or silent upon, the subject of organization" ([Ibid., September 3, 1861](#)). He wrote:

We seem to be wading through the influence of a stupid uncertainty upon the subject of organization. This is as might be expected from the circumstances connected with the introduction of the subject among us. Soon after we merely hinted at it about eighteen months since, an article appeared in the *Review* from one of the corresponding editors [R. F. Cottrell] well calculated to arouse the fears of many that Brother White was in favor of something dreadful.

[450]

We were then in Iowa where we could not give an explanation of our mere suggestions, and have a plain statement go out in the same number of the *Review*. The poison took almost everywhere. When we completed our western tour and found time, we reviewed the subject, and set forth some of the necessities of organization. But only a portion of the brethren could then be reached. The cause suffered dreadfully.

But if those who took the wrong side of the question had owned up when they saw the error and weakness of their position, if all who were convinced of the necessity of organization had spoken out freely, victory would have [been] turned, and the poison of antiorganization would have been at once removed. But our ministers were generally silent. Some exerted a strong influence against organization, while the influence of others fell indirectly through their silence into the wrong scale with dreadful weight, and many of our brethren, especially in the East, stood in doubt.

The brethren in Pennsylvania voted down organization, and the cause in Ohio has been dreadfully shaken. It has suffered everywhere. If such ministers of experience as Brethren Ingraham, Andrews, and Wheeler could have spoken on the subject decidedly and in season, much might have been saved that has probably gone to ruin. There is everywhere someone to hold back. They have no valid reasons for so doing; still they hold back.—*Ibid.*, August 27, 1861

[451] White then referred to the conference in Roosevelt. After a two-hour discussion on organization at which objections were removed, he called for a standing vote favoring organization. Pioneer worker Frederick Wheeler kept his seat. James White was devastated. He wrote, “A dreadful feeling of discouragement came over us that we have not yet been able to shake off,” and he asked, “What can we expect of the people when the ministers stand thus?” Only ten weeks before, Wheeler had written White that the members in New York State were “beginning to feel the necessity of more union, and a more perfect consecration to God and His cause” (*Ibid.*, [June 11, 1861](#)).

As James White bemoaned the situation, he pointed out that three years back as he dwelt on the subject of unity in the church he could point with pleasure to Seventh-day Adventists as being far advanced in “scriptural unity.” But now no one could deny that “instead of our being a united people, growing stronger, we are in many places but little better than broken fragments, still scattering and growing weaker.”—*Ibid.*, [August 27, 1861](#). Thinking of what this trip into the East revealed, he wrote:

A few years since we could report success and additions to the ranks at every appointment on our eastern and western tours. Now these conference meetings are scenes of wearing labor to hold together and strengthen what remains. Some who have been expecting a time of shaking are in doubt whether it has commenced. May the Lord save us from a worse shaking than the present.—*Ibid.*

The next week, September 3, White declared:

We are done moving out in any enterprise connected with the cause until system can lie at the bottom of all our operations. Mrs. White and self have interested ourselves in behalf of the poor; but in the absence of systematic arrangements among us much care has come upon us, and at least three fourths of those whom we have been instrumental in helping became our enemies.

Now let others who choose push the battle in confusion, but we are making all preparations for a safe retreat till the army of Sabbathkeepers be organized, and the rebels against organization be purged out.—[Ibid., September 3, 1861](#)

### **The Battle Creek Church Sets the Pace in Organizing**

Though in August and September several companies of believers entered into some form of organization, it was left to the Battle Creek church to lead out again in well-defined steps in this direction. The annual meeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association was called for Friday, October 4. This would bring together quite a group of Michigan ministers and laymen, and J. N. Loughborough, E. S. Walker, and George Amadon saw this as an opportunity to further the interests of church order, carrying it to a third step, the organizing of local churches. In connection with the constituency meeting, they suggested meetings over the weekend at which attention could be given to “a more perfect organization of the church” ([Ibid., September 24, 1861](#)).

[452]

So after the Sabbath, October 5, a meeting was held, with Joseph Bates serving as chairman and Uriah Smith as secretary. The minutes of this vital meeting read in part:

The first business presented was the organization of churches. Brother Loughborough said: I consider it proper and necessary to consider here the organization of churches, as the subject has been agitated among us, especially for the last six months; and in order to bring the matter before the meeting, I move that we consider the proper manner of organizing churches. Seconded by Brother White. Carried. Brother White then presented the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That this conference recommend the following church covenant: We, the undersigned, hereby

associate ourselves together as a church, taking the name Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ. Seconded by Brother Hull. Adopted.—[Ibid.](#), [October 8, 1861](#)

But the vote was not full, and White stated that he hoped that a matter of such importance would not be passed without some discussion. On this suggestion, Loughborough, by a motion, opened the way for a reconsideration of the matter. This led to the question whether White’s proposal was not a creed—and a creed they would not tolerate. Hull felt that it was not a creed or articles of faith, but merely a pledge to do one thing: “Keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” James White then led into a discussion of the involvements in the light of the fears sustained by some. Here is his statement:

[453]

If there is no one to raise any objections to this step, I have almost a mind to raise some myself, so that the subject may be discussed. Circumstances have driven me to an examination of this subject somewhat, and it is a very clear one to my mind; but perhaps it might be objected to on this ground: it will look like patterning after the churches around us; and what will be the influence? I would like to hear remarks on this point. It will certainly be doing like those around us; and certain individuals will say that we are following after Babylon; and this may be an objection in their minds.—[Ibid.](#)

Loughborough suggested that if this was so, they were patterning after the other churches by building meetinghouses. He stated, “We call the churches Babylon not because they covenant together to obey God.” He referred to an article he had written for the *Review* in which he declared:

The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is to make that

creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And fifth, to commence persecution against such.

I plead that we are not patterning after the churches in any unwarrantable sense in the step proposed.— *Ibid.*

Cornell could not see that adopting such a covenant was patterning after the churches. Then James White made a rather comprehensive and significant statement:

### **A Creed and the Spirit of Prophecy**

I am convinced; not by what the brethren have said, for I was convinced before. I wish to say a word now in favor of the resolution. I prefer that the brethren should be uniform in this thing. This would tend to unity in the church. Let us set a right example here, and let it go out from this meeting. This is one reason why I would vote for this covenant.

On the subject of creeds, I agree with Brother Loughborough. I never weighed the points which he has presented, as I have since I began to examine the subject myself. In [Ephesians 4:11-13](#), we read, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets,” et cetera. Here we have the gifts of the church presented.

Now I take the ground that creeds stand in a direct opposition to the gifts. Let us suppose a case: We get up a creed, stating just what we shall believe on this point and the other, and just what we shall do in reference to this thing and that, and say that we will believe the gifts, too.

But suppose the Lord, through the gifts, should give us some new light that did not harmonize with our creed; then, if we remain true to the gifts, it knocks our creed all over at once. Making a creed is setting the stakes, and barring up the way to all future advancement. God

[454]

put the gifts into the church for a good and great object; but men who have got up their churches, have shut up the way or have marked out a course for the Almighty. They say virtually that the Lord must not do anything further than what has been marked out in the creed.

A creed and the gifts thus stand in direct opposition to each other. Now what is our position as a people? The Bible is our creed. We reject everything in the form of a human creed. *We take the Bible and the gifts of the Spirit; embracing the faith that thus the Lord will teach us from time to time.* And in this we take a position against the formation of a creed. We are not taking one step, in what we are doing, toward becoming Babylon.—*Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

Some discussion followed about statements in writing and covenants. Then the far-reaching action was taken—that of adopting the wording proposed. Before the meeting ended they adopted the covenant by which members would join the church:

We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together as a church, taking the name Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ....

The question was called for, and unanimously carried.—*Ibid.*  
The third step in church organization had been taken.

The matter of procedure in organizing churches was referred to the ministers present who were charged with holding a “Bible class” on the subject and were to write an address to the brethren, to be published in the *Review*.

