

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

A CRITIQUE OF  
THE BOOK  
PROPHETESS OF  
HEALTH

THE STAFF OF THE ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE



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# **A Critique of the Book Prophets of Health**

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**Ellen G. White**

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### **About the Author**

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

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Prepared By The Staff Of The Ellen G. White Estate

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Further Testimony We have thought proper to add to the foregoing the following testimonies from men of high standing and authority in the medical world, corroborative of the views presented in the preceding pages. And in justice to the writer of these pages, we would say that she had read nothing from the authors here quoted, and had read no other works on this subject, previous to putting into our hands what she has written. She is not, therefore, a copyist, although she has stated important truths to which men, who are entitled to our highest confidence, have born testimony. . . . .	cclxxix
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## **Key to Abbreviations**

## Chronology of Events

- **February 17, 1863:** James C. Jackson's article on diphtheria appears in Review. James White in a note expresses confidence in his method of treating diseases.
- **February-May, 1863:** Several brief articles pertaining to health published in Review.
- **June 6, 1863:** "It was June 6, 1863, that the great subject of Health Reform was opened before me in vision." E. G. White, [The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#).
- **Mid or late June, 1863:** James White sends for "assortment" of works from Dansville, not knowing, at the time, the name of any publications offered there.
- **August 13, 1863:** Jackson writes James White apologizing for delay in sending books.
- **September 5, 6, 1863:** Mrs. White sees ad in Voice of Prophets while in Boston. This, she says, is the first she knew of the existence of the works offered for sale at Dansville.
- **October 27, 1863:** While Whites are away in the East, Review carries its first article from Laws of Life.
- **December 8, 1863:** Henry Nichols White, son of James and Ellen White, dies of pneumonia, during their visit at Topsham, Maine.
- **December 12, 1863:** By this time James White has received the books ordered from Dansville. He has no time to peruse them, and Ellen White says they remain in their wrappers. However, James White did mail one book to a friend in New York.
- **Between June, 1863, and August, 1864:** Mrs. White speaks to friends against drugs, flesh meats, and in favor of water, pure air, and proper diet. She is often asked if she has read the paper, Laws of Life, or read the works (books) of Trall, Jackson, and others: "My reply was

that I had not, neither should I read them till I had fully written out my views.” [The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#).

- **April, 1864:** *Appeal to Mothers* published.
- **August, 1864:** *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 4, published. Contains chapter on “Health.” This is the first comprehensive published report of the June 6, 1863, vision.
- **September 5, 1864:** Whites begin three-week visit to Dansville.
- **January-June, 1865:** *Health: or How to Live* published in six installments. Each installment contains one article by Ellen White expanding on certain areas presented in the 1864 chapter and introducing materials on marriage, and dress. Each number also contained articles on similar subjects by others. Ellen states: “I did not read any works [books] on health until I had written *Spiritual Gifts*, Vols. 3 and 4, *Appeal to Mothers*, and had sketched out most of my six articles in the six numbers of *How to Live*.... And after I had written my six articles for *How to Live*, I then searched the various works on hygiene and was surprised to find them so nearly in harmony with what the Lord had revealed to me.”—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#).
- **August 16, 1865:** James White suffers stroke.
- **September 14, 1865:** Second visit to Dansville begins.

## A Word to the Reader

[5]

On May 5, 1976, Harper and Row published a 271-page volume carrying the title *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*. The manuscript was authored by Dr. Ronald L. Numbers, then an Assistant Professor of the History of Medicine and the History of Science at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Because in our opinion the book does not present an accurate or complete picture of important features of the history reviewed, and because it seems clear to us that Ellen White emerges from the book in a distorted image, the White Estate is duty bound to make information available which will aid those who wish to arrive at a fair judgment based on all the available facts. The pages which follow are not primarily a defense of Ellen G. White. She needs no defense. Rather, those who read the book need a clear picture of the way in which the author of *Prophetess of Health* has used the sources cited.

A cursory glance at the 46 pages of footnotes at the end of the book quickly reveals that the average reader would find it impossible, either from the standpoint of the location of the sources or the time which would be called for, to examine critically many of the key documents referred to. Therefore he is unprepared to judge at first hand the author's use of his source materials and is left vulnerable to his interpretations.

A 23-page double column document Issued in June 1976 titled, *A Discussion and Review of "Prophetess of Health"* dealing with some of the main points presented in the book has been quite widely distributed, primarily to Adventist ministers and other worker personnel. Since the publication of the August 2, 1976, *Time* article "Prophet or Plagiarist," the document has been made available to all who have requested it. For those who desire to explore the matter in greater depth, this more detailed analysis with its extensive documentation is provided at the cost of duplicating and mailing.

The experience of members of the White Estate staff in examining the sources (and all except two or three are available to us)

leads us to wish that all readers of the book might have the same opportunity. At least they should be able to examine the phrases or sentences referred to, or quoted, in their setting. They should also be able to examine related or contrasting exhibits which have a bearing on the subject. This is the principal motivation in the preparation of this critique. All who wish should be able to judge for themselves.

Our plan at first was to provide this critique as a duplicated typewritten document. But so many have indicated a desire to examine the matter in depth—and the White Estate welcomes this—that production plans have been adjusted for it to appear in printed form.

In the Appendix items certain basic documents, not otherwise readily available, have been provided, some in facsimile form. Because, in the approach to this book, *Prophetess of Health*, much depends on a sound concept of inspiration and its practical operation, several pages of this critique are devoted to a review of the subject. Also included as Appendix F is the A. L. White discussion “Toward a Factual Concept of Inspiration” from the book *The Ellen G. White Writings*. The reader is urged to explore these. To facilitate preparation of the critique and to bring all sources quoted or referred to easily to the attention of the reader the source references are embodied in the text in abbreviated form. A key to these abbreviations appears on page 2.

In the interest of accuracy, the various allegations of which notice is taken in the critique have been set before the reader in the words of the author of *Prophetess of Health*. For this, his permission as well as the permission of the publishers, Harper and Row, have been secured.

We would call attention to the fact that many of the allegations introduced in *Prophetess of Health* are not new. Some of them were dealt with in the last century. Many others were treated carefully and more fully than is practical in this critique in F. D. Nichol’s book, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, currently available at Adventist Book Centers. The seeker for truth will not ignore this valuable source book.

For a well balanced presentation of Ellen G. White as a *Prophetess of Health*, the reader is directed to the 445 page *Story of Our Health Message* prepared by Elder O. E. Robinson, who for many



years was one of Mrs. White's secretaries. This volume was first issued in 1943. Since then certain enlargements have been made updating the story to 1965. The book is available as a Christian Home Library volume as well as in a newsprint paperback, the latter at a price of 75¢, and available at all Adventist Book Centers. This valuable historical work should form a part of the library of every Seventh-day Adventist.

The materials presented in this critique have been prepared with care, but under a certain amount of pressure. Several members of the White Estate staff have participated. An early draft was submitted to a large number of Adventist college and university professors and several church leaders. Many have offered helpful criticisms and suggestions which have been much appreciated. The author of *Prophetess of Health* was given a copy of the early draft and his suggestions and criticisms were solicited. He had not submitted any comments to date. [6]

The reader will find some variations in methods of approach and style of writing which are attributable to the fact that some areas can be treated with greater clarity by one method than another. The individual style of the White Estate staff member also becomes evident in certain instances.

Such variations do not in any way affect the observations presented. Since we have worked against a close deadline and since this is considered a transitory document, it has not been subject to the usual time consuming book editing and proofreading process accorded a regular denominational book.

The subject index at the close of this document gives ready access to the main topics treated in the body of the text of this critique. The appendix items are not indexed.

Seventh-day Adventists welcome an investigation of their history and of the life record of Ellen G. White, one of the founders of the church. They have nothing to be ashamed of or hide in the record of their development. It was for this reason that the author of *Prophetess of Health*, while a member of the faculty of Loma Linda University, was accorded access to materials in the White Estate vault. Every source to which he sought access was made available for his careful reading.

However, because of his oftentimes onesided and sometimes distorted use of this information this critique is needed. See pp. 31, 32 for a fuller statement on the involvement of denominational agencies in the preparation of his book.

The only concern of the Ellen G. White Estate is that the reader of *Prophetess of Health, a Study of Ellen G. White*, shall take the time and the pains to gain the complete picture which the full survey of all the points at issue develops.

To consider the various points set forth in *Prophetess of Health* will lead us to look at the Ellen G. White writings as bits and pieces. We earnestly urge when this review is finished, you, the reader, will pick up *Ministry of Healing*, or *Christ's Object Lessons*, or *Desire of Ages*, or any other of her books and read them through, chapter by chapter, or at least read a few chapters. Thus Gods messages, which she bears will come through with all their deep insights, their love, their gentleness, their consistency, and their soul-elevating beauty. Those who do so will see Ellen G. White as she truly was, the messenger of the Lord.

W.P. Bradley, President  
The Ellen G. White Estate  
Washington, D.C.  
August 26, 1976

## On Writing and Reading History

[7]

by Richard W. Schwarz  
Department of History, Andrews University

It is sometimes disturbing to the average reader to find that writers of history often differ widely in their portrayal of the same series of past events. Such readers may quickly assume that one or the other of the historians in conflict is ignorant, dishonest or both. In actuality, he may be neither.

The lay reader's misconceptions arise largely from a misunderstanding in two basic areas: 1) the nature of historical facts and 2) the methods used in putting these facts together. Sadly, too often we historians have been guilty of contributing to our reader's misunderstanding, instead of seeking to allay it. In part this is because, as with other professionals, historians largely tend to write for each other. Realizing that his peers have been exposed to roughly the same methodology as he has, the historian will trust his fellows to understand him—to know when he is generalizing, making value judgments or overstating a point in order to secure a desired effect. But, alas, most readers of an historical treatise, especially one done in a popular style, may not recognize these literary techniques, employed by an author to make as strong a case as possible for the viewpoint he is propounding.

Almost all history today is written from a particular viewpoint or thesis. Gone are the days of the nineteenth century historian who sought to write a simple narrative history according to Leopold von Ranke's famous injunction to "write history as it actually happened." The move toward "thesis" history was itself the result of several factors. First was a realization that, for all their pretensions to objectivity, the great narrative historians like Ranke and Parkman really could not escape arranging and interpreting the facts with which they worked according to their own preconceptions and value systems. Since this was the case, many modern historians argue

that it is better to let the reader know at the start the assumptions and point of view from which they write. Second, many historians believe that by writing their account to bolster a particular thesis, they are stimulating discussion, further investigation and the reflection necessary to more closely approach Ranke's goal of "seeing things as they have actually happened."

Historians work with many kinds of "facts." Some are easily verified because they were widely observed and carefully recorded. All historians would probably agree that Cincinnati defeated Boston in the 1975 World Series. There are many other easily verifiable facts in this particular instance—the scores of the series games, who pitched in each game, etc.

Soon, however, we come to things that are more debatable. How many errors were there in a particular game, for instance? The number of errors recorded by the official scorers can be easily ascertained. It is a *fact* that they scored x number of plays as errors in the third game, let us say. But were all of these *actually* errors? This may depend on many things—the observer's physical view of the play in question, his predilection for one team over another, his understanding of the rules of baseball, etc. The sports historian, faced with several conflicting accounts will probably accept the one that best fits his own understanding of baseball, the value of the various reporters as witnesses, etc.

The point I am trying to make is that many "facts" are facts only in the mind of the observer. To someone else, they may appear in an entirely different light. It is possible to assemble these "facts" in a number of different ways according to the pattern in the mind of the narrator. To illustrate, a child may use the same blocks to build a tower, a house or a wall. But the blocks which he puts together to form a house, may appear to be a prison stockade to someone else.

All this is by way of background to try and explain why Dr. Ronald Numbers and I, using essentially the same facts, can come up with very different viewpoints on the development of Ellen G. White as a health reformer. We both agree that she wrote extensively on the subject of healthful living, that her writings were the dominant cause of Seventh-day Adventists incorporating a gospel of health into their teachings, that she advocated simple natural remedies, and that her particular emphasis varied from time to time.

We disagree as to the source of her inspiration (secular or divine), the quality and truthfulness of some of the witnesses who provide “facts” to use in reconstructing certain events and the interpretations to be placed on many of these events. By stating this I do not mean for one to imply that Dr. Numbers is dishonest. He, in fact, states frankly in the preface of his book that he has “refrained from using divine inspiration as an historical explanation.” From this, I think, we may deduce that he feels that it is both possible and preferable to explain Ellen White’s views and visions on matters of health as the result of natural or human causes. [8]

While I would agree that it is possible to arrange a selection of the facts to arrive at this viewpoint, I would argue that a consideration of the entire life, work and writings of Mrs. White makes the supernatural explanation more satisfying to me. I will, then, consider that the way I see things more nearly approximates the “truth” or things “as they actually happened.” This I do, frankly admitting that, since historians use vastly different data than natural scientists, it cannot be proven with scientific precision that the supernatural forces of good and evil have operated as I think the evidence suggests.

It seems vital to me that readers of Dr. Numbers’ book constantly bear in mind the viewpoint from which he is writing—one of naturalistic explanation *alone*. Readers should also understand that in trying to prove the “noticeable” influence of men like Horace Mann, Dio Lewis and L. B. Coles on Ellen White’s ideas, Dr. Numbers is trying to do one of the most difficult things facing an historian. Long ago Louis Gottschalk pointed out that similar ideas held by different individuals “may be due to other factors than the direct shaping of the later man’s ideas by the earlier man’s.” Among other things Gottschalk suggests that both may have been influenced “by an independent third person” or that it “may be due to similar cultural and intellectual atmospheres.” Louis Gottschalk, *Understanding History* (1961), p. 241.

Gottschalk goes so far as to argue that to prove an influence “it is necessary to show that the similar ideas thus dressed up would not have been born in the mind of the later thinker or would have had a different form or emphasis if they had not been generated or modified directly or indirectly by the supposed source.” “Such

a demonstration,” he continues, “involves *speculation* upon how things might have happened if they had not in fact happened as they seem to have.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 241 -42) (Emphasis mine.)

Thus while it is permissible for Numbers to argue Ellen White’s debt to Mann, Lewis and Coles, it is just as permissible (and I think as intellectually respectable) to argue otherwise. In some instances during her lifetime it appears that Mrs. White gave information available to her from no known source; on other occasions that she supplied information at a particularly apropos or crucial time when she could hardly have known through human means how crucial the situation was. (There are numerous testimonials to such cases.) In such circumstances, it seems reasonable to me to conclude that her information was supernaturally received.

It is even possible to *speculate* that Lewis, Coles and Mann may have received supernatural enlightenment—not necessarily in visions, but through that elusive means called “insight.” Thus Coles and White might have had a common source for their beliefs—although receiving their inspiration in different ways. And even if we concede that Dr. Numbers has proven that Mrs. White “borrowed” organization, ideas, or language from Coles, have we proven that this could not have been Inspiration’s way of bringing this material to her?

There are a number of other points on which I differ with Dr. Numbers. I have little confidence in some of the “facts” he derives from certain witnesses. Although recognizing that H. E. Carver, D. M. Canright, Frank Belden, and M. G. and John Harvey Kellogg are hostile witnesses, Numbers places more faith in many of their assertions than I would. Strangely he appears to give little weight to the many favorable comments of Canright and the two Kelloggs made during the period before they became disenchanted and bitter toward Ellen White. The evaluation of Mrs. White’s visions that Numbers uses of M. G. Kellogg, for instance, comes from Kellogg’s old age—at a time when he was financially dependent upon J. H. Kellogg, who was then in a bitter dispute with Adventist leaders over the source of some of Mrs. White’s visions. I think it reasonable to suspect that M. G. Kellogg, perhaps approaching senility at this time, was more anxious to be sure of his brother’s favor (no sustentation in those days!) than in complete historical objectivity.

Incidentally, he, too, had had his toes stepped on by Ellen White in the past.