[455]

### **The Formation of the Michigan Conference**

James White then suggested another proposition:

*Resolved,* That we recommend to the churches in the State of Michigan to unite in one conference with

the name of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The resolution was quickly adopted. Then the ministers and delegates from the churches were declared members of the Michigan Conference. Appropriate officers and a conference committee were elected. The chairman, Joseph Bates, and the clerk, Uriah Smith, were voted in as the officers for the current year, and the time for the first session was set for October 5 to 8, 1862. There was one more important question, and that was “ministers’ papers.” Here is the action:

*Resolved*, That our ministers’ papers consist of a certificate of ordination, also credentials to be signed by the chairman and clerk of the conference, which credentials shall be renewed annually.— *Ibid.*

The fourth step in the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had now been taken. The foundations were laid with Michigan as an example of what might be accomplished. The responsibility for the organization of local churches and State conferences now passed to the believers in other States.

The conference over, James White reported through the *Review and Herald*:

A calm, sweet, melting spirit pervaded this meeting, making it the best of the kind we ever witnessed. We heard many brethren remark in regard to the conference that it was the best ever held at Battle Creek....

The unity existing among the brethren at this conference, the eagerness to take a decided position upon organization, and the general readiness to sustain the publishing association, have greatly encouraged us.... We certainly made rapid progress during the three days of our conference.—*Ibid.*

With a sigh of relief, James and Ellen White now looked ahead. In the same issue of the *Review* that reported the meeting of the Michigan Conference and the annual meeting of the publishing

association, they announced, under "Appointments," plans to visit Ohio.

### **Other States Organize**

When that *Review* came to the hands of J. N. Andrews, who was working in Minnesota, he took the matter of organization to a conference held there. Believers and workers adopted a resolution following the example of Michigan.

It was announced that Brethren Allen, Bostwick, and Morse would soon pass through the State, establishing order in the churches. The stage had been set, and now the believers in most States moved rather promptly into full organization.

### **Cautions Sounded**

New questions arose, such as the way in which those who were a part of the loose-knit Sabbathkeeping groups would be accepted into newly organized churches. In the issue of the *Review* for October 22 James White sounded a timely warning:

Great caution should be used in taking members into the churches. There should be great faithfulness in the examination of persons who offer themselves as members.

If we, without examination, take into our churches all who profess the Sabbath, we may find our condition worse than it now is. If the matter of organization be judiciously and faithfully managed, it may prove the means of relieving the brethren of many who are a burden and hindrance to the cause: first, in showing all the necessity of doing right; and, second, those who will not receive admonition and instruction can be left where they belong; viz., outside of the church....

All should understand New Testament discipline before uniting with a church. Let those who cannot yield to the pure discipline of the Word remain outside until they can. Goats will at once wander away from the

fold, but the sheep and lambs, should they be left out awhile, will bleat around the fold.— [Ibid., October 22, 1861.](#)

Two weeks later, J. N. Loughborough, whose name was frequently in the *Review* giving reports and answering questions, took up some inquiries on close points in the matter of receiving members: [457]

You ask, “How do you manage in forming a church about taking in members who use tea, coffee, tobacco, and wear hoops, and some who do not believe in Sister White’s visions?—[Ibid., November 5, 1861.](#)”

Loughborough worked very closely with James and Ellen White, and White was editor of the *Review*, where the answers would be published. So we may be very certain there was some counseling together on these points—what appeared in print represented the mind of the three. To this question Loughborough answered:

To this I simply answer, We do not take in any who use tobacco, and reject the gifts of the Spirit of God, if we know it. One of the very objects to be accomplished by church organization is to lop off these things, and only have those come together who stand in the light. To take in those who are holding on to their sins and wrongs would be to encourage the things we are seeking to remedy.

You ask, “What shall be done with such? Should such persons be taken into the church before they break away from these things, or should they be taken in and labored with?”

To both of these questions I answer, No. To take persons into the church is saying that we fully fellowship them; and to labor with them then would throw them into distraction, if it did not entirely destroy them. Better let them know the straitness of the way before taking them into the church. If they cannot stand the

truth, don't bring them into the church to fill that with darkness, and perhaps in the end, with trial and confusion.

As to taking in members and laboring with them, the very time to commence to labor is when their names are proposed for membership. (See "Conference Address.") Then if they cannot be brought to terms, it will be best to let them stand outside till they can come in right.—[Ibid.](#)

[458] One cannot miss the points made by Loughborough. No one, not even those who had been united in worshiping on Sabbath with a company of believers, should be taken into the church as a member unless he or she was in full harmony with the beliefs of the church.

The October 29 *Review and Herald* also expressed James White's concern over the peril of inexperienced individuals attempting to lead out in organizing local churches. He closed an editorial with these words:

The question has been Shall we organize? That question being answered in the affirmative, the question now is How shall we organize? Beware, brethren, of moving hastily in this matter. By hard tugging, our experienced ministers may be induced to take hold of this work, and not leave it for novices in the faith to make still greater confusion by meddling with the organization of churches.—[Ibid., October 29, 1861.](#)

This was followed by an in-depth article from Loughborough titled "Church Discipline," which he opened by quoting [1 Timothy 3:15](#): "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Loughborough elaborated:

At the present time when we are talking of, making effective moves toward, more permanent order in the church, it is highly important for us each to obtain the knowledge spoken of by Paul in the above text, to "know how to behave ourselves in the church." ... To each know

our proper sphere, and our duty; to know our position and fill it; to know how to occupy our proper place and not meddle with that which belongs to the rulers in the church.—[Ibid.](#)

Loughborough wrote at length of the relation of members to church officers, of the problems of dealing with those who have never been under discipline, of some inclined to rebel against the Spirit of Prophecy counsels, of receiving and propagating rumors and accusations, et cetera.

### **M. E. Cornell to Go to Ohio**

These were sensitive and vitally important times. James and Ellen White found that being badly worn, they dared not attempt to fill appointments made for them in Ohio. M. E. Cornell, known for his good judgment and evangelistic perception, was sent in their place. There he met agitation over the adoption of a name and also over spiritual gifts. At Green Spring when his work was brought to a close, he reported that out of a hundred believers only eight or ten were not satisfied and ready to express their “confidence in the gifts, and in those whom the Lord has placed at the head of this work.” At Lovett’s Grove he found some who thought there was danger of exalting the gifts above the Bible. Through an apt illustration he showed that this was impossible:

[459]

Take a small vessel and a large one, and connect them with a small tube; then if you pour water into the small vessel it will rise in the large one. So in proportion as our interest increases in that which the Holy Spirit communicates at one time, it will increase in all that it has ever revealed. Like the law, if we fail in one point we fail in all, because in slighting one we offer insult to all.... There is not a caution in all the Bible against thinking too much of what God has revealed, any more than there is against becoming too pure or too holy.—[Ibid.](#), [November 12, 1861.](#)

Before Cornell left, Ohio was organized into a conference, and the plan followed at Battle Creek was recommended in the organization of churches.

### Confessions of Negative Attitudes

Through all of this the *Review* carried statements from lay members and ministers confessing their wrong attitudes toward organization and their doubts about the Spirit of Prophecy. Frederick Wheeler's "Confession," published in the *Review* of December 3, was typical. It was heartfelt and extended. It opens:

*Dear Brother White,*

We are taught to confess our faults one to another, and pray one for another that we may be healed. I wish to confess and forsake all my faults and sins.... I have murmured against Brother and Sister White, and have thought them too severe, and have spoken of them to a few of my brethren in a way calculated to prejudice their minds against them. I am sorry that I have been left to do thus....

[460]

I have been slow ... to engage in the work of organization. I regret this, and intend for the future to be more diligent, believing it will accomplish a work in bringing the church on higher and holier ground.