As another example, Numbers cites J. H. Kellogg as the source [9] for stating that by 1900 vegetarianism was more the exception than the rule among Adventists. This *may* be so. Yet Kellogg was hardly a disinterested observer. Anyone reading his correspondence, or talking to those who knew him, can readily realize that Kellogg had a virtual “phobia” on this point. Never known to understate things, but rather for his repeated tendency to exaggerate, it seems just as plausible to me that the good doctor was exaggerating in this instance. Other instances of what I consider to be “poor” witnesses by Dr. Numbers could be cited.

I hasten to add, however, that Dr. Numbers undoubtedly has reasons for believing the witnesses he cites—for him to do otherwise would be dishonest, and I feel that I know him too well to entertain for a moment the idea that he would cite a witness for dishonest purposes. It is just that on the basis of our different backgrounds, religious presuppositions, study, etc., we evaluate these men’s testimony differently. It is a *fact* that they said what they did, but not necessarily that what they said was true.

There are other areas in which I disagree with Dr. Numbers. To mention them all would weary the reader, but perhaps several other samples will be useful. I believe, on occasion, Numbers generalizes beyond what his facts warrant. One case in point is his statement that the Millerite movement caused some cases of insanity. This again *may* be true, but given the level of diagnosis, the type of records and the complexity of deciding what causes irrational behavior, I would prefer a more cautious and qualified statement. There are other instances of this. Was “poor health” really the “*one constant*” during Ellen White’s early difficult years? I suspect there were others. Can we on the evidence we have say with assurance that other early SDA leaders “undoubtedly” spoke to James and Ellen White of their “experiences in health reform.” Can we be *certain* that James Caleb Jackson was the inspiration for Ellen White’s moderate attitude toward the use of salt?

There are times, too, when Dr. Numbers exaggerates to make a point. We might class this as literary hyperbole—overstatement in an attempt to call attention to a condition generally true, but

ignoring minor contradictory data. For instance—Dr. Numbers in referring to the Millerite movement, specifically the Midnight Cry movement, states that by mid-August 1844, “all hopes” were fixed on October 22. It would be more accurate, but less forceful, to say *most* hopes. Numbers knows, of course, that key Millerite leaders like Himes and Miller, himself, did not accept the October 22 date until late September or early October, 1844. Yet the bulk of the rank and file had done so by late August. Clearly he has utilized literary hyperbole to make a point. Having done this, would it be too farfetched to ask him to accept Ellen White’s right to do the same in denying her health teachings were derived from others. I think not.

One final word—What will be the impact of Dr. Number’s portrayal of Ellen White as a health reformer? It would be presumptuous to prognosticate. Some will undoubtedly conclude that she was a “pious fraud.” Others will conclude that Dr. Numbers is maliciously dishonest. I believe neither. My own hope, and prayer, is that the reader of Dr. Numbers’ elaborately researched and skillfully written study will be led to consider at least several things more carefully: 1) What was the *entire* impact of Ellen White’s work? 2) What are my reasoned views for accepting or rejecting her supernatural inspiration? 3) Just what is the role of a prophet—are they somehow so controlled by God as to lose their human characteristics? 4) How does inspiration work? 5) Am I a victim of presuppositions that have not been carefully, thoughtfully and prayerfully arrived at? If the reader is led to the thoughtful consideration of such topics, Dr. Numbers will for that person have performed a service. I rather suspect that this was what he originally wanted to do.

Berrien Springs, Mich. April 20, 1976



## Putting Prophetess of Health in Perspective

[10]

The presuppositions and methodology used in writing *Prophetess of Health* deserve careful attention. The author has declared: “I have tried to be as objective as possible. Thus I have refrained from using divine inspiration as a historical explanation.”

Yet Ellen White claimed divine inspiration. She declared that her work and writings were impelled and inspired by divine agency. How then can it be objective to rule out the possibility of divine inspiration from the very outset? Does not such an approach mean that from the very start Ellen White’s claims are presumed to be false?

The author has, subsequent to writing the book, been quoted as saying: “Certainly, there is no reason to invoke a supernatural explanation when a natural explanation will suffice.... If Ellen White was inspired, she didn’t need to be inspired.”—*Wisconsin State Journal*, July 31, 1976.

In his book the author states that in refraining from the use of divine inspiration as a historical explanation he has parted company with those Adventist scholars who insist on the following presuppositions: (1) that the Holy Spirit has guided the Advent movement since the early 1840s, (2) “that Ellen Harmon White was chosen by God as his messenger and her work embodied that of a prophet,” (3) “that as a sincere, dedicated Christian and a prophet, Ellen White would not and did not falsify,” and (4) that the testimony of Mrs. White’s fellow-believers “may be accepted as true and correct to the best of the memory of the individuals who reported.” It seems to me that such statements, particularly the last two, are more properly conclusions than presuppositions.—xi. xii.

The most generous possible interpretation of these words would understand the author merely to be saying that these four points may or may not be true, but he does not choose to use them as *presuppositions*, rather they should be *conclusions* arrived at after the examination of the evidence. Yet this interpretation seems to be

in conflict with the author's earlier declaration that he has excluded divine inspiration as a historical explanation. If divine inspiration is excluded *a priori*, then one is left with nothing but a secularist-historicist interpretation of Ellen White's life and with the implicit denial of the validity or truthfulness of her claim to divine inspiration. But even if these statements are interpreted generously to mean that they refer only to presuppositions, all the evidence in the book would tend to indicate that the author would also reject them as conclusions.

If Ellen G. White is to be on trial, it should not be in a court of opinion where secularist rules prevail. To Ellen G. White, Christ and His church are everything, and she was a vital part of that church. And the church is not in every respect subject to the canons of human secular judgment. For the church in its innermost nature is a heavenly creation. Its members are the branches and the Lord is the vine. Its citizenship is in heaven. It is a spiritual planting and is of such a nature that it must be "spiritually discerned" (1 [Corinthians 2:14](#)). It is subject to the leading of the Spirit, and operates on the basis of faith, a factor which is not capable of being expressed in a secular formula.

The secular mind is not in accord with many of the supernatural aspects of biblical faith, such as creation by the word of God, miracles, prophecy, the virgin birth of Christ, His resurrection, and ascension to heaven. As Seventh-day Adventists we accept the whole Bible as inspired and authoritative. This revelation, together with our faith and our experience with God gives us a type of confirmation and evidence which the secular historian—as a historian—is bound by the methods of his craft to reject. This we cannot help. We merely insist that there is more to life, more to truth, more to history than can be explained for in a secular, mechanistic, framework.

White Estate Staff

[11]

## I. The Crux of the Issue

*Prophetess of Health* purports to be a study of Ellen G. White. Although some favorable words are spoken here and there in the book, an air of cynicism pervades the volume. She is depicted as deceptive, offering Seventh-day Adventists and the world health teachings of purely human origin which she claimed had their source

in revelations from God. The book implies that though she firmly declared God gave health teachings to her In vision, primarily the vision of June 6, 1863, she actually learned them from fellow Adventists or borrowed from well known popular health writers. Note the following:

*Ellen White*

It was at the house of Brother A. Hilliard, at Otsego, Mich., June 6, 1863, that the great subject of health reform was opened before me in vision.... As I introduced the subject of health to friends where I labored in Michigan, New England and New York, and spoke against drugs and flesh meats, and in favor of water, pure air, and a proper diet, the reply was often made, “You speak very nearly the opinions taught in the *Laws of Life* and other publications, by Drs. Trall, Jackson, and others. Have you read that paper and those works?”

My reply was that I had not, neither should I read them till I had fully written out my views, lest it should be said that I had received my light upon the subject of health from physicians and not from the Lord.—*The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867, 30:260.*

I was astonished at the things shown me in vision. Many things came directly across my own ideas....

I ... crowded into [*Spiritual Gifts,*] Volume IV the most essential points in the vision in regard to health, intending to get out another testimony in which I could more freely speak upon the happiness and miseries of married life. That which I have written of health reform, attributing in regard to health was not taken from books or papers.... After the vision was given me, my husband was aroused upon the health question. He obtained books, upon our eastern journey, but I would not read them. My view was clear, and I did not want to read anything until I had fully completed my books. My views were written independent of books or the opinions of others.—*Manuscript 7, 1867.*

*Prophetess of Health*

Even the Sabbatarians displayed more than passing interest in the health reform movement. Joseph Bates ... adopted Grahamism in 1843. John Loughborough took to eating Graham bread and reading the “Water Cure Journal” in 1848.

J. P. Kellogg ... raised his sizable brood by the “Water Cure Journal”. Roswell F. Cottrell began experimenting in the late 1840’s

with a vegetarian diet and a daily bath. All these were closely associated with the Whites and undoubtedly spoke to them of their experiences in health reform.... (p. 79). Thus by June, 1863, Seventh-day Adventists were already in possession of the main outlines of the health reform message. What they now needed was not additional information, but a sign from God indicating his pleasure. (pp. 80-81). (Emphasis supplied).

Divine approval of the health crusade came on the evening of June 5, 1863. (page 81). Ellen White's first published account of her June 5 vision, a short, thirty-two page sketch tucked into the fourth volume of *Spiritual Gifts*, did not appear until fifteen months after the event.... (page 82). In her essay "Health," which reads in places like L. B. Coles, she recited the established principles of health reform, attributing them to her recent vision. (page 83). (Emphasis supplied.)

The conflict between Ellen White's assertions and those of *Prophetess of Health* constitute the crux of the matter. *Prophetess of Health* would trace the origin of her health teachings to earthly sources. Ellen White credits the Lord as the source of her teachings. The truth of the matter—the manner in which inspiration worked in the life of Ellen White—can only be known by carefully weighing all the evidence.

### *She Did Not Live in a Vacuum*

We should recognize that Ellen White did not live in a vacuum. As a young woman she was well instructed by a very practical mother. As the mother of four boys she was not oblivious to certain matters that had a bearing on health. Such information she would naturally hold in the framework of opinions commonly expressed.

We should recognize what the documents clearly show, that as early as 1848 Ellen White had received light in regard to tobacco, tea and coffee, and that in response to her testimony James White was able to report in 1870 that the denomination could "rejoice in victory with very few exceptions, over these pernicious indulgences of appetite" ([The Review and Herald, November 8, 1870](#), 36:165).

In 1854 in a "testimony for the churches In New York State" basing the message on the vision of February 12 she wrote of the

importance of “cleanliness” and of “coarse food free from grease” in contrast to “rich,” “fine” foods. (Ms 3, 1854. Quoted in Arthur L. White, *Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 50. Hereinafter abbreviated *Messenger*.)

### *What Ellen White Doubtless Knew*

By 1863 she doubtless knew of, but was apparently unimpressed by, the dietetic practices of Joseph Bates and Roswell Cottrell. She may have known that Cottrell took a daily bath and the Kellogg and Andrews families at times employed some hydropathic methods of treatment, just as she knew in 1858 that a Brother and Sister A in New England were advocating the non-use of swine’s flesh.

It is probable that Mrs. White was aware of the five or six brief articles touching on health topics published in the *Review* prior to her vision. Indeed, we have some evidence that the Whites themselves observed certain elementary health practices prior to the 1863 vision.

[12]

Among the articles which appeared in the *Review and Herald* during this period was one brief note about dress by Dio Lewis in the *Review* of November 25, 1862. Lewis writes that the extremities of females should be well clothed in cold weather if they are to have good health.

The next article, on “Pure Air,” appeared in the February 10, 1863, *Review*. It explained the importance of proper ventilation in meeting houses. James White added some remarks, extending the application to the schoolhouse and home, and showing that even in winter fresh air is important. He then spoke of the practice in his own family, saying: “We usually sleep with two windows open at opposite sides of the room, summer and winter, and take a cold-water sponge-bath in the morning, hence a healthy atmosphere, not destroyed by heat, is more congenial to our feelings” ([The Review and Herald, February 10, 1863](#), 21:84). White added:

Had we allowed ourselves to be smothered in close sleeping-rooms, and given up to every pain and ache of the lungs, and throat, and head, and kept up a perpetual dosing with this and that medicine, we might now be silent in death.... Air, water, and light, are God’s great remedies. If the people would *learn* to use these, doctors and their drugs would be in less *demand*.—*Ibid*.

A separate article on the importance of ventilating bedrooms also appeared in the February 10 *Review*.

There is ample documentary evidence that James and Ellen White during a diphtheria epidemic in January, 1863, pulled two of their children through by employing the hydropathic procedures advocated in a letter by Dr. J. C. Jackson published in the *Yates County Chronicle* of Penn Van, New York. This James White published in the *Review* of Feb. 17, 1863.

The next *Review* article to touch on health appeared May 12, 1863, recommending that in the spring, people ought to leave off their heavy winter diet of meats and fats and turn to lighter foods in smaller quantities. Another article in the May 19 issue teaches the two-meal-a-day diet as superior, but says nothing about eating between meals.

Aside from the numerous articles on tobacco, tea, and coffee, this is a complete list of what appeared in the *Review* prior to Mrs. White's vision of June 6, 1863.

In summary it seems very likely that Mrs. White read these half dozen articles on health before her vision of June 6. James White testifies to their love of fresh air and sponge baths and designates air, water, and light, as "God's great remedies." He also speaks against drugs. But their awareness of the full significance of these things, and their practical knowledge of how to apply them in the treatment of illness remained quite vague.

*Prophetess of Health* holds that, based on such exhibits, by the time the "health vision of June 6, 1863" was given, "Seventh-day Adventists were *already in possession of the main outlines of the health message.*" It is asserted that it was not "additional information" the church needed, but a "sign from God indicating his pleasure" (page 81).

### *A Fine But Crucial Point*

This is a fine point, but a crucial one, and one which involves the integrity of Ellen G. White, James White and a number of others. It is true that there were glimmerings of knowledge of health principles among a few scattered Adventists prior to June 6, 1863, but that such

limited and scattered examples support the conclusions asserted in *Prophetess of Health* is certainly open to question.

How can the fact that a dozen or so scattered Adventist families were acquainted with certain incongruent health practices put the church as a whole “in possession of the main outlines of the health message” so that there was no need of “additional information?” Furthermore, there is evidence that it was the health vision of June 6, 1863, that marked the watershed of a systematized health program.

James White referring to the 1863 vision states that “When the Lord saw that we were able to bear it, light was given on food and dress” ([The Review and Herald, November 8, 1870](#), 36:165, quoted in [Counsels on Diet and Foods, 496](#), hereinafter abbreviated CDF).

And he wrote in 1870: “About seven years ago, the attention of our people was especially turned to the importance of thorough ventilation and to the proper relation of proper food and clothing to health. The question of flesh eating came up and was fully and candidly discussed” (E. G. White, *Christian Temperance*; James White, *Bible Hygiene*, p. 225, herein after abbreviated CTBH).

The fact that James and Ellen White felt that changes in crucial matters relating to health should await the definite light from God is illustrated in the experience of 1858. Ellen White wrote to a Brother and Sister A, “I saw that your views concerning swine’s flesh would prove no injury to you if you have them to yourselves.” And she pointed out that “If God requires His people to abstain from swine’s flesh, He will correct them on the matter” ([Testimonies for the Church 1:206-207](#). Herein after abbreviated 1T).

When this testimony was reprinted in 1871 James White appended the following note:

This remarkable testimony was written October 21, 1858, nearly five years before the great vision of 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!—[Testimonies for the Church 1:206](#).

True, the 1863 vision in its comprehensive treatment of the subject of health confirmed certain points of knowledge then held by some Adventists here and there, but it also opened up new vistas. And most important, it put the whole thing together in one harmonious body of teaching. It is in this connection that Ellen White

[13] declares that: “It was at ... Otsego, Michigan, June 6, 1863, that the great subject of Health Reform was opened before me in vision” ([The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#), 30:260). Why would she write this if, as asserted in *Prophetess of Health*, “Seventh-day Adventists were already in possession of the main outlines of the health message?”

In spite of the fact that there were some glimmerings of health knowledge among Adventists at the time, something of vital importance was opened to Ellen White on June 6, 1863. She began to write of it that day. She refers to it as “the great subject of health reform” ([The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#), 32:260). James White refers to it as “the great vision of 1863 in which the light was given on health reform” (James White’s footnote in [Testimonies for the Church 1:206](#)). In another reference to the 1863 vision, already cited, he states that “light was given on food and dress” (RH 36:165, Nov. 8, 1870).

Suppose that with what they had in hand up to the 1863 vision, God had said, “You know all about it, now put it into practice.” Was that all that was needed? Granted that Graham, Alcott, Trall, and Coles had lectured and written, presenting truth mixed with error and extremes, but where is the evidence that this produced a “systematic and harmonious body of hygienic truth?” (CTBH, p. iii. Preface by J. H. Kellogg see [General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 8, 1897](#), p. 1). Why is it that at the time that the teachings of Graham, Alcott, and others were generally ignored by the public a systematic and harmonious body of hygienic teaching was being increasingly accepted by Seventh-day Adventists? The “missing evidence”—evidence which could and should have appeared in *Prophetess of Health*—would have supplied the answer.

### *The Story the Witnesses Tell*

Mrs. J. N. Andrews’ diary for 1860 to 1864 shows that during those years the Andrews family did employ “a pack,” “wet cloths,” “a wet sheet,” “sitz bath,” or a “warm bath” in treating illness. Speaking of their family’s method of adopting health reform practices prior to March, 1864, J. N. Andrews wrote:



It was in March, 1864, that myself and wife decided to adopt the principles of health reform. I had seen some numbers of the *Laws of Life*, and I knew that there was a hygienic institution at Dansville, N.Y. But I had so little knowledge of the hygienic system in general, and of this institution in particular, that I was not by any means decided that this was the only system to be relied upon for the preservation and recovery of health.—[The Health Reformer, February, 1872](#), 7:44.

James White, who with his wife nursed two of their boys through an attack of diphtheria employing a hot bath, sitz bath and packs as recommended by Dr. J. C. Jackson, wrote in the *Review* of Feb. 17, 1863, of “having a good degree of confidence in his manner of treating diseases,” and even “decided to give the entire article” to the readers of the *Review*. He could not have been too deeply impressed for Ellen White fixes the time of his interest being sparked in health matters:

“After the vision was given me,” then “my husband was aroused upon the health question” (Ms 7, 1867). See Appendix B.

J. P. Kellogg is said in a reminiscent statement by his son John Harvey in 1938 to have “raised his sizable brood by the *Water Cure Journal*,” and is known to have made an effective use of its methods when the children were attacked with measles. Yet John Harvey in 1890 writing of Ellen White’s first writings on health in 1864 and 1865, for which he set the type, declares that “At the time the writings referred to first appeared, the subject of health was almost wholly ignored, not only by the people to whom they were addressed, but by the world at large” (*CTBH*, p. iii).

J. N. Loughborough, cited in *Prophetess of Health* as “eating Graham bread and at the age of 16 reading the *Water Cure Journal* in 1848,” illustrates the paucity of “instruction given in health lines in those days” by telling how he followed the counsel of his physician by smoking cigars as a remedy for “slight hemorrhages of his lungs” ([The Medical Missionary, December 1899](#), 10:7)

Loughborough in an article published in the [The Review and Herald, December 6, 1864](#), eighteen months after the June 6, 1863, vision, and just three months after it was published, states: “For the *short time* I have been striving to live strictly in accordance with the laws of life, I have been greatly benefited.”

How much the ongoing knowledge of health reform he gained in 1848 stuck by him is reflected in what he then says:

With the short experience I have had, [the last two months] I would not, for any consideration go back to the meat, spice, pepper, sweet cake, pickles, mustard, headache, stomach ache and gloomy, and give up the good, wholesome fruit, grain, and vegetable diet, with pure cold water as a drink, no headaches, cheerfulness, happiness, vigor and health.—[The Review and Herald, December 6, 1864, 25:14.](#)

Joseph Bates is mentioned. He is the only one cited who could be said to be a thoroughgoing health reformer. Of him James White wrote: “He did not mention his views of proper diet in public at that time or in private unless interrogated upon the subject” (*Life of Bates*, p. 311).

It is not the purpose of this presentation to claim more for Ellen White than the facts support. But justice demands that we defend her against the implication in *Prophetess of Health* that in speaking of these matters she falsified.

### *The Facts Not Hidden*

Seventh-day Adventist leaders in the 1860’s readily recognized, as did Elder J. H. Waggoner in the *Review and Herald* in 1867, that there were by the time of the 1863 vision various persons who were teaching reforms in living and in the care of the sick. The outstanding contribution of the vision was that its instruction was presented as a part of religious duty, not merely as interesting ideas on health. Waggoner, in clarifying this point, well said:

[14] We do not profess to be pioneers in the general principles of the health reform. The facts on which this movement is based have been elaborated, in a great measure by reformers, physicians, and writers on physiology and hygiene, and so may be found scattered through the land. But we do claim that by the method of God’s choice it has been more clearly and powerfully unfolded, and is thereby producing an effect which we could not have looked for from any other means.

As mere physiological and hygienic truths, they might be studied by some at their leisure, and by others laid aside as of little conse-

quence; but when placed on a level with the great truths of the third angel's message by the sanction and authority of God's Spirit, and so declared to be the means whereby a weak people may be made strong to overcome, and our diseased bodies cleansed and fitted for translation, then it comes to us as an essential part of present truth, to be received with the blessing of God, or rejected at our peril.—[The Review and Herald, August 7, 1866, 28:77.](#) (quoted in O. E. Robinson, [The Story of Our Health Message, 79-80.](#))

What was it then that made the vision of June 6, 1863, so memorable? Why did James White refer to it as “the great vision” and Ellen White speak of its contents as “the great subject of health reform.” What was it in this vision that led Seventh-day Adventists generally to make radical changes in their way of living and in many documented cases date these changes after the 1863 vision?

Dr. J. H. Kellogg provides an answer. Kellogg, a talented and trusted leader of the medical work of the church, a man endorsed by God for this position, explained why Mrs. White's counsels had such power and appeal. In her time, he observed, “Nowhere, and by no one, *was there presented a systematic and harmonious body of hygienic truths, free from patent errors, and consistent with the Bible and the principles of the Christian religion*” (CTBH, p. III). (Emphasis supplied).

*Prophetess of Health* argues that from the purely secular sources—Graham, Trall, Jackson, et al—“Seventh-day Adventists were already in possession of the *main outlines of the health message*” (page 80), and that Ellen White gained a knowledge of this from certain Adventists practicing reform principles for they “were closely associated with the Whites and undoubtedly spoke to them of their experience in health reform” (page 79). If this was the source of her knowledge, what prevented her from imbibing the errors and extremes which frequently formed a part of the teachings of Graham, Trall, etc.? Dr. Kellogg, who would rank with any of the best trained physicians of his time, points this out:

It must be admitted to be something extraordinary that a person making no claims to scientific knowledge or erudition should have been able to organize, from the confused and error-tainted mass of ideas advanced by a few writers and thinkers on health subjects, a body of hygienic principles so harmonious, so consistent, and so

genuine that the discussions, the researches, the discoveries, and the experience of a quarter of a century have not resulted in the overthrow of a single principle, but have only served to establish the doctrines taught.

The guidance of infinite wisdom is as much needed in discerning between truth and error as in the evolution of new truths. CTBH, p. iv.

Now it is not surprising that a public character such as Ellen G. White, whose ministry extended over a seventy-year period, and whose writings touched the lives of so many with guidance, encouragement, reproofs, and corrections, would be the subject of comment, favorable and unfavorable.

Some, unfortunately, will reach their conclusions based on the limited and biased presentation of *Prophetess of Health*. But if the reader is to be fair to himself, fair to Ellen G. White and fair to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he should judge by the full “weight of evidence.”

#### The Weight of Evidence

Historical statements can rarely be tested and proven with the certainty of a scientific experiment in a laboratory. To deal with historical records is to deal with records that are often incomplete, and are frequently ambiguous. We must also bear in mind that these records were produced by human beings with their differing backgrounds, experience, desires, and prejudices. Nevertheless, the weight of evidence can satisfy the open and candid mind on essential issues. Thus the truth can be approached only by a conscientious and thoughtful investigation of all the available evidence on all sides of a question.

Ellen White held that her health teachings had their origin in the visions given to her by God. This position has always been taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The evidence for this position is clearly set forth in O. E. Robinson’s book, *The Story of Our Health Message*, first published in 1943, and available for 75¢ at Adventist Book Centers.

Speaking of the relationship between evidence and doubt, Ellen White observed regarding the inspired messages of Scripture that, “While God has given ample evidence for faith, He will never remove all excuse for unbelief. All who look for hooks to hang their

doubts upon will find them” ([The Great Controversy, 527](#). Herein after abbreviated GC). And again, regarding her own writings, she declared:

“Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence.” [Testimonies for the Church 5:675](#).

When there appears to be a conflict, the evidence on both sides must be carefully sifted. The reader might well ask himself the following questions: Have I considered all the available evidence? What were the circumstances? How credible are the witnesses to these events, and were they in a position to observe all that took place? How much weight should be given to this episode in the light of the overall picture? Have I separated assumptions from documentable facts and determined the credibility of the assumptions to the best of my ability? Finally, one must ask an important theological question as well: Do I have a correct and adequate concept of inspiration? (See Appendix F.)

[15]

### *An Illustration*

An illustration of the need to separate assumptions from facts may be enlightening. The employment of the word “sex” gains immediate interest. Chapter Six, “Short Skirts and Sex,” portrays Ellen White as holding unrealistic, puritanical views (pages 158-159) concerning the sexual relationships between husband and wife. Documents are cited in which Ellen White counsels against excessive sexual activity, and then *Prophetess of Health* states:

Although she never defined exactly what she meant by excessive, it seems likely—since she generally agreed with earlier health reformers in such matters—that she would have frowned on having intercourse more frequently than once a month. That was the maximum Sylvester Graham had condoned, and his disciple O. S. Fowler, who personally favored sex for procreation only, had stated that to “indulge, even in wedlock, as often as the moon quarters, is gradual but effectual destruction of both soul and body.”—pp. 157-158.

This is purely an assumption. Not a line is cited from Ellen White to prove it, nor can such be found. At no time did Ellen White prescribe any rule except to avoid excesses. She wrote of the “privilege of the family relation” ([Testimonies for the Church 2:90](#)) and the “privilege of the marriage relation” ([Testimonies for the Church 2:391](#)) and explained that “Jesus did not enforce celibacy upon any class of men.... He looks with pleasure upon the family relationship where sacred and unselfish love bears sway” (Ms 126, 1903, published in [The Adventist Home, 121](#)).

In discouraging early attachments Ellen White in *Appeal to Mothers* interestingly counseled: “The young affections should be restrained until the period arrives when sufficient age and experience will make it honorable and safe to unfetter them” (p. 8).

The casual reader is left with the conclusion that Ellen White held that the rule should be once a month. Actually, Ellen White, rather than following Graham and Fowler in establishing a fixed rule, stands beside the discerning marriage counselor of today who leaves the matter of frequency of sexual relationship within marriage to the marriage partners.

The discussion is closed by the statement that “Throughout her long life Ellen White remained generally antipathetic toward sex.... In her waning years she looked forward expectantly to an idyllic existence in the new earth free from such unpleasant activities.” This assumption is based on a misinterpretation of her reference to the teachings of our Lord that in the “resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage” ([Matthew 22:30](#). See page 74 below).

On one occasion when an Adventist layman urged in a tract he had prepared that “sexual indulgence should be only for the raising of children,” and sought Ellen White’s support for its publication, she listened to him and when he had finished she asked him if he was through. He replied that he was. According to J. N. Loughborough she said to him, “Go home and be a man” (quoted in *Ministry*, April, 1969). Does this accord with the pattern projected in *Prophetess of Health*? Are we to accept assumptions as facts?

## II. A Look At Some Of The Prime Witnesses

While the copious footnotes carry many names and titles, there are certain witnesses which are depended upon for negative evidence concerning crucial points. Among such are: M. G. Kellogg, J. H. Kellogg, E. S. Ballenger, D. M. Canright, H. E. Carver and F. E. Belden, etc.

Since their testimony is of quite a different character than that of many that are cited in the footnotes, it may be well to examine them, noting the time their testimony was given, and this in relation to other events.

### *Merritt G. Kellogg*

The testimony of Dr. Merritt G. Kellogg is summoned in regard to the visions of Ellen G. White. On page 19, it is stated that “the two Kellogg doctors, Merritt and John, believed she suffered from catalepsy, which as the latter described it ‘is a nervous state allied to hysteria in which sublime visions are usually experienced.’”

The Merritt Kellogg letter of June 3, 1906, cited as documentation, (page 217) was written when he was 74 years of age. Sixteen years earlier he wrote freely for publication a favorable account of seeing Ellen White in vision. In the light of his testimony in old age, the 1890 statement written at age of 58 is significant. Elder J. N. Loughborough in preparing a volume for publication on the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church giving special attention to the work of Ellen G. White, called upon Kellogg to present his testimony recounting his observations of Ellen White in several of her visions. Kellogg reported in detail on the first vision he witnessed, given in Michigan, May 20, 1853, at a meeting held in Tyrone, Livingston County. He says:

Sister White was in vision about twenty minutes or half an hour. As she went into vision everyone present seemed to feel the power and presence of God, and some of us did indeed feel the Spirit of God resting upon us mightily. We were engaged in 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 meeting with His presence, and that He would bless the work in Michigan. As Sister White gave that triumphant shout of “Glory! g-l-o-r-y! g-l-o-r-y!” 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 any one 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 has had when I was present. The coming out of the 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 the 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, MD, Battle Creek, Mich., Dec. 28, 1890; *Great Second Advent Movement*, p. 206 (quoted in *Messenger to the Remnant*, pp. 22-23).

Dr. M. G. Kellogg’s rather strange statement made in a personal letter in 1906 can probably be attributed to his strong feelings over his brother’s (J. H. Kellogg) estrangement from the church and Ellen G. White. Certainly his former favorable statement should not be ignored.

### *John Harvey Kellogg*

So far as our records go, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, twenty years younger than his half brother Merritt G., makes no reference to having personally seen Ellen G. White in vision. John Harvey’s March 3, 1933, statement written to A. B. Tower, when he was 81 years of age, quoted briefly on pages 19, 20 and noted above, should



be read in the light of repeated statements made forty years earlier when he was in his prime.

In 1897 Dr. J. H. Kellogg was requested to address the delegates at the General Conference Session. He did so on March 3, and no one could have been more clear as to the visions being the source of Ellen White's information on health. Kellogg is speaking:

“The brethren desired that there should be presented before you some of the special instruction which we have been receiving at the sanitarium from time to time upon the subject of health reform, and its important relations to the various branches of the work, especially to us as individuals. Now I will read first a statement here from a testimony received in 1893. It is dated Auckland, New Zealand, Feb. 19, 1893. These words apply to everybody, and not alone to those at the sanitarium: ‘Guilt rests upon us as a people who have had much light, because we have not appreciated the importance of the light given upon health reform.’ It is a very interesting fact that the Lord began giving us this light thirty years ago. Just before I came to the Conference I had a talk with Dr. Lay, and he told me of how he heard the first instruction about health reform away back in 1860, and especially in 1863. While he was riding in a carriage with brother and sister White, she related what had been presented to her upon the subject of health reform, and laid out the principles which have stood the test of all these years—a whole generation.

“I am sure, as Dr. Riley said to me this morning, that it is impossible for any man who has not made a special study of medicine to appreciate the wonderful character of the instruction that has been received in these writings, It is wonderful, brethren, when you look back over the writings that were given us thirty years ago, and then perhaps the next day pick up a scientific journal and find some new discovery that the microscope has made, or that has been brought to light in the chemical laboratory,—I say, it is perfectly wonderful how correctly they agree in fact.

“Now in the preface to *Christian Temperance* you will find a statement which I presume not very many of you have read. There is no name signed to the preface, but I wrote it. But if you will read it, you will find a statement to the effect that every single statement with reference to healthful living, and the general principles that underlie the subject, have been verified by scientific discovery. I

sometimes see some of our brethren appear to be a little shaky on the testimonies; they do not know whether these things come from the Lord or not; but to those I invariably say that if you will study the subject of health reform from the testimonies, and then from the light of scientific discovery,—compare it with what science teaches at the present time,—you will be amazed; you will see what a flood of light was given us thirty years ago.