I humbly ask forgiveness of God and all my brethren, and ask an interest in their prayers.—[Ibid., December 3, 1861.](#)

A confession was made by J. N. Andrews, writing from Waukon, Iowa, on November 28, 1861. He confessed his negative attitude and influence concerning "the testimony of the Spirit of God, given through vision to Sister White." He mentioned his failure to reprove "sin ... and wrongs" that came under his observation, and referred to his turnaround, stating that "the present work of organization meets my hearty approval."—[Ibid., December 17, 1861.](#)

### James White Surveys the Battle and Victory

As the year 1862 opened, James White reminisced in his editorial column:

Two years since we suggested the necessity of organization, and had a right to expect that the subject would be met with Christian candor by all of our people. In this we were disappointed. Some of our best men opposed, and stirred up that element of insubordination and lawless independence which has ever followed us as a people, and not a few distinguished themselves in heaping their anathemas upon us for suggesting such a thing as organization....

Others secretly were in favor of organization, but dared not advocate it openly, until the scale turned in its favor, and now their tongues and their pens are employed in its advocacy. But certainly their labors on this subject were more needed eighteen months since than now. Then we stood nearly alone. The battle went hard, and we needed help; but many of our very prudent men saved their ammunition to fire away upon the subject of organization now when the battle is fought and the victory won....

As we turn from the present prosperity of the publishing department to the struggle of the past two years, sadness comes over us. We feel at least four years older than two years since, and sometimes fear that we never can fully recover from the effects of those heartrending discouragements which so nearly drove us from the brethren, and from that cause which was dearer to us than life.—*Ibid.*, January 7, 1862.

[461]

Then White turned to the influence of the experience of the past year or two on the members of the church, and noted:

Our people have had great confidence in their self-sacrificing ministers. This confidence with many has been dreadfully shaken. The shock has been felt by all,

and it is hard to recover from it. Until full confidence is restored between preacher and preacher, and between preachers and people, but little success can be expected. May God give wisdom to His servants that they may see the cause of the evils which have fallen upon us, and labor to remove it, that these evils may cease to tear down the cause of truth.—[Ibid.](#)

As he brought his rather extended editorial to a close he stated:

We hope to be able to rise above the discouragements of the past. It may not be our duty to again refer to the trials connected with the subject of organization. We advise all to make thorough work in relation to their past wrongs which have brought the cause into its present condition, and may God forgive past errors, and help all to press forward to the crown of life. A lack of confidence in each other will ruin us as a people. Then let us be faithful and true to our own consciences, true to each other, and true to our God.—[Ibid.](#)

There was one more step to be taken in church organization, and that was the binding of the State conferences together in the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

## Chapter 31—(1861) The Clouds of War

[462]

As the year 1861 dawned, the United States was in somewhat of a turmoil. The recent Presidential election had polarized the Northern States and the Southern States, where slaves were held. Sabbathkeeping Adventists had no sympathy with slavery and were aware, of course, of the tensions and excitement that attended the Presidential campaign of 1860, which led to the election of Abraham Lincoln, but they had kept quite aloof from matters relating to the political situation. Lincoln would take office on March 4, 1861. He was known for his antislavery stance, and his election had led to considerable unrest in the Southern States.

Even before Lincoln's inauguration as President, on December 20 South Carolina passed an ordinance seceding from the United States. In the North this move was not taken seriously, and there were few who considered war probable.

### Vision at Parkville, Michigan

Just at this time light concerning what was ahead was given to Ellen White in a vision at Parkville, Michigan, on Sabbath afternoon, January 12, 1861. The summer before, J. N. Loughborough and J. N. Andrews, as noted earlier, held a rather extended tent meeting in Parkville, some thirty miles south of Battle Creek, which resulted in a large number accepting the third angel's message. A church building was soon erected and was to be dedicated on Sabbath, January 12. The leading members of that congregation appointed a general meeting commencing Friday, January 11, and through the *Review* invited Loughborough, J. H. Waggoner, James White, J. Byington, and "as many more as can come" to be with them ([The Review and Herald, December 18, 1860](#)). James and Ellen White accepted the invitation and with Loughborough and Waggoner drove from Battle Creek by carriage to be present for the weekend

[463]

meetings. Loughborough describes the service Sabbath afternoon and the vision then given to Ellen White:

A large congregation assembled. Brother Waggoner gave the sermon, and Brother White made the dedicatory prayer. Sister White followed with a very powerful exhortation. Then, as she sat down in the chair, she was taken off in vision, which lasted some twenty minutes or more.—[Pacific Union Recorder, March 7, 1912.](#)

The congregation watched every move with intense interest. Most of those present had never seen her in vision. The vision over and Ellen White breathing again, she soon stood and told briefly of what had been revealed to her. An indelible impression was made on the minds of those in the audience. Later Loughborough recounted his memory of her statement:

“Men are making light of the secession ordinance that has been passed by South Carolina. They have little idea of the trouble that is coming on our land. No one in this house has even dreamed of the trouble that is coming.

“I have just been shown in vision that a number of States are going to join South Carolina in this secession, and a terrible war will be the result. In the vision I saw large armies raised by both the North and the South. I was shown the battle raging. I heard the booming of the cannon, and saw the dead and wounded falling on every side. I was then taken to hospitals, and saw the sufferings of the sick and wounded prisoners. I was taken in the vision to the homes of those who had lost sons, brothers, or husbands in the war. There was distress and mourning all over the land.”

Then, looking pensively over the congregation, Ellen White declared:

“There are men in this house who will lose sons in that war.”—[Ibid.](#)

### Ellen White Examined While in Vision

[464]

A physician who was also a spirit medium was in the congregation. He had heard of Mrs. White and the visions, and boasted that if ever he was present when she was in vision, he could bring her out of it in a minute. On this occasion, as on others, James White, while Ellen was in vision, told of her experience, explained her condition in vision, and gave an opportunity for those who wished to do so to come forward and examine her. Someone near the back was heard to say, "Doctor, go ahead, and do what you said you would." On overhearing this, James White invited the physician to come forward and examine Ellen White. He knew nothing of the physician's boasts.

The doctor moved forward boldly, then, turning deathly pale, stopped suddenly, shaking from head to foot. White stepped down and went to the man, and, putting his hand on his shoulder, urged him into the presence of Ellen White. The physician carefully tested her pulse, heartbeat, and what would have been her breathing, and declared in startled words:

"Elder, her heart and pulse are all right, but there is not any breath in her body."—[Ibid., March 14, 1912](#)

Pulling away rather quickly, he made a beeline for the church door. Those near the door blocked his exit and said to him, "Go back, and do as you said you would." James White, taking the whole thing in, called upon the physician to report to the whole audience the result of his examination. He exclaimed: "Her heart and pulse are all right, but there is not a particle of breath in the woman's body!" Those close to him asked, "Doctor, what is it?" He replied, "God only knows. Let me out of this house." And he fled. Remarked Judge Osborne to Loughborough:

"It was evident to all of us that the spirit that controlled the doctor as a medium and the Spirit that controlled Mrs. White in vision had no sympathy with each other.—[Ibid.](#)

### At Home and Writing Personal Testimonies

[465] James and Ellen White were in that trying period reviewed in the past chapter or two when they passed through the agonies of watching over their dying child and at the same time were in the midst of the battle for organization, when most seemed to forsake them and even many of their closest friends turned against them. Ellen made reference to this in one of the first testimonies she wrote after returning to Battle Creek from Parkville. She wrote particularly of the vision of December 23, given to her a week after the funeral of John Herbert. In lines directed to William Ingraham, she reported, “The past year has been a year of peculiar trials to me. It has been a year of discouragements and suffering.... We could not rise above the discouragements we passed through in the past summer.”—[Letter 17, 1861](#).

Then followed an earnest testimony to a minister who was failing to come up to his potential in the cause of God ([Ibid.](#)). Other messages were written on that day and the days following. One was to Victory Jones, a member in the church at Monterey, Michigan, who was battling with appetite. This testimony closed with a heartfelt appeal to the young man. Making a play on his name, Ellen White urged him to arouse himself and gain the “victory” over his problem:

I have tried to write you what has been shown me. Now, dear friend, I appeal to you, will you take hold of this encouragement which the Lord now presents to you? Will you lay hold upon the hope the Lord now gives you? We feel deeply for you. We cannot leave you to perish. We want you to go with us.

We will pray for you. Pray and watch yourself. Seek for the power of truth in the soul. A mere theory of truth will never strengthen you to overcome your strong habits. Everlasting life is before you. For the sake of gratifying a depraved appetite, do not make your family wretched, and shut out all happiness from them and be miserable yourself and in the end receive the wages of sin, which is death....

I must close. My prayer is that you may prove worthy of your name. Be an overcomer and walk with Jesus in light because you shall be found worthy, washed and made white in His blood.—[Letter 1, 1861](#).

Another of the testimonies based on the vision of December 23 was addressed to “Dear Friends in Caledonia.” It opened:

The church in Caledonia has been shown me. I saw everything in confusion—brethren pulling apart, no brotherly love and sweet union.—[Letter 22, 1861](#).

[466]

She wrote of Satan’s work, stating that he “came in another form to sow disunion among brethren.” Then she added:

I saw that the manner of dress the sisters adopted [hoop skirts] was foolish and wrong. It was immodest apparel, unbecoming professors of present truth. It has brought stigma upon them and lowered them in the estimation of unbelievers around them. It had the appearance of evil and a wretched influence. Such a lack of judgment and wisdom deserved the severest censure.—[Ibid](#).

In this letter, Ellen White addressed one family after another by name with words of counsel, reproof, and encouragement. The testimony closed:

I saw the Lord was reviving the living, pointed testimony which will help develop character and purify the church. While we are commanded to separate from the world, it is not necessary that we be coarse and rough, and descend to utter low expressions and make our remarks as rugged as possible so as to disgust people. The truth is designed to elevate the receiver, to refine his taste and sanctify his judgment.

There should be a continued aim to imitate the society that we expect soon to associate with, namely angels of God, who have never fallen into sin. Our characters

should be holy, our manners comely, our words without guile, and we should follow on step by step until we are fitted for translation. There is a work to be done to attain this. We must live upon the plan of addition. Add to your faith virtue, et cetera.... May the Lord help you all to make thorough work for repentance is my prayer. Ellen G. White.—[Ibid.](#)

### The Inroads of Prevailing Fashion

[467] Five years before, in May, 1856, in a vision given at the close of a conference in Battle Creek, she was shown “the conformity of some professed Sabbathkeepers to the world.... They think they are not like the world, but they are so near like them in dress, in conversation, and actions, that there is no distinction.”—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:131](#). The message of counsel based on this vision is titled “Conformity to the World.” Now in mid-1861, prevailing fashions were again making their inroads in the church. She hinted of this in the testimony to the church in Caledonia and in other letters written in succeeding weeks. Then in June she prepared a six-column article for the *Review* entitled “Power of Example,” which was published on June 25. It is found today in [Testimonies for the Church, 1:274-287](#). She took as her theme [Titus 2:13 and 14](#), that Christ would “purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Early in the article she stated:

I have frequently received letters of inquiry in regard to dress, and some have not rightly understood what I have written. The very class which have been presented before me, who are imitating the fashions of the world, have been very slow, and the last to be affected or reformed.

There is another class who lacked taste and order in dress, who have taken advantage of what I have written, and taken the opposite extreme, and considered that they were free from pride, and have looked upon those who dress orderly and neat as being proud. Oddity and careless dress have been considered by some a special

virtue. Such take a course which destroys their influence over unbelievers. They disgust those who might be benefited.

While the visions have reproved pride and imitating the fashions of the world, they have reproved those who are careless of their apparel and lacked cleanliness of person and dress.—[The Review and Herald, June 25, 1861](#).

In this article Ellen White came to grips with the wearing of hoop skirts, then becoming popular. She took up the subject first from the standpoint of example, and then she disclosed what she had been shown in vision in regard to the matter.

I was shown that hoops were a shame, and that we should not give the least countenance to a fashion carried to such ridiculous lengths.—[Ibid.](#)

Four of the six columns of the article were given over to scriptural counsel, introduced with the request: [468]

Please read [1 Timothy 2:9, 10](#). “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.”—[Ibid.](#)

### **Letters to the Wife of a Minister**

During the late 1850s and early 1860s John and Mary Loughborough were very close to James and Ellen White, both in labor and in personal fellowship. Several testimonies were directed to Mary and John, and in each case they were thoughtfully and gratefully received. Each of the families had lost a child at the turn of the decade. These were buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery. The two mothers were close in spirit. Sometime in the spring of 1861 Mary had asked Ellen White about the incoming hoop skirts. As she wrote to her on June 6, 1861, Ellen White answered this question and touched on some other points of importance to the wife of a minister:

Mary, I have been thinking long and patiently upon what you said to me in regard to your wearing hoops. I am prepared to answer: *Do not put on hoops by any means.* I believe that God will have His people distinct from the nations around them. They are peculiar, and should we strive to abolish or put away every sign that marks us as peculiar? No, no; let us preserve the signs which distinguish us in dress, as well as articles of faith.

By putting on hoops, however small, you give not only countenance but a powerful influence to this ridiculous fashion, and you place yourself where you could not reprove those who may choose to wear the larger hoops. Stand clear from this disgusting fashion. My mouth is open. I shall speak plain upon hoops in the next *Review* [June 25, 1861].

Then Ellen White touched on a matter on which Mary like some others, was growing careless:

[469]

Dear Mary, let your influence tell for God. You must take a position to exert an influence over others to bring them up in spirituality. You must guard against following the influence of those around you. If others are light and trifling, be grave yourself.

And Mary, suffer me a little upon this point. I wish in all sisterly and motherly kindness to kindly warn you upon another point: I have often noticed before others a manner you have in speaking to John in rather a dictating manner, the tone of your voice sounding impatient. Mary, others notice this and have spoken of it to me. It hurts your influence.

We women must remember that God has placed us subject to the husband. He is the head, and our judgment and views and reasonings must agree with his if possible. If not, the preference in God's Word is given to the husband where it is not a matter of conscience. We must yield to the head.

I have said more perhaps upon this point than necessary. Please watch this point. I am not reproving you,

remember, but merely cautioning you. Never talk to John as though he were a little boy. You reverence him, and others will take an elevated position, Mary, and you will elevate others.

Seek to be spiritually minded. We are doing work for eternity. Mary, be an example. We love you as one of our children, and I wish so much that you and John may prosper. Be of good courage. Trust in the Lord at all times. He will be your stronghold and your deliverer.... Please write me, Mary, fully. Tell me all your joys, trials, disappointments, et cetera. In much love, Ellen G. White.—[Letter 5, 1861](#).

Eleven days later Ellen White acknowledged Mary's response to hers of June 6, quoted above. She answered a question about quilted skirts, and told Mary she would find her answer in the next issue of the *Review* and told her to write again if this did not convince her or settle her mind. She wrote more of the importance of setting a right example, and made a suggestion:

Mary, dear sister, let us covenant together to earnestly seek the Lord and learn wisdom of Him. Oh, for vital godliness! We must be examples to others around us, and never let us be a cause of stumbling. I am very desirous that you should continue to enjoy the free Spirit of God. Do not be content without it. It is your privilege to have it. Let us have strong confidence in God. Come to Him with living faith and let us rely wholly upon God.

[470]

Dear Mary, I went up to Oak Hill Cemetery and fixed our babes' graves and also Clara's. Fixed ours exactly alike. Put some pansies on the graves, and some myrtle, and at the foot of the stake put a bunch of tall moss. It looked very pretty. We shall go up again soon and see if the flowers are doing well....

Mary, fear not to speak to me freely and fully your feelings. Others have no business with what we write. Let us be faithful to each other. Your letter cheered and

encouraged me. Love to yourself and John.—[Letter 6, 1861](#).

### Another Intimate Glimpse of the White Home Life

Two days later, June 19, she wrote to Lucinda Hall, having slipped away from the house to the Review office to find a retired place to write. There was some remodeling being done at their home, which would give them a “good-sized kitchen,” a “large bedroom,” a “buttery” (pantry), and a dining room. “It is,” she wrote, “pound, pound, banging and slamming, tearing down and putting up.” She thought Lucinda would be delighted with the improvements. But she was needing help in the home that would free her, as she said, to “do my duty in writing and helping James in his writing.” She added:

I cannot do my duty to my family and devote myself to the benefit of God’s children too. My mind cannot be everlastingly planning and cutting and contriving and yet be prepared to write for the *Review* and *Instructor* and answer the numerous letters sent in to me. I want to know my place and then I will try to fill it.