“There is no evidence so powerful that can be deduced in support of these writings and the source from which they come, as the fact that the writings thirty years ago are fully substantiated by the scientific discoveries of today.”—[The General Conference Bulletin, March 8, 1897.](#)

Some two years before this Dr. J. H. Kellogg was in New York City talking to Dr. David Paulson, who was just completing his medical training and would soon be coming to Battle Creek. As reported by Paulson, Kellogg asked the new physician:

“Do you know how it is that the Battle Creek Sanitarium is able to keep five years ahead of the medical profession?”

Dr. Paulson said he did not know. Then Dr. Kellogg explained:

“When a new thing is brought out in the medical world I know from my knowledge of the Spirit of Prophecy whether it belongs in our system or not.”

If it does, I instantly adopt it and advertise it while the rest of the doctors are slowly feeling their way, and when they finally adopt it, I have five years start of them.

[17] On the other hand, when the medical profession is swept off their feet by some new fad, if it does not fit *the light we have received*, I simply do not touch it. When the doctors finally discover their mistake, they wonder how it came that I did not get caught.—White Estate Document File #269 “Paulson Articles and Misc.”

Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, in his prime is without any question the most competent and most important witness to Ellen White’s teachings in the field of health. He was a physician and surgeon well trained in scientific lines, having studied both in America and Europe. He traveled widely, lectured frequently, and carried on a constant line of investigation and experimentation. He was medical superintendent of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, the foremost such medical institution in the world, which attracted such of the world’s

great as Taft, Rockefeller, Edison, Ford, Burbank, etc. True, because of the innovations made at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, Kellogg was at times under fire by fellow physicians. But if the reader would see Ellen White emerge in her true image, he may well look to Kellogg before his defection, and even after his defection Kellogg never repudiated or discounted Ellen White's health teachings. For this reason as we introduce his 1890 Preface statement to *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, the first part of which is a compilation of E. G. White materials, we quote at length, urging the reader to peruse it carefully to gain its full impact. Please note Kellogg's frequent reference to "the principles taught" by Ellen White:

Nearly thirty years ago there appeared in print the first of a series of remarkable and important articles on the subject of health, by Mrs. E. G. White. These articles at once commanded earnest consideration by those who were acquainted with Mrs. White's previous writings and labors. Thousands were led to change life-long habits, and to renounce practices thoroughly fixed by heredity as well as by long indulgence. So great a revolution could not be wrought in a body of people without the aid of some powerful incentive, which in this case was undoubtedly the belief that the writings referred to not only bore the stamp of truth, but were endorsed as such by a higher than human authority. This is not the proper place for the consideration of the grounds upon which this belief was based, but the reader's attention is invited to a few facts of interest in this connection:

1. At the time the writings referred to first appeared, the subject of health was almost wholly ignored, not only by the people to whom they were addressed, but by the world at large.

2. The few advocating the necessity of a reform in physical habits, propagated in connection with the advocacy of genuine reformatory principles the most patent and in some instances disgusting errors.

3. Nowhere, and by no one, was there presented a systematic and harmonious body of hygienic truths, free from patent errors, and consistent with the Bible and the principles of the Christian religion.

Under these circumstances, the writings referred to made their appearance. The principles taught were not enforced by scientific authority, but were presented in a simple, straightforward manner

by one who makes no pretense to scientific knowledge, but claims to write by the aid and authority of the divine enlightenment.

How have the principles presented under such peculiar circumstances and with such remarkable claims stood the test of time and experience? is a question which may very properly be asked. Its answer is to be found in facts which are capable of the amplest verification. The principles presented have been put to the test of practical experience by thousands; and whenever intelligently and consistently carried out, the result has been found in the highest degree satisfactory. Thousands have testified to physical, mental, and moral benefits received. Many of the principles taught have come to be so generally adopted and practiced that they are no longer recognized as reforms, and may, in fact, be regarded as prevalent customs among the more intelligent classes. The principles which a quarter of a century ago were either entirely ignored or made the butt of ridicule, have quietly won their way into public confidence and esteem, until the world has quite forgotten that they have not always been thus accepted. New discoveries in science and new interpretations of old facts have continually added confirmatory evidence, until at the present time every one of the principles advocated more than a quarter of a century ago is fortified in the strongest possible manner by scientific evidence.

Finally, the reformatory movement based upon the principles advocated so long ago has lived and prospered until the present time, and the institutions developed by it have grown to be the most extensive and the most prosperous establishments of the sort in the world; while other efforts, looking somewhat in the same direction, but contaminated by error, have either abandoned the principles of truth, and been given over to error, or have fallen into obscurity. It certainly must be regarded as a thing remarkable, and evincing unmistakable evidence of divine insight and direction, that in the midst of confused and conflicting teachings, claiming the authority of science and experience, but warped by ultra notions and rendered impotent for good by the great admixture of error,—it must be admitted to be something extraordinary, that a person making no claims to scientific knowledge or erudition should have been able to organize, from the confused and error-tainted mass of ideas advanced by a few writers and thinkers on health subjects, a

body of hygienic principles so harmonious, so consistent, and so genuine that the discussions, the researches, the discoveries, and the experience of a quarter of a century have not resulted in the overthrow of a single principle, but have only served to establish the doctrines taught.

The guidance of infinite wisdom is as much needed in the discerning between truth and error as in the evolution of new truths. Novelty is by no means a distinguishing characteristic of true principles, and the principle holds good as regards the truths of hygienic reform, as well as those of other reformatory movements. The greatest and most important reformatory movements of modern times have not been those which presented new facts and principles, but those which revived truths and principles long forgotten, and which have led the way back to the paths trodden by men of bygone ages, before the world had wandered so far away from physical and moral rectitude.—Preface, CTBH, pp. iii, iv

[18]

In his later years Dr. Kellogg led his friends to believe that some of his pronouncements on health influenced Ellen G. White. “I gave her that inspiration,” he would declare. But in 1892 he wrote spontaneously to Ellen G. White, then in Australia, on the point of his observations that she was not influenced. Dr. Kellogg’s testimony may be of interest in view of the repeated assertions in *Prophetess of Health* that others had a profound influence on her writings:

There are so many who are ready to say that Sister White has been influenced to do or to say this or that, I often hesitate about writing you concerning things which I would like to write to you about, so that in case remarks of that sort are made, I can say with the utmost confidence that there had been no possible opportunity for you to be influenced, by me at any rate. It has been to me a source of more confidence and satisfaction than I can express to you, that I have often seen, in my acquaintance with you and your work, wrongs set right through the special leading of your mind by the Lord.

I used often to make a test in my mind, saying nothing to anybody. I would say to myself, Now here is an evident wrong. Sister White knows nothing about it, or if she knows anything about it, the circumstances are such as would produce a personal prejudice in favor of a wrong rather than against it. If the Lord leads her

to denounce and correct this evil, I shall know that she is being specially led. In not a single instance did the test fail, and so my confidence grew. I mention these facts very often to those whom I find doubting.—Letter from J. H. Kellogg to E. G. White, Sept. 9, 1892. Quoted in [The Messenger](#), 16-17.

The careful investigator who weighs all the evidence will not ignore the J. H. Kellogg statements from the 1890's, evidence not so much as mentioned in *Prophetess of Health*. As he looks at the J. H. Kellogg statements made in his later years discrediting Ellen White, he will tend to agree with the footnote on page 250 admitting that the “doctor was writing about fifty years after the events described and may have had a tendency to embroider.” This concession is significant in that it tends to weaken the arguments based on Kellogg's assertions made late in life. Unfortunately it does not appear in the text.

#### *D. M. Canright*

Another witness seldom quoted, but often named in the footnotes, is D. M. Canright, the author of *Life of Mrs. E. G. White* (1919)—Canright's late testimony on the visions, the work and the writings of Ellen G. White.

Canright was a prominent and much respected Seventh-day Adventist minister and leader for a number of years.

In February, 1887, six months before he was dropped—at his own request—from fellowship in the Seventh-day Adventist church, he declared to his nephew as he drove onto the Michigan camp grounds where a president for the state conference was to be chosen, “If I am not elected president of this conference at this meeting I am not going to preach for them any more” (Carrie Johnson, *I Was Canright's Secretary* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, c 1971] p. 80). Another was chosen to fill that office. Canright stood by his declaration and was soon disconnected from Seventh-day Adventists, and, before long was at war with Ellen G. White and the church. In his old age with a bitter and frequently inaccurate pen he did all he could to discredit her. But the question is: How reliable is he as a witness in this book written in his mid to late 70's, an embittered old man?

But now let us look at Canright in his prime as a Seventh-day Adventist minister. He wrote for publication in the *Review and Herald* in an article entitled “A Plain Talk to Murmurers” published April 26, 1877:

As to the Christian character of Sister White, I beg leave to say that I think I know something about it. I have been acquainted with Sister White for eighteen years, more than half the history of our people. I have been in their family time and again, sometimes weeks at a time. They have been in our house and family many times. I have traveled with them almost everywhere; have been with them in private and in public, in meeting and out of meeting, and have had the very best chances to know something of the life, character, and spirit of Brother and Sister White. As a minister, I have had to deal with all kinds of persons, and all kinds of character, till I think I can judge something of what a person is, at least after years of intimate acquaintance.

I know Sister White to be an unassuming, modest, kindhearted, noble woman. These traits in her character are not simply put on and cultivated, but they spring gracefully and easily from her natural disposition. She is not self-conceited, self-righteous, and self-important, as fanatics always are....

I have heard Sister White speak hundreds of times, have read all her testimonies through and through, most of them many times, and I have never been able to find one immoral sentence in the whole of them, or anything that is not strictly pure and Christian; nothing that leads away from the Bible, or from Christ; but there I find the most earnest appeals to obey God, to love Jesus, to believe the Scriptures, and to search them constantly. I have received great spiritual benefit times without number, from the testimonies...

Another fact should have great weight with our Sabbathkeeping Adventists. All the leading men among us, those of the very strongest minds and the best talents, and who have had every facility for more than a quarter of a century to become thoroughly acquainted with Sister White and her writings, have the strongest faith in her testimonies. This, with our people who keep the Sabbath and believe in the Advent doctrines, should have great weight.—[The Review and Herald, April 26, 1877, 49:132.](#)

Eight years later Canright placed another series in the Review, [19]

this time under the title “To Those in Doubting Castle.” In the first he pointed out:

Sister White and her work have not only been connected with the message from the very first, but she has had a leading influence in that work, has stood front and foremost, and with voice and pen has done more to guide and mold the message than any other half dozen laborers now in the cause. From the beginning her teachings have been accepted by all the leading ministers and believers as light from God. Now would it not be the very height of absurdity to accept the message and the work as the truth and God’s work, and yet reject the very one who has done the work? A deceiver, an impostor, a false teacher stand at the head of God’s special work for forty years! No, that will never do.

But are there not difficulties in these writings hard to explain?— Passages which seem to conflict one with another, or with some passage in the Bible, or with facts? I freely grant for myself that there are some passages which bother me, and which I do not know how to explain.

If a man reads the Bible on purpose to find objections, as Tom Paine did, and as Ingersoll does, he will find plenty of them to satisfy his unbelief, and confirm him in his infidelity. But if, like thousands of others equally learned and intelligent, he goes to the Scriptures to find light and God and salvation, he will find them full and clear, to the joy of his soul. I am profoundly convinced in the depths of my soul, after an experience of twenty-five years, that the same thing is true of the testimonies.

No, the real trouble lies close at home in a proud, unconverted heart, a lack of real humility, an unwillingness to admit to God’s way of finding the truth.—[The Review and Herald, February 10, 1885](#), 62:85-86.

From 1887 to 1919 Canright opposed Seventh-day Adventists and Ellen G. White, but told a close friend, D. W. Reavis, in 1903 when Reavis urged him to return to the church he loved and served in earlier years: “I would be glad to come back, but I can’t: It’s too late. I am forever gone! Gone!” ([Counsels on Stewardship, 101](#)).

This sentiment he expressed a number of times between 1903 and 1913. See documented statements in *I Was Canright’s Secretary* pp 101-107. Then in 1915 while preparing his manuscript for his



book against Ellen G. White, he attended her funeral and as he paused at the open casket declared, as heard by several witnesses: “There is a noble Christian woman gone!” (W. A. Spicer in *The Spirit of Prophecy in the Advent Movement* p. 127).

### *E. S. Ballenger*

One whose name occasionally appears in the foot notes is E. S. Ballenger. One time a Seventh-day Adventist minister, manager of the Paradise Valley Sanitarium, and then Educational Secretary of the Southern California Conference, Ballenger parted company with the church over the Sanctuary teachings. From 1913 to the close of his life in the late 1950’s, he opposed the church and published a monthly journal, “*The Gathering Call*,” each issue of which carried at least one article in opposition to Ellen G. White and the church. His lament near the close of his life was that he had been unsuccessful in forming an organization to carry on the work to which he had dedicated forty years of his life.

### *F. E. Belden*

Another whose name occurs a number of times in the footnotes is F. E. Belden, hymn writer and publisher of hymn books and one time quite high in denominational publishing circles. He was one of several who demanded wages out of proportion with the denomination’s standards. He was one who while connected with the *Review and Herald* advocated business procedures to deal with authors in a manner as to strip them of their proper royalties, and then turned on the *Review and Herald* with the complaint that he was treated unfairly. Belden turned bitter and there is every evidence that he became the tool in the hands of Battle Creek Sanitarium leaders in a legal attempt in 1906 and 1907 to wrest from the denomination its largest meeting house—the Battle Creek Tabernacle. Although a nephew of Ellen G. White, being the son of her older sister Sarah, his communications to the members of the White family and to the Ellen G. White Estate were filled with venom.

### *H. E. Carver*

In 1865 and 1866 Carver was an officer of the Iowa Conference, serving as secretary. During Civil War days he differed with church leaders in their relationship to the government and military service. He was early to join others in Iowa in turning against church organization, certain doctrines of the church and Ellen G. White.

In July, 1866, Carver was dropped from his position as a conference officer because he was “in open opposition to some of the prominent doctrines held by this people” ([The Review and Herald, July 7, 1866, 28:49](#)). He was characterized by Ellen G. White as gathering testimonies of falsehood from rebels and traitors ([The Review and Herald, February 20, 1866, 27:89](#)).

Admittedly, these witnesses do not provide the bulk of the evidence cited in the book, but since some of them are the source of significant “negative” evidence, it is well to keep their backgrounds and biases in mind.

### **III. The Missing Exhibits**

The reader of *Prophetess of Health*, from the first chapter with the introduction of the shut door matter of the 1840’s to its closing sentences regarding Seventh-day Adventists in 1970 operating a world-wide chain of 329 medical institutions, is short changed. The exhibits which would tell the whole story are just not there.

[20] The reader of such a volume, prepared as it is by a scholar well trained in historical research, has every right to expect that what he peruses under such a title is the whole story and that the image in which Ellen White emerges in each chapter is the true image.

#### *1. Influence on the Longevity and Health of Seventh-day Adventists*

Reserved to a few pages in the heart of the last chapter of *Prophetess of Health* and the last three paragraphs appearing on the last two pages is mention of the positive enduring contributions of Ellen G. White made in the field of health ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist church. If the volume *Prophetess of Health* were true to its title these are the points which should have been developed and

expanded to fill most of the pages between its two covers. Here it is stated that “although consumed with making preparation for the next world, she nevertheless devoted much of her energy to improving life and health in this one.” (page 200). One would judge from the wording that she succeeded in this, but where is this story told in the book?

Why is not the reader introduced to a representative cross-section of the published testimonies of many who down through the years witnessed to the often lifesaving blessing which they experienced as they brought their lives into harmony with the principles expounded in Ellen White’s writings in the field of health from 1864 and onward. Only one is cited and *Health Reformer* references given to two others. Dr. J. H. Kellogg back in 1890 would put those who benefited at “thousands”—“thousands have testified to physical, mental and moral benefits received” ([Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 114](#)). These are a matter of easily obtained records, many of them going back to the years 1864, 65 and 66. Why is not the positive and repeated testimony of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg included? He was perhaps the most competent of all the witnesses, but his is one of the *missing exhibits*.

Grudgingly, it seems, the reader is told in the closing sentences of the book of Seventh-day Adventists who, following the principles of health advocated by Ellen White “enjoy better health for it,” if “*we are to believe recent scientific reports.*” Would it not be fair to Ellen White and the readers to present the mounting weight of evidence from many witnesses in more recent years, particularly in the detailed reports of the carefully conducted scientific studies? Are these not needed to fairly portray Ellen White as a *Prophetess of Health*?

Pages can be devoted to dress and the discussion of its length in inches, a matter which Ellen White declared was never revealed to her, but there is almost no room for a presentation of what Ellen White’s health reform teachings meant to thousands who put them into practice. Two lines are devoted to mention of scientific reports of the fruitage of Ellen White’s health reform teachings. Not one scientific confirmation is named, although there are many. These are among the most significant incontrovertible evidences of the

integrity of what she claims God revealed to her. But the story is not told. These are among the *missing exhibits*.

## *2. Sanitariums and Treatment Rooms*

The reader in fewer than ten lines in the closing paragraphs is told that “despite the Battle Creek tragedy she left behind at the time of her death thirty-three sanitariums and countless treatment rooms on six continents” (page 200), and that “As of 1970, Seventh-day Adventists were operating a world-wide chain of 329 medical institutions stretching from Kingston to Karachi, from Bangkok to Belem—each a memorial to the life and work of Ellen G. White, *Prophetess of Health*” (page 201). Earlier in the chapter a page is devoted to recounting what is said to be Mrs. White’s sanitarium building campaign.

Isn’t this a success story in itself which should fill a sizable portion of a book titled *Prophetess of Health*? Why only a few paragraphs in the closing chapter, when pages are given to the problems and seeming conflicts in starting the first medical institution, the Western Health Reform institute. Why is the reader not informed of the reasons for the success of these institutions—the employment of rational methods, discarding as far as possible “poisonous drugs” as they were so freely administered a hundred years ago, and eminently successful use of hydrotherapy and physical therapy, which relieved pain and fostered recovery, and saved many a life; the adoption of a “well balanced, nutritious and appetizing diet,” free from the use of flesh foods; and the staffing by self-sacrificing physicians and nurses, and a retinue of other employees dedicated to bringing spiritual and physical blessing to the sick?

And where did the basic elements come from? From the counsels of Ellen G. White. And today administrators, physicians, department heads, and nurses are found perusing Ministry of Healing, Counsels on Health, Medical Ministry, Counsels on Diet and Foods, etc., to reaffirm the guidelines. And leaders in this work unabashedly and concertedly search the pages of compilations of E. G. White materials on the objectives of Seventh-day Adventist institutions. These writings are, as a whole, often cited in policy making meetings.

This is what portrays Ellen White in her true image, but these are among the missing exhibits.

### *3. The College of Medical Evangelists and Loma Linda University*

Mention is made on pages 200, 201, that Mrs. White determined in 1906 to turn the Loma Linda Sanitarium into an educational center and in due time called for a medical school which opened in 1910. It is correctly stated that “during the last few years of her life Ellen White labored incessantly to insure that the College of Medical Evangelists fulfilled its divinely appointed mission” (page 199). Allusion is also made to the Ellen G. White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles which served for years as the principal clinical facility of the College of Medical Evangelists.

No well informed person will deny that without Ellen White’s initiative and counsel Seventh-day Adventists would not today be in possession of Loma Linda and would not be operating a highly recognized medical and dental school. The story is a thrilling one, and in it Ellen White emerges in her true image as a *Prophetess of Health*. This is so from her first counsels to purchase the Loma Linda property, with J. A. Burden risking his finances and reputation in following Ellen White’s directions which she based on the visions God gave to her. It is so to the final decisions made in January, 1910, based on her two paragraph statement opening with the words, “The light given me is, we must provide that which is essential to qualify our youth who desire to be physicians” and in obtaining this training whatever is “required by the laws of all those who practice as regularly qualified physicians, we are to supply whatever may be required” ([Pacific Union Recorder, February 3, 1910, p. 9](#); [The Story of Our Health Message, 386](#)). But we were to go a step further in maintaining at Loma Linda a school of “the highest order.” The call was breathtaking and faith-taxing, but the response was “the Lord has spoken, and we will obey” ([The Story of Our Health Message, 387](#)).

[21]

Shouldn’t this dramatic story with such miracles as to how money was received to make the purchase and carrying through to the gaining of the “A Grade” recognition as a medical school really be a

part of *Prophetess of Health*? But it is untold in the book. These are among the *missing exhibits* needed to tell the full story.

#### *4. The Memory Lives On*

The last paragraph of *Prophetess of Health* admits that “the memory of Ellen G. White lives on in the lives of nearly two and one half million Seventh-day Adventists, many of whom continue to believe ‘that she wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.’”

Reasons for this continued confidence are not given. If Ellen White is to emerge in her true image, and if the whole story were to be told, several exhibits should have been presented. To name a few:

A. It was “a systematic and harmonious body of hygienic truths” which came to Seventh-day Adventists through Ellen White. This led to the adoption of a system of nutrition supplying all the body’s needs with attractive, appetizing foods, utilizing dairy products, but eliminating all meat, condiments, stimulants as tea and coffee. In an endeavor to popularize this regimen, especially for non-Adventist guests at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, Dr. J. H. Kellogg led out in the development of the cereal breakfast foods, cereal coffee, peanut butter and vegetable meat substitutes. This resulted in Battle Creek becoming the cereal capital of the world. This is freely acknowledged by those in the know to be the result, first of Adventists moving to Battle Creek, second to the vision given to Ellen G. White, and third to a response among Adventists to this counsel. (See “The Cereal Story,” *Collier’s*, April, 1952.)

The story of this train of events favorably effecting eating habits in all parts of the world, and leading to the establishment of food industries in many countries, is barely mentioned in the book.

B. Adventists have been impressed with fine points in dietetic guidance which were unlikely to have come from any human source. Take the use of milk as an illustration. Some of those who were said to be the source of Ellen White’s knowledge of nutrition, while discarding meat and condiments and refined flour, condemned the use of milk except for infants. Salt was labeled a poison (A. T. Trall, *The Health Reformer*, October, 1869, 4:76). Ellen White on the basis of the 1863 vision condemned meat and condiments, but when it came to milk called only for obtaining milk from sanitary sources

and its moderate use. When extreme voices were loudly heard in 1870 on this point, James White wrote significantly:

In reference to the use of tobacco, tea, coffee, flesh meats, also to dress, there is general agreement, but at the present she is not prepared to take the extreme position relative to salt, sugar, and milk.... While she does not regard milk, taken in large quantities as customarily eaten with bread, the best article of food, her mind, as yet, has only been called to the importance of the best and most healthy condition of the cow, whose milk is used as an article of food. She cannot unite in circulating publications broadcast which take an extreme position on the important question of milk with her present light upon the subject.—[The Adventist Home, November 8, 1870](#), p. 36; quoted in CDF p. 496-7.

Knowing as we do today the value of milk in the nutrition of the family, here is an exhibit of prime importance. Ponder well the significance of Ellen White's moderate counsel on this point. What deprivation, what malnutrition, what suffering might have resulted had Ellen White, as portrayed in *Prophetess of Health*, adopted and passed on as of heavenly origin the extreme positions of those from whom it is said she gained her information. Even when at the turn of the century, before dairy herds were tested or pasteurization of milk was a common practice, she wrote of a time yet future when dairy products might have to be eliminated from the diet because of the increase of disease in the animal kingdom. But even then she cautioned that the time had not yet come and we were to wait until the Lord made it plain to us. Her last statement on the point in 1909 was that "The time will come when we may have to" ([Testimonies for the Church 9:162](#)).

The importance of Vitamin B12, recognized only in recent years, makes Ellen White's moderate counsels on milk even more impressive. And to what may these cautions be attributed? According to James White, "Her mind ... has only been called to the importance" of the "healthy condition" "of the cow" and to her position based on her present light on the subject. ([The Review and Herald, November 8, 1870](#), 36:165; CDF p. 497.)

The Whites, from the time of Mrs. White's 1863 vision until the close of her life, always kept a cow or two whenever they owned their own home.

Certainly such an exhibit, if Ellen White is to emerge in her true image, should be included in a portrayal of Ellen G. White as *Prophetess of Health*. Or was the author unaware of these facts?

### 5. Counsel to Dr. Kress

Adventists have been impressed with the Daniel H. Kress experience, and the part one vision had in saving his life. Kress, an Adventist physician inclined to extreme views on the use of dairy products, while heading the medical work of the church in England and Australia, developed pernicious anemia.

[22] The doctor, in Australia, was totally incapacitated and at death's door. Ellen White, who was in California at the time, was shown his condition, his hands as white as in death, and she wrote:

“Do not remove milk from the table or forbid its being used in the cooking of food.... I have told you what I have because I have received light that you are injuring your body by a poverty stricken diet.... Put into your diet something you have left out. It is your duty to do this. Get eggs of healthy fowls. Use these eggs cooked or raw. Drop them uncooked into the best unfermented wine you can find.... Do not for a moment suppose that it will not be right to do this.... I say that milk and eggs should be included in your diet.... Eggs contain properties which are remedial agencies in counter acting poisons.”—[Letter 37, 1901](#); quoted in CDF p 203-4.

The dying doctor reluctantly followed the counsel. It saved his life. He gave forty more years to medical service in the church, where if the counsel from Ellen White had not been hastened across the Pacific he probably would have died. Thirty years after the vision-inspired letter was written, science discovered remedial properties in eggs in the form of certain vitamins. More recently the recognition of the presence of iron in grape juice and the discovery that eggs are a rich source of Vitamin B12 gives particular meaning to the counsels to the physician dying of pernicious anemia. From whom did she get the knowledge essential to save life? From Trall? From Jackson? Or Graham? She declares it was from the Lord, and her claim would be hard to gainsay. Should not a book carrying the title *Prophetess of Health* feature such an exhibit? But this is one of the missing exhibits.



## ***6. The So-Called Daniel's-Kellogg Controversy***

Reference is made in the closing chapter to what might be called "The Battle Creek Tragedy." Earlier in the manuscript mention is several times made of what is said to be a conflict between Elder A. G. Daniells, president of the General Conference, and Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, the leader of the medical work of the church. And the reader is left to believe that this controversy was largely a personality clash between the two leading men. There is no mention made of the pantheistic teachings of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg which blossomed at the turn of the century, teachings which as Ellen White declared would "do away with God." Nor is there any mention made of the Kellogg financial policies which led him to encourage the development and opening of sanitariums here and there, largely on borrowed money, and then persuading the General Conference to take over the indebtedness to the point that the denomination at the time Elder Daniells became its leader was virtually bankrupt. The two men soon clashed on both the matter of sound financial policies and erroneous theological teachings. These are part of the missing exhibits.

## ***7. J. H. Kellogg's 1938 Statement***

It is unfortunate that *Prophetess of Health* does not include some of the kind remarks made by Dr. Kellogg late in his life as those which appeared in his October 21, 1938 statement referred to in the footnotes on pages 230, 238, and 241. This would present a balance to some of his other late remarks. In the 1938 document Kellogg also says the following:

"I had heard it stated that the Institute [at Battle Creek] was built because Sister White had stated that this should be done, but nothing further. On inquiry I found that she had stated that the Lord had shown her that such an institution should be established, and I have never for a moment doubted that a kind Providence planted the work.

"The standards established in those early days I have endeavored to maintain not only while I was a member of the denomination but since. I found Mrs. White a wise counselor and a friend to whom I constantly appealed for advice which I followed to the best of my ability. I had the utmost confidence that the Lord was leading Mrs.

White's mind and I have this same confidence still. She was a godly woman who sought divine guidance and received it. I had many evidences of this, probably more than any other living man ever had.

"I do not for a moment doubt that kind Providence led Mrs. White to recognize the principles on which the Battle Creek Sanitarium is based as divine truth and that this recognition was the motivating impulse which led J. N. Loughborough, Joseph Aldrich, my father and a few others to invest in the enterprise every dollar they could spare from their scanty means.

"I have always entertained the greatest respect and regard for Mrs. White. Aside from my parents she was the best friend I ever had. She treated me as a son. As a young man I was a member of her family for months at a time."—John Harvey Kellogg, autobiographical memoir, October 21, 1938, pp. 5, 6, 11, 15.

Wouldn't it have been fair to have given these remarks made by Kellogg 31 years after his break with the denomination some recognition in *Prophetess of Health*? Is not this one of the missing exhibits?

### *8. In the Field of Medical Science*

But there is another area of Ellen White's writing as prophetess of health conspicuous because of its missing exhibits. This is in the field of medical science, particularly physiology. We hasten past such commonly discussed matters as tobacco, tea and coffee, etc., to mention three which further well illustrate the point:

A. Birth defects resulting from the use of drugs and alcohol. Only in the last fifteen or twenty years have the Ellen G. White statements concerning birth defects become of particular significance, and this was underlined by the thalidomide tragedy of the early 1960's which left thousands of babies without arms or legs or otherwise badly deformed because the mother took what seemed to be a harmless tranquilizer during the early months of pregnancy.

[23] What is common knowledge today did not exist fifteen or twenty years ago, and today it is recognized and repeatedly emphasized that during the early months of pregnancy the prospective mother needs to exercise great care in avoiding all drugs.

Can any reader suggest where Ellen White would have gained a knowledge of what she wrote on this subject back in 1865, unless God had revealed to her that many cases of deformity are the result of birth defects that could be traced to “drug poisons administered at the hand of the doctor” ([Healthful Living, 51#3](#); [Selected Messages 2:442](#)). And in 1890 she spoke of the heavy use of alcohol as responsible for the “thousands of children born deaf, blind, diseased and idiotic” ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 561](#)). Did she gain this from Coles, or Trall, or Jackson? It was something which was unimagined at the time, and yet in the early 1960’s medical science came over and stood by her side in regard to birth defects.

B. And then there is prenatal influence. True, prenatal influence was being advocated by some of the health writers prior to Ellen White’s work, and then as the years progressed their work was discounted. Nonetheless, what Ellen White wrote in 1865 concerning prenatal influence and repeated in 1905 in *Ministry of Healing* is attested to today by the best authorities in the field. It was in 1954 that the breakthrough came. In the twenty years since then authoritative, well-documented reports give the strongest support. But prenatal influence is discredited in *Prophetess of Health* and what might have been a very effective exhibit is not there. It is one more of the missing exhibits.

C. Causative factors in cancer. A point which has been of deep interest for many years among medical men is the Ellen G. White statement published in *Ministry of Healing* in 1905 in which she mentions cancerous germs. For a time the statement was not challenged because no careful study was being made into the causes of cancer, but thirty years later as intensive study was undertaken it was declared that cancer is not an infectious disease. It was declared that there is no infectious agent in connection with cancer. Some at this point ridiculed Ellen White’s statements or tried to interpret them in some satisfactory way. But in the 1950’s the tide began to turn.

Now the viral etiology of cancer has been quite well substantiated by the best research work done in the causative factors in cancer. In 1961 Dr. Robert J. Huebner of the National Institutes of Health at Bethesda, Maryland, declared that “there is not the slightest doubt in

our minds that human cancers are caused by viruses. To this extent they are simply infectious diseases.”

Is it not significant that Ellen White fifty years ahead of medical science linked cancer with a germ? Yet this is not mentioned in *Prophetess of Health*. This, again, is one of the missing exhibits.

Other exhibits might have been cited in the fields of physiology and nutrition. A number are presented in the booklet *Medical Science and the Spirit of Prophecy*. These, however, are sufficient to illustrate the point of how *Prophetess of Health* totally ignores a great body of significant and interesting data that would allow Ellen White to emerge in her true image and which certainly should have its place in a book of this kind. But they are missing exhibits.