Lucinda, I was thankful for your help when you were with us. I know that it was a great sacrifice for your mother to have you come so far from home. But if you could come and be with me again the coming winter and spring, I should be perfectly suited.—[Letter 27, 1861](#).

[471] She reported that she was writing an article for the *Review* on hoops, stating that “this piece has required much study and care, for it is a delicate and important matter.” As she brought her letter to a close she wrote of her parents, now living with them:

I must close. My children are as well as usual. Father and Mother are living with us, and they seem so contented and happy. They take care of their room but eat with us. You don’t know what a weight of care is removed from me since I can watch over these two

aged children. Mother does just as I wish her to, follows every suggestion I make.

I dress her up neat as wax, comb her hair, and she looks like a nice, venerable old lady. Father also tries to please us in every way. We fix him up and he looks real nice.—*Ibid.*

### A Second Vision of Civil War Involvement

At Roosevelt, New York, on the weekend of August 3 and 4, James White, spoke on sanctification. He wrote of the meetings as a refreshing season. It was on this occasion, as noted earlier, that a very comprehensive vision was given to Ellen White. Willie White was with his parents on this trip, and witnessed such an experience for the first time. He spoke of it in an address on visions to a group in Takoma Park in 1905.

The first one I witnessed as a little boy in the meetinghouse at Roosevelt, New York. Father had given a short talk. Mother had given a short talk. Father prayed, Mother prayed, and as she was praying, I heard that shout, “Glory.” There is nothing like it—that musical, deep shout of “Glory.” She fell backward. My father put his arm under her.

In a little while her strength came to her. She stood up in an attitude of one seeing wonderful things in the distance, her face illuminated, sometimes bright and joyous. She would speak with that musical voice, making short comments upon what she saw. Then as she saw darkness in the world, there were sad expressions as she spoke of what she saw.

This continued ten or fifteen minutes. Then she caught her breath, and breathed several times deeply, and then, after a little season of rest, probably five or ten minutes, during which time Father spoke to the people, she arose, and related to the congregation some of the things that had been presented to her.—DF 105b, “The Visions of Ellen White.”

Of this vision she wrote:

At the conference at Roosevelt, New York, August 3, 1861 ... I was taken off in vision and shown the sin of slavery, which has so long been a curse to this nation.... The North and the South were presented before me.—  
[Testimonies for the Church, 1:264-266.](#)

She seemed to be taken to the very scenes of the war and witnessed the disastrous and disheartening battle of Manassas.

The war fever was to worsen until it became a serious, disruptive element distracting the work of the church in the years 1862 to the early part of 1865.

Of other features of the vision at Roosevelt, Ellen White later wrote “Different churches and families were presented before me.”—[Ibid., 1:326](#). The broad diversification of subject matter and the grave import of what was shown to her is revealed by such article titles in volume 1 of the *Testimonies* between pages 264 and 302 as “Perilous Times,” “Organization,” and “Duty to the Poor.”

The eastern tour, of which the weekend at Roosevelt was a part, terminated September 17 ([The Review and Herald, September 24, 1861](#)). This was followed by the conference held in Battle Creek in early October.

### **The New Publishing House**

During the autumn months of 1861, the new publishing house in Battle Creek had been constructed. It was a two-story brick building in the form of a Greek cross, providing ample space for the publishing operation. Along with an engraving of the new structure made by Uriah Smith, the *Review* of December 3 published a little write-up. In this it was noted:

The building is a good one. The material was good, and the builders have shown themselves masters of their business.... The cost of the building, including hoisting apparatus, cistern and eave troughs, new machinery and fixtures to run the engine and press, and a comfortable fitting out of tables, shelves, drawers, chairs, stoves, et

cetera, will cost not far from \$5,000.—[Ibid.](#), December 3, 1861 (see also [Ibid.](#), July 16, 1861).

This new structure, it was felt, would provide abundant room for present business and could well take care of foreseeable increases. [473]

For a time the War Between the States had seemed far away. To those in Battle Creek little was taking place, and James and Ellen White were involved in various interests. The third angel's message had not reached into the South, and the church was thus relieved of some concerns. Organization was taking hold rather slowly, but some churches were moving into line. Linked closely with the opposition to organization was a declining regard for the Spirit of Prophecy as manifested in the work of Ellen White. Beginning with the February 4, 1862, issue of the *Review and Herald*, James White set forth his views in four editorials entitled "Perpetuity of Spiritual Gifts." The next issue carried on the back page James White's appeal for the members to arise and assist B. F. Snook in securing a home for his family in Marion, Iowa. A property valued at \$1,300 was available for \$500. Snook described it:

"The house is large and roomy, very convenient, with a good well, cellar, et cetera. It has two beautiful lots. Is fronted with large locust trees, and surrounded by about thirteen nice bearing apple trees. It has a good fence."—[Ibid.](#), February 11, 1862

White commended the Snook family and took the lead in assisting them:

We will give \$25 toward getting Brother Snook a home, provided the brethren in Iowa and elsewhere, those who wish to join them, will promptly raise the \$475 to make up the required \$500.—[Ibid.](#)

He described Brother and Sister Snook as loved by those who knew them. He stated: "We can recommend them *both* in the highest terms to any church that can appreciate faithfulness, intelligence, devotion, and that which is lovely." James White was able to make this offer of \$25 from modest profits coming to him from the sale

of Bibles, concordances, commentaries, et cetera, and some income from his own literary productions.

The *Review* of April 8 carried the word that the \$500 needed for the Snook home had been raised.

[474]

### The Five-Week Western Tour

In the interest of facilitating organization, and in another attempt to hold things steady in Mauston, Wisconsin, where fanaticism had done its blighting work, on February 19 James and Ellen White were off for a five-week tour in States to the west. In his first report White set forth his feelings and position:

We are enjoying usual health, and most perfect freedom of spirit. We design to go forward by faith and do our duty fully, and instead of mourning over others' errors, seek for freedom, and let others feel the weight of their own wrongs. God has given us a testimony, and He will give us freedom and strength to bear it.—[Ibid.](#), [March 4, 1862](#)

During the spring months following this trip west, the Whites were at home. Ellen White did considerable writing. Several articles were published in the *Review and Herald*, and another sixty-four-page testimony pamphlet was advertised for 10 cents on the back page of the *Review* of May 20:

*Testimony for the Church* No. 8—This pamphlet of sixty-four pages is now ready. Subjects—How to Confess Christ—Patent Rights—Duty of Husband and Wife—An Unfaithful Watchman—Mauston Fanaticism—Northern Wisconsin—Bogus Holiness—Bible Holiness—The Power of Satan—The Two Crowns—The Future.

These important articles may be read in [Testimonies for the Church, 1:303 to 354](#).

### The War and the Threatening Draft of Recruits

For several months the *Review* had been silent on the Civil War, but the issue of June 10 reprinted an item from the New Bedford,

Massachusetts, *Republican Standard*, which drove home to Adventists that they were in troublous times. It opened:

A few weeks ago it was proclaimed with a great flourish of trumpets that the armies of the nation were full, and orders were given to stop recruiting and the enlistment of volunteers. Now it is announced that a call is made for a hundred thousand additional men, to be used “as a reserve.” A sudden change seems to have come over the administration, and they appear to be convinced that the struggle in which we are engaged is not to be terminated in any thirty or sixty days, as some of the leading men at the capital have been fond of asserting.

[475]

Why is it that a call is to be made for one hundred thousand additional men, from the loyal population of America? Why is this large number to be added to the half million, more or less, who have already been called from the field and the workshop, from the hills of New England, the valleys of New York, and the prairies of the West?

It is because the large army now in the field has been terribly diminished in numbers by the bullets of the rebels on the battle field, the exposures and hardships of the march, or the still more fatal diseases of the camp.—  
[The Review and Herald, June 10, 1862.](#)

Now there loomed before Adventists the almost certain threat of a draft of able-bodied men, something the Sabbathkeeping Adventists had dreaded and hoped would not occur. As the summer wore on, excitement ran high in the Northern communities, and Seventh-day Adventists asked themselves what they would do in the face of such a situation. From their ranks none, or almost none, had enlisted. They had maintained a low profile, but now they were being watched. Writing of this in early 1863, Ellen White explained:

The attention of many was turned to Sabbathkeepers because they manifested no greater interest in the war

and did not volunteer. In some places they were looked upon as sympathizing with the Rebellion. The time had come for our true sentiments in relation to slavery and the Rebellion to be made known. There was need of moving with wisdom to turn away the suspicions excited against Sabbathkeepers.—[Testimonies for the Church, 1:356](#).

The story of the involvement of the church in the four years of hostilities will be told in volume 2 of this biography, [Ellen G. White, The Progressive Years](#).

## Chapter 32—(1862) The Year 1862 Closes on an Upbeat

[476]

At the weekend conference held in Battle Creek in connection with the annual meeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association in October, 1861, those who attended hammered out the basis on which local churches could be organized. They proceeded to organize the Battle Creek church and then the Michigan State Conference. Then the following action was taken:

*Resolved*, That the first session of the Michigan State Conference of Seventh-day Adventists be held at Monterey, Michigan, October 5-8, 1862.—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1861](#).

### First Annual Session of the Michigan State Conference

An early call for this conference session was published in late August, “that all the churches may have ample time for the election and instruction of their delegates” ([The Review and Herald, August 26, 1862](#)). As the time neared, a cordial invitation was extended not only to church members in Michigan but to ministers and believers from other States as well. In anticipation of the conference to be held in Monterey, completion was hastened of the “commodious house of worship.” It was forty by sixty feet ([Ibid., September 16, 1862](#)). Those attending the conference were urged to come “expecting to stay till Tuesday morning, as the business of the [publishing] association and conference will probably hold till Monday night” ([Ibid.](#)). There was some misgiving that this conference, being held somewhat away from the center of the State, might be poorly attended. But the fears did not materialize. Uriah Smith, in reporting the gathering, stated:

[477]

Brethren were present from all sections of the State, to the number, as it was estimated, of not far from five

hundred, besides a few from New York, Ohio, Indiana, and Wisconsin.—*Ibid.*, October 14, 1862.

James White preached Sabbath morning and John Loughborough in the afternoon. Preaching time on Sunday was shared by Moses Hull and James White. Sunday morning some of the residents from the community crowded in. Before the meeting was adjourned at noon the center supports for the floor, thought to be fully adequate, gave way and the floor settled eight inches in the center. The floor was repaired during the noon hour, and meetings continued through Sunday and Monday. Uriah Smith reported:

There were two social meetings, which were seasons of interest and encouragement. Sister White also spoke several times with usual freedom and power, to the acceptance of all lovers of the pure and straight testimony. Her words cannot fail to have effect upon the hearts and lives of those who heard.—*Ibid.*

Publishing association business was completed on Monday, October 5.

### **The Business Sessions of the Conference**

Ministers present belonging to the Michigan Conference were James White, J. H. Waggoner, J. B. Frisbie, John Byington, J. N. Loughborough, Moses Hull, M. E. Cornell, R. J. Lawrence, and Joseph Bates. Bates now resided in retirement in Monterey, only two blocks from the meetinghouse. He was asked to serve as chairman of the conference.

There was much to be accomplished in the business meetings; first, the examination of the standing of the churches, their memberships, and their wishes in relation to being taken into the conference. This accomplished, study was given to ministerial credentials and the assignment of ministers to fields of labor.

[478] Now that there was an official Seventh-day Adventist Church body, with longstanding, acknowledged leaders to guide in the work of the church, particularly in Michigan, attention could be given to more general resolutions. One read:

*Whereas*, We believe that the Lord has called Brother and Sister White to labor among the churches, and,

*Whereas*, The state of the cause in the several States demands their labor, therefore,

*Resolved*, That this conference recommend Brother and Sister White to labor in different States, and assist in organizing conferences and churches, as the way may open before them.—*Ibid.*

### Matters for Conference Consideration

The minutes of this conference session set forth some interesting items of business that Elder Sanborn brought from Illinois and Wisconsin, calling for the opinion of the conference:

1. How shall we treat divorced marriages?
2. Shall preachers from other denominations embracing the message preach and baptize among us, on the strength of their former ordination and standing as ministers?
3. Shall young preachers, before being ordained, be allowed to baptize?
4. Shall T. M. Steward have a letter of commendation as a preacher among us?—*Ibid.*

Steward was the minister deeply involved in the fanaticism that broke out in Mauston, Wisconsin.

After satisfying themselves to the full intent of the first question—and ascertaining that what was involved was the accepting into church membership those couples comprised of individuals who had been divorced on grounds other than the violation of the seventh commandment, actions were taken as follows:

1. *Resolved*, That the matter of divorced marriages be referred to the conference committee. [Diligent search fails to disclose any report on this perplexing item.]

[479]

2. *Resolved*, That ministers of other denominations, embracing present truth, should give proof of being called to preach the message, and be ordained among us, before administering the ordinances.

3. *Resolved*, That no person, young or old, should administer the ordinances before being ordained.

4. In reference to Brother Steward's case, it was suggested ...that... further time be allowed... The conference saw fit to take no action in the matter.—*Ibid.*

The feeling prevailed that Steward's position was somewhat akin to that of a young minister, allowing him time to give proof of his ministry before endorsing him again for that sacred work. It was felt best, however, to leave the matter without record.

The closing actions of the conference called for the next State conference meeting to be held in Battle Creek, October 2 to 5, 1863, and that the State conferences be invited to meet with them by delegates "in general conference, at our next annual conference."

The subject of a general conference that would bind State conferences together surfaced again from time to time. This would be the crowning step in organization.

Uriah Smith, as he reported the conference, pointed out that "our pilgrimage heavenward lies through a pathway that is rough and thorny," but that the conference at Monterey would be looked back upon as an oasis in the desert. It was clear that organization of churches and conferences was paying off. He observed, "The meetings were harmonious, and the brethren unanimous in their conclusions."—*Ibid.*

### Organization of the General Conference

The matter of a meeting referred to as a true "General Conference" could not be put off for a year. By April, 1863, James White was calling for such a meeting to commence Wednesday, May 20, 1863, at 6:00 P.M. "to secure the united and systematic action of the friends of the cause in every part of the wide field" (*Ibid.*, April 28, 1863). At the appointed time, twenty delegates assembled in Battle

Creek. They examined and accepted credentials and undertook the work before them. The minutes read:

For the purpose of securing unity and efficiency in labor, the promoting of the general interests of the cause of present truth, and of perfecting the organization of the Seventh-day Adventists, we the delegates from the several State conferences hereby proceed to organize a General Conference, and adopt the following constitution for the government thereof.—*Ibid.*, May 26, 1863.

[480]

There were nine articles in the constitution, specifying the name *General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*. Three officers were called for—president, secretary, and treasurer—and an executive committee of three, of which the president was to be one. Article Five was perhaps the most important, for it made provision for the uniform distribution of labor and the uniform handling of funds.

An election of officers and an executive committee was the next business. The minutes report an interesting turn:

The committee on nominations reported as follows: For President, James White. Secretary, Uriah Smith. Treasurer, E. S. Walker. Executive Committee, James White, John Byington, J. N. Loughborough....

On motion the conference proceeded to vote on the nominations presented. Brother White was unanimously chosen president, but declined to serve. After a considerable time spent in discussion, the brethren urging reasons why he should accept the position, and he why he should not, his resignation was finally accepted, and Elder John Byington elected as president in his stead.