#### **IV. Importance Of A Proper Concept Of A Prophet And Their Work**

Some of the exhibits employed in *Prophetess of Health* carry weight only in the light of rigid or distorted concepts of inspiration. We freely admit that as we examine closely the mass of material from Ellen White’s pen—vastly more than from the pen of any other author who laid claim to inspiration—material embodying not only writings intended for publication, but sermons, letters, diaries and even the reports of interviews produced over a period of seventy years, there are some problems. These are relatively few, but some problems do exist. We at the White Estate readily acknowledge this, but in the same breath we point out that there is nothing singular about it. What is true of Ellen White’s writings in this respect is equally true of the Bible—there “are some things hard to be understood” (2 Peter 3:16).

##### *Some Points We Should Consider*

While the limitations of space in this critique do not allow for an extended discussion of God’s communication through His prophets, we should pause here to consider some points in the Holy Scriptures and in the E. G. White writings which may well have a bearing on our observations.

The apostle Paul declared that the gift of prophecy, along with other spiritual gifts, would appear in the Christian church “till we all

come in the unity of the faith” ([Ephesians 4:11-13](#)). Joel particularly specified that “your Sons and your daughters shall prophesy” in anticipation of “the great and terrible day of the Lord” ([Joel 2:28-32](#)). Seventh-day Adventists hold that the prophetic gift has been manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White.

It is only natural that questions should be raised concerning the relationship between Ellen White and the Bible prophets. How did her life, her inspiration, and her work compare with the inspiration and the work of Isaiah, Daniel, Nathan, Huldah and the other Biblical prophets?

She, like them, claimed to speak with divine authority. Her sources of information were similar to theirs. What about the nature of her inspiration,—was it like theirs? It will be instructive to compare Ellen White with the biblical prophets on these and other vital points.

### *Authority*

[24]

The Bible writers claim, either implicitly or explicitly, that it was the God of heaven who authorized them to bear His messages. Moses wrote repeatedly, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel” ([Exodus 14:1, 2](#); [Leviticus 27:1, 2](#); [Numbers 15:1, 2](#), etc.). It was the word of the Lord that came to Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the other prophets ([Ezekiel 1:3](#); [Jeremiah 1:2](#); [Isaiah 1:2](#), etc.). Some New Testament authors make no specific claims to divine authority for their works, yet they obviously believed that their writings were commissioned from above.

Ellen White also maintained unequivocally that God had spoken through her. “In my books,” she declared, “the truth is stated, barricaded by a ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ The Holy Spirit traced these truths upon my heart and mind as indelibly as the law was traced by the finger of God upon the tables of stone” ([Colporteur Ministry, 126](#). Hereinafter abbreviated CM). “Sister White,” she wrote of herself, “is not the originator of these books. They contain the instruction that during her lifework God has been giving her” ([Colporteur Ministry, 125](#)). “God gave me the light contained in *The Great Controversy* and *Patriarchs and Prophets* ... these works were not the product of any human mind; they are the voice of God speaking to His people”

([Colporteur Ministry, 129](#)). “The Holy Ghost is the author of the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy” ([Letter 92, 1900](#)). There was no more question in the mind of Ellen White as to the source of her messages than there was in the minds of the Bible prophets. Like them, she claimed to speak with divine authority.

### *Sources of Information*

A variety of sources entered into the material which is now a part of Holy Writ. These included:

1. *Information supernaturally supplied in visions or prophetic dreams*, such as the account of the creation of the earth, the origin of sin and the fall of man, the apocalyptic visions of Daniel and John, and a great portion of the rest of the Bible.

2. *Genealogical lists*, such as those appearing in [Matthew 1](#) and [Luke 3](#). There is no reason for believing that these long lists of names were supernaturally supplied to the Gospel writers. They no doubt used existing official records as their sources.

3. *Biographies or histories written by others*. Luke acknowledges that he studied other works on Christ’s life before he wrote his Gospel. ([Luke 1:1-4](#)). An examination of the synoptic gospels reveals that not only Luke but also Matthew used existing historical documents. For example, even a casual reading of [Matthew 9:6](#), [Mark 2:10, 11](#) and [Luke 5:24](#) proves that a decided literary relationship existed between the three authors. The passages in Matthew and Luke are practically identical to the one in Mark, even to the inclusion of the non-literary break in the middle of the sentence. If Mark wrote first, as many scholars believe, then both Matthew and Luke engaged in what we call literary borrowing. It is even possible that all three writers may have used a common source.

Many other similar illustrations of this nature could be cited.

4. *Non-christian literature* such as Paul’s quotations in [Titus 1:12](#), and [Acts 17:28](#). Sometimes Paul does not indicate that he is quoting another author, as in [1 Corinthians 15:33](#), where he uses the language of the heathen poet Menander without a credit line. The passage about Enoch’s proclamation of the second advent ([Jude 14, 15](#)) is also found in a pseudepigraphal work of the first century B.C.

5. *The laws of other nations.* As scholars are well aware, the civil code of Israel contained some regulations also found in the code of Hammurabi which was known at least 250 years earlier. Since Moses was one of the best educated men in the world of his day, we must assume that he was acquainted with Hammurabi's laws, and to some extent embodied their language in delineating certain regulations. For example, the code of Hammurabi No. 14 says, "If a citizen has stolen the son of a citizen he shall be put to death." In similar vein Moses wrote, "And he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death" ([Exodus 21:16](#)). The code of Hammurabi No. 196 and No. 200 read, "If a citizen destroys the eye of the son of a citizen his eye shall be destroyed.... If a citizen knocks out a tooth of a citizen his tooth shall be knocked out." Two and a half centuries later Moses wrote, "Life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" ([Deuteronomy 19:21](#)). Clearly, Moses was not the first to say some of the things which are recorded in the Pentateuch. (For the Code of Hammurabi, see James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, pp. 166-177.)

6. *Commonly known facts.* It was not necessary for the Holy Spirit to inform Luke that Emmaus was "about threescore furlongs" from Jerusalem, as this was common knowledge, a fact known to everyone who lived in that area.

In outlining these sources of the prophets' information we do not in any way challenge their inspiration. The Holy Spirit led them to record what they did.

Investigation of the sources used by Ellen White shows that they were quite similar to those used by the Biblical prophets. Among these the following may be listed:

1. Information supernaturally provided through visions and dreams.

In her introduction to the *Great Controversy* Mrs. White states: Through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the scenes of the long continued conflict between good and evil have been opened to the writer of these pages. From time to time I have been permitted to behold the working, in different ages, of the great controversy between Christ, the Prince of life, the Author of our salvation, and Satan, the prince of evil.—GC p. x.

Most of the material in the Ellen White books appears to have been provided in this supernatural way through visions and prophetic dreams.

[25] 2. Articles and books written by others. In the same Great Controversy introduction the author states further,

The great events which have marked the progress of reform in past ages are matters of history, well known and universally acknowledged by the Protestant world; they are facts which none can gainsay. This history I have presented briefly, in accordance with the scope of the book, and the brevity which must necessarily be observed, the facts having been condensed into as little space as seemed consistent with a proper understanding of their application. In some cases where a historian has so grouped together events as to afford, in brief, a comprehensive view of the subject, or has summarized details in a convenient manner, his words have been quoted; but in some instances no specific credit has been given, since the quotations are not given for the purpose of citing that writer as authority, but because his statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject. In narrating the experience and views of those carrying forward the work of reform in our own time, similar use has been made of their published works.—GC pp. xi, xii.

In this passage penned in 1888 Ellen White informs us that, like Moses and Paul, she felt free to use certain existing historical documents. She applied the same principle to religious and health works.

Approximately seven percent of her book *Sketches from the Life of Paul* was drawn from Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of Saint Paul*. Shortly before her own book was published she shared her enthusiasm for Conybeare and Howson with the readers of the church's principal missionary paper. In support of an advertisement for the book in a February, 1883, issue of *Signs of the Times*, she wrote, "*The Life of St. Paul* by Conybeare and Howson, I regard as a book of great merit, and one of rare usefulness to the earnest student of the New Testament history" ([The Signs of the Times, February 22, 1883](#), p. 96). Four months later, in June, 1883, her own volume on Paul was published.

Similarly, Mrs. White directed the attention of Adventists to both Larkin B. Coles and Horace Mann before she ever borrowed a



line from their works. In 1865 she published articles by both Coles and Mann in her six pamphlets, *Health or How to Live*. Later she drew passages from their writings into her own works.

Why, it may be asked, did the prophets need the help of the Holy Spirit when they were using as sources documents already in existence? The answer is that the guidance of the Spirit was needed in determining what should be selected and what should be rejected. For example, Moses was led by the Holy Spirit to include some of the civil laws which were in the code of Hammurabi, but by no means all of them. The code of Hammurabi No. 210 states that if a man caused the death of a pregnant woman his own daughter should be put to death. This inhumane law is not repeated in the Bible. The inspiration of the Spirit is seen in what is omitted as well as in that which is borrowed.

Referring to Ellen White's instruction along health lines, John Harvey Kellogg wrote, in a statement quoted earlier, "The guidance of infinite wisdom is as much needed in discerning between truth and error as in the evolution of new truths" ([Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene](#), 4).

### *The Nature of Inspiration*

According to Peter, "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" ([2 Peter 1:21](#)). To what extent did the Holy Spirit control the prophets in their writing? Was every word dictated? Or were the prophets allowed some measure of freedom in selecting words and phrases which seemed suitable to them? <sup>1</sup> Ellen White answers this question:

The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all "given by inspiration of God" ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit

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<sup>1</sup>Note: In connection with this study the reader will find of interest a statement from the pen of the British clergyman, Henry Alford, D.D., on "The Inspiration of the Evangelists and Other New Testament Writers" appearing as Appendix B (pp. 177-183) of *The Ellen G. White Writings*

has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language.—[The Great Controversy, vii](#), Introduction.

Commenting further on vocabulary and style, she informs us that:

Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by another.—[The Great Controversy, viii](#).

On the union of the divine and the human, Ellen White comments:

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity.... It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired.... He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do His work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, nonetheless, from heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God.—[Selected Messages 1:21, 26](#).

This is the manner in which Ellen White believed that she herself was inspired. In referring to three companies of women she had seen in vision she declared:

Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation. As I wrote upon the subject of dress the view of those three companies revived in my mind as plain as when I was viewing them in vision; but I was left to describe the length of the proper dress in my own language the best I could.—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867, 30:257](#). (See Appendix A).

### *Errors in the Books and Manuscripts*

Since the Bible is a combination of the human and the divine, and since everything that is human is imperfect, we may expect that the Scriptures will reveal in some places the defectiveness of humanity. The manuscripts of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures have been preserved through the ages by the providence of God, but they have not come down to us free from error. In His inscrutable wisdom the Lord has permitted occasional slips of the tongue and pen of the author or the copyist to become a part of the Sacred Writings. Here are a few illustrations:

1. In [Matthew 27:9](#) we read, “Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet.” But the quotation which follows is from Zechariah, not Jeremiah.

2. [Luke 3:36](#) adds a second Cainan to the list of the first twenty patriarchs, thus conflicting with the genealogical list found in [Genesis 10:24](#).

3. In [Acts 7:14](#) Stephen is quoted as saying that Jacob’s family numbered threescore and fifteen souls at the time they entered Egypt, while [Genesis 46:7](#) puts the figure at three score and ten.

There are also “problem texts” in the Bible which cannot be explained to everyone’s satisfaction, such as the imprecatory psalms (e.g., [Psalm 109:10-12](#); [137:8, 9](#)), the hanging of seven men to end a famine ([2 Samuel 21](#)), Ezekiel’s temple that was never built, or [1 Corinthians 14](#) dealing with tongues.

Turning to the Ellen White writings, we also find some errors, but this should not surprise us unless we demand more of her than we require of the Biblical writers. Two examples of the type of error or inaccuracy found in her writings are:

1. She wrote in [The Review and Herald, October 30, 1913](#), “The love of Christ constraineth us, the apostle Peter declared.” Actually, it was Paul, not Peter who wrote those words in [2 Corinthians 5:14](#).

2. [Patriarchs and Prophets, 387](#), reads: “Eleven days after leaving Mount Horeb the Hebrew host encamped at Kadesh.” The events of the journey described in the preceding chapter make it clear that the journey took much longer. The discrepancy can undoubtedly be attributed to [Deuteronomy 1:2](#) which reads: “There are eleven days’ journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea.”

Someone may ask why the Lord did not protect His messages so that they would come to us without any flaws or shortcomings. One answer is that “Faith grows by conflicts with doubts” ([Sons and Daughters of God, 191.](#)) Ellen White states, “God gives light to guide those who honestly desire light and truth; but it is not His purpose to remove all cause for questioning and doubt. He gives sufficient evidence to found faith upon and then requires men to accept that evidence and exercise faith” ([Testimonies for the Church 5:303](#)).

We should not “lament that these difficulties exist,” she says, “but accept them as permitted by the wisdom of God” ([Testimonies for the Church 5:706](#)). And so, while we freely admit that the frailties of humanity have entered into the productions of the prophets, both ancient and modern, yet we need not allow this fact to distress us unduly.

### *Writings Not Given Under Inspiration*

Did the Bible prophets ever write anything which was not divinely inspired? It is a fair assumption that they did. Daniel, for instance, must have written many letters and other documents of a business nature while in the employ of Nebuchadnezzar. Doubtless many of the Bible prophets engaged in correspondence with friends and wrote other things which were not especially given under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. This was also true of Ellen White. On September 11, 1903, she wrote to her son Edson and his wife:

This morning I found your letter under my door. I was glad to hear from you. Yesterday I wrote you a letter on common, everyday topics. This letter will be sent today. I have written a long letter on the subject spoken of in your letter, and have given it out to be copied. This will be sent to you soon.—[Letter 202, 1903.](#)

Here Ellen White is describing two different letters she had written to Edson. One was a “common” letter, therefore not given under inspiration, while the other was counsel in response to problems he was facing in his missionary activities.

At times Ellen White dealt with both common and sacred matters in the same letter. (See T. H. Jemison, *Prophet Among You*, p. 400.) Where did she and her contemporaries—and where do we

today—draw the line between that which was divinely inspired and that which was not? Ellen White answered this question in her discussion of the number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium. She wrote:

The information given concerning the number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium was given, not as a revelation from the Lord, but simply as a human opinion. There has never been revealed to me the exact number of rooms in any of our sanitariums; and the knowledge I have obtained of such things I have gained by inquiring of those who were supposed to know. In my words, when speaking upon these common subjects, there is nothing to lead minds to believe that I received my knowledge in a vision from the Lord and am stating it as such.

When the Holy Spirit reveals anything regarding the institutions connected with the Lord's word, or concerning the work of God upon human hearts and minds, as He has revealed these things through me in the past, the message given is to be regarded as light given of God for those who need it. But for one to mix the sacred with the common is a great mistake.—[Selected Messages 1:38](#).

Only a small percentage of Ellen White's published writings deal with common things. For the most part her writings are of a decidedly religious character. She wrote:

In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas, they are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne. It is true concerning the articles in our papers and in the many volumes of my books.—[Selected Messages 1:29](#).

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### *Evidence of Divine Inspiration*

A compelling conviction of the inspiration of Scripture is supplied by the internal witness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. With reference to the Scriptures, the Westminster Confession of Faith declares that:

Our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit,

bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.—Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. III, p. 603.

Ellen White says essentially the same thing when she states: Everyone who has passed from death unto life can testify I need help, and I found it in Jesus. “Why do I believe the Bible?—Because I have found it to be the voice of God to my soul.” We may have the witness in ourselves that the Bible is true.—[Steps to Christ](#), 112.

A second persuasive argument in favor of the divine inspiration of the Canonical writings is found in the fulfillment of its prophecies.

Turning to Ellen White we ask, Does the Holy Spirit speak uniquely and powerfully to human hearts through her writings? Thousands answer, Yes.