The nominations for secretary and treasurer were then ratified. J. N. Andrews and G. W. Amadon were chosen as the remaining members of the executive committee.—*Ibid.*

Uriah Smith, reporting the conference, declared:

[481]

Perhaps no previous meeting that we have ever enjoyed was characterized by such unity of feeling and harmony of sentiment. In all the important steps taken at this conference, in the organization of a General Conference, and the further perfecting of State conferences, defining the authority of each, and the important duties belonging to their various officers, there was not a dissenting voice, and we may reasonably doubt if there was even a dissenting thought. Such union, on such points, affords the strongest grounds of hope for the immediate advancement of the cause, and its future glorious prosperity and triumph.—*Ibid.*, p. 204.

Organization in its fullness was at last attained: All could praise God and rejoice.

### **The Last Few Weeks of 1862**

But back to the closing weeks of 1862. It was clear that there was a general understanding that James and Ellen White were much needed in the field, to keep in close touch with and build up the churches. Plans for November called for them to attend quarterly meetings in Monterey, November 8 and 9; Wright, November 15 and 16; and Greenville, November 22 and 23. Before the itinerary was over it had stretched to four weeks to include the church at Orleans, November 29 and 30. With the matter of organization largely settled, attention could be focused on spiritual revival. Ellen White's diary for November gives many details of the work done. She and her husband left Battle Creek Friday morning, November 7, for the fifty-mile drive by carriage to Monterey. They arrived very weary. Sabbath morning they began their work, and the Spirit of God led them into a somewhat new and promising line in evangelism, that of special work for the children and youth.

### **A Burden for the Youth of the Church**

The diary record reads:

In Monterey we held meetings for the benefit of the young. We felt that there had not been that interest manifested for or labor bestowed on the youth that there should have been. Ministering brethren, as they have labored in different places, have seen so much to do to get out important points of truth before the people that they have neglected the young and have failed to reap that harvest which they might.—[Manuscript 9, 1862](#).

As she and James seemed called upon to press forward with this special and promising work, she described what took place:

The meetings held in Monterey for the benefit of the children were, I think, the best and most profitable to the church of any which we attended. As we entreated the young to come to Christ there was not a child present whose heart was not affected. There was nothing like indifference, but all began to seek the Lord and to inquire, “What shall I do to be saved?”

[482]

All those who wanted to be Christians and desired the prayers of God’s people were invited to occupy the front seats, which by request had been vacated. Here was a cross for the young. We knew if they could take this first step they would gain strength to take the next, for by so doing they testified to all present that they chose to leave sin and the service of Satan and become Christ’s followers.

One after another came forward until nearly the whole Sabbath school who were old enough to know what sin was had filled the vacant seats. Oh, how anxious we felt for those dear, weeping children that they might turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart and be accepted of Him! We felt like taking these dear children in the arms of our faith and laying them at the feet of Jesus. We felt assured that He would say, Son, or Daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee. And we knew that the Lord was working for us to bring these dear children into His fold.—[Ibid.](#)

This was Sabbath. Tuesday ten young ladies were baptized. Ellen White, writing of it, said that they saw no light in keeping these children six months or a year before being baptized, to see if they were true to their profession. In fact, not even one week. "It was their privilege," she wrote, "to be baptized after they repented and believed."—*Ibid.*

She mentioned one case in particular:

One dear child we deeply sympathized with. Through a constitutional difficulty she had never been able even to witness one baptized. But while she with her young companions sought the Lord, she decided that she must be baptized. She came with her young companions to the water, but her difficulty returned. She could not look upon the water or see any of her young friends baptized.

[483]

All had been baptized but her, and she could not be prevailed upon to go into the water. We felt that Satan was opposed to the good work begun with her, and wished to hinder it, and that she must go forward. Her parents, with us, felt that if she left the water unbaptized she would never have strength to follow the example of her Saviour. We all were anxious that she might obtain a victory there.

I put the robe upon her and urged her to go into the water. She hesitated. We looked up in faith to God. My husband on one side and I upon the other and her father entreating her, we tried to encourage her along, yet her peculiar dread of water caused her to shrink.

We persuaded her to move to the edge of the water and have her hands and head wet. She complied. There was a united looking up to God that Satan might not prevail. Her head and hands were wet, and then she moved forward while the administrator several times repeated these words, "In the name of the Lord, move forward." Calmly she went into the water and was buried in the likeness of Christ's death. Calmly she came up

out of the water, having followed the divine command, and we all felt rejoiced that we did not consent to let the child go.—[Ibid.](#)

The meetings continued the next day, and five young men gave their hearts to the Lord and were baptized. Then James and Ellen White pushed on to Wright, where the church was now well organized. They traveled over rough and muddy roads, with two or three miles of rough logways. For this part of the journey Ellen White walked.

### Victories at Wright and Orleans

Our meetings in Wright were blessed of God. We labored especially for the young and were encouraged as we saw that our labor was not in vain. Nine Sabbath-keeping children manifested their desire for salvation, and each had strength to take the cross. With broken hearts they bore their testimony.—[Ibid.](#)

Wednesday afternoon eleven were baptized, nine of them young people. Then the traveling workers pressed on to Greenville for the meetings of the next weekend. Ellen White wrote:

We traveled Thursday afternoon over crossroads, mud, sloughs, and logways. Again I went on foot a portion of the way because the roads were so bad. We traveled all day Friday to get to Greenville. Arrived there before sundown.—[Ibid.](#)

[484]

At Greenville efforts to get the church fully organized took the couple's time and strength. There was opportunity for only one meeting for the youth. There was a good response, and seven were baptized. Though they had filled the appointments made for them in this part of Michigan, they felt they could not return to Battle Creek without meeting with the church at Orleans, so they extended their itinerary one more week. After a profitable Sabbath and Sunday there, they started back to Battle Creek, holding some evening meetings en route. As James White reported the month-long carriage trip he commented:

We look back upon this tour with great pleasure, and hope the time is not far distant when discordant notes among us will cease, and order and sweet harmony will prevail, and the Lord will work among our people everywhere.—[The Review and Herald, December 9, 1862.](#)

### **Triumphant Year-End Meetings at Battle Creek**

With this taste of youth evangelism, it was not difficult for James and Ellen White to plan for year-end meetings in Battle Creek, with special efforts for the children and youth. They recognized that if success were to attend this type of ministry, more than meetings on Sabbath and Sunday were called for; plans were laid for what White termed “protracted meetings.” The first was to commence on Tuesday evening, December 23, and carry over the Sabbath, December 27, and then a second series to begin the next Wednesday and continue to Sabbath, January 3. In advertising the meetings in the *Review*, James White declared that “the brethren will be happy to see a general attendance of the brethren from surrounding towns.” He urged, “Come with your children, prepared to labor for the revival of the church, and the conversion of the youth and children.”—[Ibid., December 23, 1862.](#) A week later he reported that the results of the first few days of meetings were excellent and urged good attendance at the next series that would open Wednesday night and terminate with a baptism Sabbath afternoon.

[485] In the midst of the second series Loughborough and Byington came back to Battle Creek from a tour among the churches to the north. They reported a revival among the youth and children in the meetings they had been holding. God’s Spirit was at work. James White’s triumphant report of this work with the young people of the church at the close of the old year and the commencement of 1863 reads:

Several brethren came in from other places to enjoy this meeting with us, and the evening commencing the Sabbath we had a full and deeply interesting meeting. Many of the young spoke, among them the eldest son

of Elder J. H. Waggoner, whose confession and stated resolutions to be a Christian caused tears of joy to flow.

On the Sabbath [January 3] our place of worship was full. We baptized fifteen, among them our two oldest sons. In the afternoon we had a communion season, in which not far from two hundred participated. We think the Battle Creek church never enjoyed a better Sabbath.—[Ibid., January 6, 1863](#)

### **The Church Prepared for Development and Expansion**

With confidence renewed in the Spirit of Prophecy and growing in experience, the Seventh-day Adventist Church with its 3,500 members was on the verge of increasing lines of development. These would include an understanding of the relation of health to religious experience, and lead to the establishment of health and educational institutions. They would also include an understanding that the whole world was before them, to win for Christ and His kingdom those who would lend an ear. What a challenge!