Additional evidence of Ellen White’s inspiration is found in the area of fulfilled predictions and in the meeting of crisis situations with messages providentially timed to reach the point of need at precisely the right moment. Evidence is found in the success which has attended the work of the church called into being by her messages and nurtured by her counsels. Many exhibits could be presented, but space forbids.

A comparison of the ministry of Ellen White with that of the Bible prophets reveals parallels that are truly striking. Her life bears a marked resemblance to theirs. Those who knew Ellen White best when she lived and those who know her best now through her works, are alike convinced that she truly did the work of a prophet. To all who may not be personally acquainted with her writings, the Pauline invitation is extended, “Despise not prophesyings; Prove all things, hold fast that which is good” ([1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21](#)).

### *Some Relevant Questions*

Having called attention to certain points of interest in connection with the Bible prophets and with the experiences of Ellen G. White, we may well give consideration to some points regarding inspiration and revelation as we look at some of the situations introduced in *Prophetess of Health*. Readers might well ask themselves:

1. Are we bringing a true, valid concept of inspiration to bear in dealing with these situations?

a. Do we build on the premise of verbal inspiration—that the prophet mechanically wrote or uttered words imparted by a supernatural power.

b. Or is it our understanding that in vision there was imparted to the prophet certain concepts, ideas and information which when not in vision he was to embody in his own words in conveying the message to the people.

2. Do we recognize that the prophet must convey his message in the terminology commonly in use and that he may not always have selected the most appropriate or accurate forms of expression?

3. Do we accept that the prophet was a human being with the sensitivities and proclivities of humanity? Do we realize that Ellen White did not operate in a vacuum, but was a mother in the home, a citizen in the community, a wife traveling with her husband or others under all conceivable circumstances? And do we recall that she was often hounded by poverty and at times suffered intensely from illness, that she spoke to every type of audience, was in demand for incessant interviews—all the while having many of her words recorded and all of them critically examined?

4. Do we recognize that in the case of Ellen G. White she was called to a work which included “More than the word ‘prophet’ signifies?” ([Selected Messages 1:32](#)). Her work led her, in an emergency, to conduct a monthly column in the *Health Reformer*. Under all types of circumstances she mixed with the people in their homes and their work in favorable living circumstances and unfavorable. Do we recognize that under such conditions it was not always possible to reach and maintain the ideal, for example in the matter of her personal diet?

5. Are we cognizant of her position with respect to reforms as she counseled that “we would better come one step short of the mark than to go one step beyond it. And if there is error at all, let it be on the side next to the people” ([Testimonies for the Church 3:21](#)).

6. Is there a tendency with the concept of inspiration we hold, to demand more in the prophet, who was a mortal such as ourselves, than we are justified? Or do we demand more of Ellen White than we would of the Bible prophets?

7. Do we accept the proposition set forth by Ellen White relating to her counsels that:

a. “Circumstances change the relation of things” (Ms 7, 1904; [The Review and Herald, April 24, 1975](#)).

b. “Time and place must be taken into account” ([Selected Messages 1:57](#)).

8. Do we recognize that God leads His people as they are able to follow? That what may be present truth today may not have been present truth a year or two ago, or five or ten or twenty years ago?

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9. Do we keep in mind that God never gave visions to take the place of initiative, study, or hard work. They were given to make us strong, not weak and dependent. Often His special guidance is shown in calling attention to certain principles without presenting all the details of application. For example:

a. God revealed the important place of water in the care of the sick but did not disclose the details of giving baths or wet sheet packs. This could come from study, experimentation and the work of others.

b. God called attention to the value of grains, legumes, vegetables, and fruits in the dietary program, but He did not give detailed instructions on the nutritional value of each or how to cook beans or provide a recipe for bread, gems, or nut loaf.

10. Do we remember that the prophet, although careful not to set forth his own ideas as divinely imparted instruction, was not deprived of thinking ordinary thoughts, of engaging in ordinary conversations or of taking part in everyday secular activities?

Nor would the prophet necessarily remember accurately all details of events in which he may have participated during his life. And this could well account for the possibility of some minor discrepancies in recollection of places and dates of events. She did not claim inerrant accuracy in every detail in her biographical statements. In her preface to *Spiritual Gifts, Volume 2*, an autobiographical work entitled “*My Christian Experience, Views and Labors*,” published in 1860, she states:

In preparing the following pages, I have labored under great disadvantages, as I have had to depend in many instances, on memory, having kept no journal till within a few years. In several instances I have sent the manuscripts to friends who were present when the circumstances related occurred, for their examination before they were put in print. I have taken great care, and have spent much time,



in endeavoring to state the simple facts as correctly as possible. *I have, however, been much assisted in arriving at dates by the many letters which I wrote.*—page iii. (Emphasis supplied).

The appendix appearing in the first 400 copies carried this statement:

A special request is made that if any find incorrect statements in this book they will immediately inform me. The edition will be completed about the first of October; therefore send before that time.

In none of the score or more books issued during her life did she include such statements as appeared in the Preface of her 1860 autobiography except for the biographical accounts in *Early Writings* and the *Testimonies* etc. which represented a different type of writing.

By turning to the *Comprehensive Index*, Volume 3, p. 2950, and the heading, “White, Ellen G. White, Biographical,” it will be found that several times errors occurred in her statements of her experiences based on her memory:

She first heard Miller preach in 1840 not 1839.

She heard Miller preach again in 1842 not 1841.

She was baptized June 26, 1842, at the age of 14 and not 12 as reported in [Spiritual Gifts 2:13](#).

She claimed no divine inspiration for biographical statements based on her recalling the events.

Clearly, a concept of inspiration which grows out of the facts, not preconceived notions, is essential to finding a satisfactory answer to the “problem” statements in Ellen White’s writings. (See Appendix F, “A Factual Concept of Inspiration.”)

### *Could Ellen White Be Depended On To Tell The Truth?*

Scattered through *Prophetess of Health* are insinuations that Ellen White was not always strictly truthful—that is, she prevaricated when this seemed expedient in making a point or meeting an awkward situation. As noted earlier this is a viewpoint which dominates the book as effort is made to counter her claim to divine origin of her teachings on health.

The implications are serious for it is logical to conclude that a prophet would tell the truth. Could it be that, as *Prophetess of Health*

insinuates, the one who wrote, “God despises misrepresentation and prevarication” ([Evangelism, 132](#)), held a double standard: One she taught and another she followed?

This brings us to the proposition of Ellen White’s integrity. Would one who counseled: “Be straight and undeviating. Even a slight prevarication should not be allowed” ([My Life Today, 331](#)), dissimulate? “Even life itself,” she wrote at one time, “should not be purchased with the price of falsehood” ([Testimonies for the Church 4:336](#)). And she pointed out that:

Falsehood and deception of every cast is sin against the God of truth and verity. The word of God is plain upon these points. Ye shall not “deal falsely, neither lie one to another.” “All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” God is a God of sincerity and *truth*.—*Ibid.*

The charge that Ellen White deviated from the truth is a serious one and before accepting it the thoughtful reader will carefully ponder its implications as touching all her writings and ministry. First he will ask, why should she attempt to avoid the truth? What did she have to gain? Then, knowing the nature and influence of these writings, he will pause before passing judgment. He will ask: Are her writings as a whole characterized by misrepresentations and a shady use of the truth? If, as her work is presented in *Prophetess of Health*, there is an apparent distortion of truth, can it be that some facts have been overlooked or omitted, or is there projected a misconception of inspiration? When all the facts are brought forward will this make a difference in judging the point in question?

Unfortunately, there are individuals who will receive what is presented as evidence to undercut confidence in the integrity and binding obligation of the Spirit of Prophecy counsels, yet the conscientious seeker of truth will hesitate to allow his confidence to be influenced by anything short of proven facts. He will approach carefully unsustained assertions and assumptions.

## V. The Matter Of Plagiarism

In a number of places throughout *Prophetess of Health* allusions are made to Ellen White’s borrowing the sentiments and occasionally the wording of certain health reform writers such as Mann, Coles,

etc. Typical are the words appearing on page 83: “In her essay ‘Health,’ which reads like L. B. Coles,” etc., or on page 156 where speaking of one point the book states that she “neglected, as she so often did, to cite her earthly source.”

*Time* magazine in its August 2, 1976, issue carries an article titled “Prophet or Plagiarist?” devoted to the book, *Prophetess of Health*, Ellen G. White, and the Seventh-day Adventist church. They put it this way:

Numbers contends that many of White’s supposedly unique revelations simply reflected contemporary views, and may sometimes have been plagiarized from the writings of 19th century health reformers and diet faddists.

While reference is made on page 25 of this critique to Mrs. White’s use of historical and health works, and certain specific items of borrowing will be dealt with in the chapter by chapter review which follows, it may be well at this point to give a little time to a discussion of plagiarism as such.

The charge that Mrs. White was guilty of plagiarism—literary theft—is not new to Seventh-day Adventists. It was first introduced by D. M. Canright in 1889. The word plagiarism may be frightening to some, as it may call up questions both moral and legal. Let us look at the matter candidly, taking into account the attitude and practice of other well known authors of Ellen White’s day and appraise the involvements of one author borrowing from another.

For clarity, comprehension and strength we can do no better than to quote from F. D. Nichol’s discussion of the matter in *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*.

### *The Historical Background of Literary Borrowing*

In order rightly to evaluate the charge before us, we need to examine the subject of literary borrowings in its historical setting. The old saying that there is nothing new under the sun finds ample illustration in the history of literature. Literary ideas, themes, plots, et cetera, seem to be strangely alike century after century. Different writers fall into similar forms of expression in describing similar incidents. One writer, though patently borrowing phrases or sentences from another writer, may use these simply as a part of

his foundational material on which he rears a literary edifice that is sufficiently different from that of the other writer to warrant the judgment that it is a piece of truly original literary architecture. It is in this very area that much of the dispute and uncertainty have arisen.

So general has been the practice, by prose writers as well as by poets, of drawing more or less from earlier works that the noted author, Vicente Blasco-Ibanez, declared, in a vein of hyperbole:

One is compelled not only to say, but also to believe, that all the great writers, absolutely all, are plagiarists, and that the best of each does not belong to him, because he has taken it from others.—Quoted by Maurice Salzman in *Plagiarism, The “Art” of Stealing Literary Material*, p. 22.

Another writer on this general subject observes; “The great [literary] artist is only one of a long chain of borrowers and adapters.”—W. A. Edwards, *Plagiarism, An Essay on Good and Bad Borrowing*, p. 114.

### *Religious Writers Borrowed Without Acknowledgment*

The greatest difficulty of all in evaluating a charge of plagiarism against an author has been in the field of religious writing. Religious writers, in general, have felt that they were writing, not to advance their own interests, but the interests of the kingdom of God, and that whatever might contribute to that objective should be drawn upon. They have also felt that the common source of all religious writing is the Bible, on which no one has a monopoly. Listen to this frank statement by none other than John Wesley as to how he proceeded in his writing in relation to other authors:

I once designed to write down barely what occurred to my own mind, consulting none but the inspired writers. But no sooner was I acquainted with that great light of the Christian world, (lately gone to his reward) Ben Gelius, than I entirely changed my design, being thoroughly convinced it might be of more service to the cause of religion, were I barely to translate his *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, than to write many volumes upon it. Many of his excellent notes I have therefore translated. Many more I have abridged, omitting that part which was purely critical, and giving the substance of the rest...

I am likewise indebted for some useful observations to Dr. Heylin's *Theological Lectures*: and for many more to Dr. Guyse, and to the *Family Expositor* of the late pious and learned Dr. Doddridge. It was a doubt with me for some time, whether I should not subjoin to every note I received from them the name of the author from whom it was taken; especially considering I had transcribed some, and abridged many more, almost in the words of the author.

But upon farther consideration, I resolved to name none, that nothing might divert the mind of the reader from keeping close to the point of view and receiving what was spoken only according to its own intrinsic value.—*Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, Preface. [30]

#### *All Commentators Have Borrowed—Often Without Credit*

A Bible commentator makes this general statement with regard to the practice followed by theological writers through the years in quoting from men who had preceded them:

All the commentators have drawn largely from the fathers, especially from St. Augustine; and most of them have made general property of Patrick, Lowth, and Whitby. Poole has exhausted the old continental writers; Henry has made very free with Bishop Hall and others; Scott and Benson have enriched their pages abundantly from Henry; Gill has translated the spirit of Poole's "Synopsis," but he most generally gives his authorities; Adam Clarke and Davidson have been much indebted to all the best critics, though the former does not always mention his obligations, and the latter never; but his preface to this admirable "Pocket Commentary" is an honest confession that he pretends to be no more than a compiler; some original thoughts appear, however, to be scattered among his notes.—Ingram Cobbin, *The Condensed Commentary and Family Exposition of the Holy Bible* (London: William Tegg, 1863), Pre face, p. iv.

In general, it did not occur to these writers to put quotation marks around every phrase or sentence they might borrow, much less to give documentary reference. They seemed to reason that they were drawing from a common pile of building material that had been produced by earlier literary builders. They saw no reason why they ought not to be free to pick up a brick here or a board there, or even

several boards nailed together, to incorporate into the edifice that they were constructing.

Or, to change the figure: They felt that they could rightly borrow from the blueprints of earlier author-architects a design for a pillar, a cornice, or some other detail of the new edifice they were creating. They felt that in turn the blueprint of their finished literary edifice would provide further material from which later authors would draw, and thus they would be making a contribution that would ethically justify their borrowings. Nor did they feel that the finished structure which came from their hand and pen was any the less theirs because they had followed this procedure. It never occurred to them that they must label the pillar, or the cornice, or whatever it was that they borrowed in design, as having come from an earlier design, in order to be considered honest builders...

In thus giving a recital of some of the literary practices of the past, particularly in the field of religious writing, we are not necessarily saying that such practices were ideal—we are sure they were not. For some generations there has been a steadily growing conviction that an author should give to his readers clear evidence of his literary borrowings. In fact, the trend has gone almost to the extreme today, so that many writers feel that they should not only use quotation marks, but also give the name of the author, if they borrow so much as a part of a sentence.

Both the moral and the legal angles of literary borrowing have provoked endless disputes and revealed every shade of opinion. Authors who have devoted books to the subject confess to difficulty in framing a wholly satisfactory definition of plagiarism. Courts have likewise found themselves in difficulty. It is not an uncommon thing for higher courts to reverse lower courts in suits for infringement, infringement being the legal aspect of plagiarism.

A modern writer on this subject said, with regard to the writing of his own book:

I am fully aware of the difficulty of deciding what is plagiarism of a sort. If I had indicated the source of every statement made, the notes would have been so numerous as to interfere with the continuity of the letterpress: I have, therefore, confined myself to occasional references, and have indicated the quotations I have made; but I must bear the blame of having sometimes used the

investigations of others with only a general acknowledgment of indebtedness.—H. M. Pauli, *Literary Ethics*, pp. 126, 127.

### *The Legal Aspect of Plagiarism*

Because of the well-defined copyright laws that now obtain in the United States—and in most other countries for that matter—it is possible for an author who feels that another writer has plagiarized his work to enter suit against him. Needless to say many such suits have been instituted. As a result there is a rather large body of decisions that set forth the consensus of legal thinking on this matter. The following is quoted from the authoritative summary of the current rulings of the courts regarding this matter: In determining the question of infringement, the amount of matter copied from the copyrighted work is an important consideration, but to constitute infringement it is not necessary that the whole or even a large portion of the work shall have been copied, although on the principle of *de minimis non curat lex* it is necessary that a material and substantial part of it shall have been copied, it being insufficient that mere words or lines have been abstracted. If so much is taken that the value of the original is sensibly diminished, or the labors of the original author are substantially and to an injurious extent appropriated by another, that is sufficient in point of law to constitute a piracy. The question is one of quality rather than quantity and is to be determined by the character of the work and the relative value of the material taken, and it has been said that in deciding questions of this sort the court must look to the nature and objects of the selections made, the quantity and value of the materials used, and the degree in which the use may prejudice the sale, diminish the profits, or supersede the objects of the original work.—18 *Corpus Juris Secundum*, Sec. 94, p. 218.