**Appendix A**

[486]

[487]

[488]

**[A Geneological Chart of Ellen Gould Harmon White]**

## Appendix B

### The Experience of William Ellis Foy

In the height of the advent awakening William Foy, a light-skinned mulatto residing in New England, was given two or three visions relating to the Second Advent of Christ. Sometime before the disappointment of October 22, 1844, Ellen Harmon heard him speak in Beethoven Hall in Portland, Maine. Sometime after the 1844 disappointment, unbeknown to Ellen Harmon at first, he was present in a meeting held in the countryside east of Portland, toward Cape Elizabeth, at which she spoke, telling of her first vision. While she was speaking, Foy stood to his feet and praised the Lord, declaring that it was just what he had seen. After the meeting he wanted to talk with her, and they had a little visit.

In 1835, Foy as a young man, gave his heart to Christ and became a member of the Freewill Baptist Church. Seven years later, in 1842, while he was preparing to take holy orders as an episcopal minister, two visions were given him. Although deeply religious, he was by his own testimony, "opposed to the doctrine of Jesus' near approach."

The visions relating to the near advent of Christ and to last-day events created in him a very definite interest in the advent movement, and he joined others in heralding the message of the expectation of Christ's soon return.

The two initial visions of William Foy, together with a brief sketch of his Christian experience, were published in 1845 in a pamphlet in Portland, Maine. The first vision was given to him on January 18, 1842, while he was attending service in a Boston Church on Southark Street. Eyewitnesses to the experience testify that he was in vision two and a half hours. A physician who examined him testified that he could find no appearance of life "except around the heart." In his autobiographical account Foy declares, "my breath left me."

[489]

In the first revelation foy viewed the glorious reward of the faithful and the punishment of sinners. He felt the duty to declare what he had seen to others, but not being instructed to relate the vision, he disclosed it to no one. But he had no peace of mind. In a second revelation given to him, on February 4, 1842, he viewed multitudes of earth, those who had not died and those who had been raised from the dead, being assembled to receive their reward. In connection with this revelation he was instructed, "thou must reveal those things which thou hast seen, and also warn thy fellow creatures to flee from the wrath to come."

Foy's unwillingness to relate to others what had been shown to him stemmed from both the prejudice against any who claimed to have divine revelations and the prejudice against those of his color. He questioned in his mind, "why should these things be given to me to bear to the world?"

A few days later the pastor of the bloomfield street church in boston called upon foy to relate the visions in his house of worship. Reluctantly he consented, and the next evening he found a large congregation assembled awaiting his message. As he began to speak, his fear left him, and he related with great freedom the things that were shown to him, to a congregation that gave rapt attention.

With this as a beginning he traveled for three months, delivering his messages to crowded houses of all denominations. He had a good command of language. As he described the heavenly world, the New Jerusalem, and the compassionate love of Christ, and exhorted the unconverted to seek God, many responded to his entreaties. As his family needed support, after three months in the field, foy retired from public work to labor with his hands. He engaged in such work for three months, and then, feeling impelled to stand before the people, he again took up his public ministry, expecting soon to see his saviour when he should come. When speaking, he wore the clerical robes of the episcopal clergy.

[490] According to J. N. Loughborough, near the time of the expectation in 1844 foy was given a third vision in which were Presented three platforms that he could not understand in the light of his belief in the imminent coming of Christ. According to loughborough, in perplexity foy ceased public work. It is known that in the 1850S and through mid-life he filled positions as a freewill baptist minister

in Massachusetts and Maine, and then turned to farming in Sullivan county in Maine. While but little is known of his later experience, his tombstone bears the record that he died in 1893.

There is no occasion to question the genuineness of William Foy's experience. Loughborough felt that the visions bore clear evidences of being the genuine manifestations of the spirit of God. More significant, perhaps, is the fact that Ellen White, who as noted above had some acquaintance with him, in an interview in 1912 treated his experience as genuine.—Author.

### Sources

Df 231. "The Christian experience of William E. Foy, together with the two visions he received in the months of January and February, 1842." Portland: J. and C. H. Pearson, 1845. Ellen G. White [Manuscript 131, 1906](#). Loughborough, J. N. *The Great Second Advent Movement*. Washington, D.C.: [The Review and Herald, 1909, 145-147](#).

## Appendix C

### Stephen Smith and the Unopened Testimony

[491] About a year after he was disfellowshipped, Stephen Smith came to see his errors, confessed, and was restored to fellowship in the church (*Ibid.*, November 25, 1852). This continued for a few months, and then he again became involved in erroneous views and was again disfellowshipped. In 1857 He found his way back again, but only for a short time (*Ibid.*, February 19, 1857; *Ibid.*, March 19, 1857).

At some point in the 1850S, after one of his lapses, Ellen White wrote him a testimony in which she depicted what his life would be if he persisted in the course he was following. When he received the letter he feared that it was a testimony of reproof, so he took it home from the post office and tucked it deep in a trunk, still unopened and unread.

For nearly thirty years Stephen Smith was out of the church, opposing his former brethren, mean and cutting in his criticism. Mrs. Smith remained faithful, and the *Review and Herald* Came weekly to their home. Then one day Smith picked it up and read an article from Ellen White. He continued to read her weekly articles and found they spoke to his heart, and he began to soften.

In 1885 E. W. Farnsworth, son of William Farnsworth, of Washington, New Hampshire, was holding revival meetings in the little Washington Church. Smith had known him as a boy, and he walked twelve miles to attend the sabbath meeting. He heard farnsworth preach on the rise and development of the remnant church. The sermon over, Smith Rose to his feet and asked for the privilege of speaking. The audience, who knew him well, expected a perfect blast of criticism and meanness.

“I don’t want you to be afraid of me, brethren,” he said. “I have not come to criticize you. I have quit that kind of business.” Then he reviewed the past, his hatred of church organization, his joining one opposition party after another, which he had seen go down and their

sympathizers come to confusion. “Facts,” said he, “are stubborn things, but the facts are that those who have opposed this work have come to naught, while those who have been in sympathy with it have prospered, have grown better, more devoted and godlike. Those who have opposed it have learned only to fight and debate. They have lost all their religion.

“No honest man can help seeing that God is with them and against us. I want to be in fellowship with this people in heart and in the church.” Smith intended to stay over in Washington for the meeting on the next Sabbath, but on Wednesday he thought of the letter from Ellen White in his trunk at home. Feeling he could not wait to read it, he started out early Thursday morning and trudged the twelve miles home and soon had the unopened envelope in his hands. He tore it open and read its contents. [492]

Back again in Washington on Sabbath he heard farnsworth preach on the spirit of prophecy in the remnant church. When the sermon was over he was on his feet again. Here is what he said:

“I received a testimony myself twenty-eight years ago. I took it home and locked it up in my trunk, and I never read it till last Thursday.” He said he did not believe this testimony, although he did not know a word there was in it. He was afraid to read it, fearing it would make him mad. But, said he, “I was mad all the time, nearly.” Finally, he said:

Brethren, every word of the testimony for me is true, and I accept it. And I have come to that place where I finally believe they [the testimonies] all are of God, and if I had heeded the one God sent to me as well as the rest, it would have changed the whole course of my life, and I should have been a very different man.

Any man that is honest must say that they lead a man toward God and the Bible always. If he is honest, he will say that; if he won't say that, he is not honest.

If I had heeded them, they would have saved me a world of trouble. The testimonies said there was to be no more “definite time” preached after the '44 movement, but I thought that I knew as much as an old Woman's visions, as I used to term it. May God forgive me! But

to my sorrow, I found the visions were right, and the man who thought he knew it all was all wrong, for I preached the time in 1854, and spent all I had when if I had heeded them, I should have saved myself all that and much more. The testimonies are right and I am wrong.

After talking for some time, he concluded, “Brethren, I am too old to undo what I have done. I am too feeble to get out to our large meetings, but I want you to tell our people everywhere that another rebel has surrendered.”—From a letter written by E. W. Farnsworth to EGW, July 15, 1885.

A real change took place in Stephen Smith’s life and experience, and he was remembered in his later years as a kind, sweet, wholehearted Seventh-day Adventist.