[31]

Making extracts, even if they are not acknowledged as such, appearing under all the circumstances of the case, reasonable in quality, number, and length, regard being had to the object with which the extracts are made and to the subjects to which they relate, is a fair and noninfringing *use*.—*Ibid.*, Sec. 105, p. 224.

#### What Is the Essence of Plagiarism?

After we have considered the legal aspect, and the changing viewpoint of different generations as to how extensively a writer

may properly copy from others without acknowledgment, we still have before us the primary question: Morally speaking, what is the essence of the offense called plagiarism? The answer is evident: The attempt of a writer to deceive his readers into thinking that the entire work which bears his name is wholly his own, when in fact some strands of the fabric were drawn, not from his own mental spinning wheel, but from the fabric of some other author's work. <sup>2</sup> —*Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, p. 410.

*Prophetess of Health* contends that Ellen White borrowed without giving credit from Mann and Coles, etc. There is evidence that in articles touching on physiology, hygiene, and nutrition *written subsequent* to the issuance of her basic health writings published in 1864 and 1865, *she did* occasionally embody her thoughts in words and phrases of these health writers—writers to whom she had already called attention. But concerning the first health writing she declared in 1867:

I did not read any works upon health until I had written *Spiritual Gifts*, volumes iii and iv, [August, 1864] *Appeal to Mothers*, [April, 1864] and had sketched out most of my six articles in the six numbers of “How to Live” [Jan.-June, 1865]...

And after I had written my six articles for “How to Live,” I then searched the various works on Hygiene and was surprised to find them so nearly in harmony with what the Lord had revealed to me. And to show this harmony, and to set before my brethren and sisters the subject as brought out by able writers, I determined to publish “How to Live,” in which I largely extracted from the works referred to.—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#), 30:260.

The materials she extracted and used stood as separate, properly accredited articles or excerpts. After this clear-cut declaration of 1867, her later use of words and phrases from sources to which she had called attention gave evidence she had nothing to cover up.

We conclude this discussion with a summation made by Nichol: Can Mrs. White rightly be charged with plagiarism? Let us break down the question into several parts to cover the moral and the legal phases:

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<sup>2</sup>Pauli well observes that a plagiarist is distinguished by the fact that he “always hopes that he will not be found out.” *Op. cit.*, p.45



1. Was there an intent to deceive? We believe the unprejudiced reader will willingly answer No. And that answer removes completely the shady color of evil intent that some have sought to cast over Mrs. White in this matter.

(In the following questions we have quoted phrases from the summary of the current court rulings on infringement—the legal side of plagiarism—which was cited earlier in this chapter.)

2. Did Mrs. White take “so much ... that the value of the original is sensibly diminished, or the labors of the original author are substantially and to an injurious extent appropriated”? The answer is surely an emphatic No...

3. Were the borrowings “reasonable in quality, number, and length,” particularly in regard “to the nature and objects of the selections made” and “the subjects to which they relate”? The answer is *Yes.*—*Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, p. 427. <sup>3</sup>

## **VI. Involvement of Denominational Agencies in Preparation of Prophetess of Health**

The Preface of *Prophetess of Health* and the copious footnotes throughout the book contain frequent references to sources consulted at Loma Linda University and the Ellen G. White Estate at the General Conference headquarters in Washington, D.C. Reference is also made to materials which have been secured from these two organizations. Thus the contacts made by the author with these Institutions should be explained.

Serious work which led to the preparation of the manuscript by Dr. Ronald L. Numbers was begun in 1972 at a time when he was serving as an assistant professor of history of medicine in the Department of Humanities at Loma Linda University. As a bona fide member of the LLU faculty, there was available to him in the Heritage Room and other departments of the Loma Linda Library, materials which would relate to his field of instruction.

It was at that time and under those circumstances in July, 1972, that he contacted the Ellen G. White Estate as one who had received a grant from the Walter E. McPherson Society of Loma Linda

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<sup>3</sup>The reader is directed to the full discussion of the subject in *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pp. 403-458, for a detailed discussion of Mrs. White's borrowings.

University, asking the privilege of doing research work on the origins of the Seventh-day Adventist medical work. On the basis of his credentials he was given the privilege which he sought. This was quite routine. Many individuals in their research work have been granted the privilege of access to the E. G. White materials. We at the White Estate have welcomed such requests and have been happy to grant these privileges.

[32] When both the director of the Heritage Room at the Loma Linda Library and we at the White Estate perceived that it was likely that a negative and unjustified interpretation would be placed on the exhibits which at his request were supplied to the author of *Prophetess of Health*, we could do no more than encourage him to use the sources which he had gained in a responsible way. We urged our concern that all facts be fairly reported and that the presentation be such that Ellen White would emerge in a true image. This we have urged a number of times in our contacts with the author. He has assured us repeatedly and as late as February 15, 1975, that he was as concerned as we were that the portrayal of Ellen White be accurate. He disclaimed any desire to give a distorted picture of either Ellen White or her work.

When copy of the manuscript came to our hands, we arranged for a representative of the White Estate and the Chairman of the Department of History at Andrews University to review with the author a number of points which according to information in our possession had either been only partially reported or had been given an emphasis which in our opinion the sources did not justify. Some of our suggestions were accepted, some rejected, but the thrust of the book was left unchanged.

The publishers who had accepted the manuscript, were, soon after they received it, alerted by the White Estate that according to our knowledge of the content, Ellen White did not emerge in her true image and the facts were in many cases not accurately reported. No requests or demands were made of the publishers. Their response was that they would “insist that any book published under the Harper and Row imprint be true to the historical record.”

The White Estate has taken the position, and we reiterate the fact, that Seventh-day Adventists have nothing to be ashamed of in their history when that history is accurately and responsibly reported.

However, it must be recognized that historical materials can be arranged so as to give a misleading impression, and this we believe to be the case with *Prophetess of Health*.

We make one more general observation: The reader of *Prophetess of Health* is urged to peruse the footnotes to gain the intent of the author. At times in these notes he seems to almost reverse himself. An example of this is his reference on page 5 to the possibility of Ellen Harmon suffering from mercury poisoning because “a mercury solution” was used in treating the fur used in felt hats. It is said that “This disease manifested itself in various psychic and physical disturbances including ‘self-consciousness,’ ‘tremors’ and ‘hallucinations’” (*Ibid.*). In the accompanying footnote (p. 213), the author admits that “it seems unlikely to me that mercury-induced hallucinations had anything to do with her later visions.” Why, then, may we ask, is the mercury poisoning item introduced in the text?

## VII. The Significance of the Book

It is neither our moral right nor duty to pass judgments on individuals or to impugn the motives and integrity of the author of *Prophetess of Health*. We urge all to refrain from accepting and repeating rumors and from attempting to judge individuals. It is, however, our duty to stand in defense of truth and present documentation which places many matters dealt with in their true perspective. It is our duty also to remind the readers of Ellen White’s prediction that “The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’ ([Proverbs 29:18](#))” ([Selected Messages 1:48](#)).

Can it be doubted that the enemy of souls will use such a book to accomplish this very work? “Satan will work ingeniously,” the servant of the Lord tells us, “to unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony” (*Ibid.*). For whatever purpose the author may have intended that the book should serve, it will no doubt be used by some to undermine confidence in the work of Ellen White.

This book must nevertheless be taken as an opportunity to increase our understanding of our history and our ability to deal with such challenges with appropriate skill, grace, firmness, and equa-

nimity. There have been a number of such challenges down through the years, coming from within the church or instigated by former Seventh-day Adventists.

Ellen White assures us that we may expect even more historical and doctrinal challenges from without the church:

Every position of truth taken by our people will bear the criticism of the greatest minds; the highest of the world's great men will be brought in contact with truth, and therefore every position we take should be critically examined and tested by the Scriptures. Now we seem to be unnoticed, but this will not always be. Movements are at work to bring us to the front, and if our theories of truth can be picked to pieces by historians or the world's greatest men, it will be done.

We must individually know for ourselves what is truth, and be prepared to give a reason of the hope that we have with meekness and fear, not in a proud, boasting, self-sufficiency, but with the spirit of *Christ*.—*Evangelism*, 69.

### *General Conference Encourages Investigation*

In order to foster this necessary familiarity with our church's history and doctrine, the General Conference Session in 1975, adopted the following resolution:

That students and workers be encouraged to make active use of the rich research materials being gathered at the E. G. White-SDA Research Centers established in different parts of the world.

[33] This will facilitate and stimulate useful research and keep alive and strengthen confidence in the Ellen G. White writings, especially among the younger generation.—RH GCB No. 10, P. 8(940), Aug. 7-14, 1975.

#### To Ignore or Not to Ignore

Some have wondered just what the church should do when faced by such a book. It has been suggested that it should merely be ignored. Yet we recall the counsel Mrs. White gave years ago in a somewhat similar situation in Australia. She wrote:

When man assails his fellow-men, and presents in a ridiculous light those whom God has appointed to do work for Him, we would not be doing justice to the accusers, or to those who are misled by

their accusations should we keep silent, leaving the people to think that their brethren and sisters, in whom they have had confidence, are no longer worthy of their love and fellowship.

This work, arising in our very midst, and resembling the work of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, is an offense to God, and should be met. And on every point the accusers should be called upon to bring their proof. Every charge should be carefully investigated; it should not be left in any uncertain way, the people should not be left to think that it may be or it may not be...

And when there is a servant of God, whom He has appointed to do a certain work, and who for half a century has been an accepted worker, laboring for the people of our faith, and before God's workers as one whom the Lord has appointed; when for some reason one of the brethren falls under temptation, and because of the messages of warning given him becomes offended, as did the disciples of Christ, and walks no more with Christ; when he begins to work against the truth, and makes his disaffection public, declaring things untrue which are true, these things must be met. The people must not be left to believe a lie. They must be undeceived.—EGW [Letter 98a, 1897](#).

### *A Review of Some of the More Important Points*

No attempt will be made in this review of the book to take up every point introduced to picture Ellen White as *Prophetess of Health*. As chapter by chapter we peruse the book we shall deal with a representative group of exhibits that stand out. It should not be necessary to go beyond this. If twenty or so specific exhibits show that one cannot place full dependence on the book, what would be gained in exploring each and every one? The most significant will be noted. The absence of mention of a specific problem should not be taken to mean that there is no valid answer to it.

## Chapter 1—A Prophetess Is Born

This largely biographical chapter is written in an interesting style and is informative. The biographical data is for the most part accurate, but interpretations of certain experiences are in some instances over-stressed and in others the conclusions are unsupported and quite misleading.

*Ellen Harmon and good health*—On page 2 after mentioning Ellen Harmon's childhood experience in picking up a scrap of paper which predicted the near end of the world and referring to her accident at the age of nine it is stated: "For the remainder of Ellen's long life, good health and Christ's second coming were uppermost in her mind."

This sweeping rhetorical sentence gives the incorrect impression that her girlhood accident made the subject of health uppermost in her mind. There is no evidence that because of the accident she focused her attention unduly on health. Except for the fact that she off and on suffered ill health for a number of years, the documentation in our files would lead us to conclude that her interest in health lines was no different than that of her contemporaries. If she had been an avid health buff in the years 1836 to 1860, why was it that with Graham, Alcott, Coles, etc., in the land neither her supposed interest nor the interest of her friends led her to a knowledge of their work? She is strangely silent on this topic said to be uppermost in her mind. At no time did she link the experience of her childhood accident with her interest in health. At no time between the time of the accident and the time of the vision thirty years later did she manifest any unusual interest in healthful living.

Only once in her long life did she look back to make mention of picking up the piece of paper. The reader should be alert to the frequent broad assertions sparked by casual or isolated Ellen G. White statements.

## The Shut Door Matter

At several points in this chapter the “Shut Door” matter is introduced: on pages 14, 16, 17, 23, 26, 27, 28.

The term is interpreted as the closing of the door of mercy to sinners on October 22, 1844. The “shut door” is an involved question. To assess it correctly, one must have a thorough knowledge of the circumstances of the times, and also of the perceptive change of the meaning of the term as employed by Sabbathkeeping Adventists between the years 1844 and 1851. In its strictest sense, the term referred to the close of probation for all mankind on October 22, 1844. In its broader and much used sense, it came to stand for having confidence in the fulfillment of prophecy in 1844.

There appears in the [The Review and Herald, February, 1851](#) a letter which a new convert to the teachings of the Sabbathkeeping Adventists wrote to his son. It sheds some light on the meaning of the term shut door as held at that time. It begins as follows: “*I have from the presentation of truth embraced the seventh-day Sabbath and shut door as being my last refuge in this dark and gloomy day.*” And when about half through he says, “Hence *I embraced the ‘midnight cry,’ the ‘shut door,’ and the third angel’s message as being my last refuge, as I started at first.*” (Emphasis supplied.)

[34]

As explained by Ellen White, and others, while they held that probation had closed for those who had received light and had rejected it, or those in the Advent movement who repudiated their Advent experience, they did not maintain for long that there was no opportunity for the salvation of sinners generally after 1844. The ample evidence concerning this includes the personal work of Ellen White for sinners.

It is asserted on page 27 that “By 1851 the Whites had abandoned much of their shut door doctrine” and “systematically deleted from her writings what might be construed as supporting the shut door.” It is of interest to observe that Ellen White in her 1884 *Spirit of Prophecy* Volume IV, in a chapter entitled “An Open and a Shut Door” (pp. 268-272), explained the choices open to Adventists in 1844. The concluding paragraph is significant:

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](#).—[The Spirit of Prophecy 4:271-2](#).

Ellen White also made reference to this experience in all printings of [The Great Controversy, 429](#) (trade edition).

On August 24, 1874, in answering a question raised by J. N. Loughborough she stated her position:

With my brethren and sisters, after the time passed in forty-four 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 that the precious light in regard to the heavenly sanctuary was opened before me and I was shown the open and shut door.—[Selected Messages 1:74](#).

Considerable material has been written on “the shut door” and may be found in the *SDA Encyclopedia* pp. 921-924; *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pp. 161-252; and a sixty-two page A. L. White well-documented monograph on the subject is available on request from the Ellen G. White Estate. In 1883 looking back to the shut door experience Mrs. White explained:

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.

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.

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 god-

liness, and profess to be followers of Christ; but having no living connection with God, they would be taken captive by the delusions of Satan. These two classes are brought to view in the vision [her first vision].—[Selected Messages 1:63-64](#).

[35]

### The Visions

*The Astronomy Vision Convinces Bates*—(page 15) It is intimated that inasmuch as Bates back in 1845 had written a tract entitled “The Opening Heavens” relating Lord Rosse’s discoveries of the open space in Orion, it was not strange that Ellen White’s running account of heavenly bodies and Orion as she had a vision in Bates’ presence in 1846 strengthened his confidence. It should be noted that the Bates tract consisted of 39 pages of 44 lines each, and there are but twelve lines on page 8 devoted to a very brief treatment of Lord Rosse’s observations. A few more lines of the Bates pamphlet are given over to one or two other astronomers, but this is all that relates to Orion.

What in the vision convinced Joseph Bates that the experience of Ellen White was genuine was that she in vision first began to talk about the planets, giving a glowing description of rosy tinted belts which she saw across the surface of one, and then she described the satellites of other planets. In each case Bates, with his knowledge of astronomy and having studied the stars through a telescope, recognized what she was describing, and he identified certain of the objects by name (*Great Second Advent Movement*, p. 258). Orion was only a part of what was shown to her. The other matters viewed of planets and satellites are not referred to at all in the Bates pamphlet. So she could hardly be indebted to Bates for the major part of what she was shown in the vision. For fuller documentation see *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pp. 91-101.

*State in vision: slowed down vital functions*—(Pages 19, 20) While the testimony of Martha Amadon who witnessed the health vision of June 6, 1863, is presented (pages 18, 19), there is omitted from this first-hand description of one who often saw Ellen White in vision the unequivocal declaration: “In vision her eyes were open. *There was no breath*, but there were graceful movements of the shoulders, arms, and hands expressive of what she saw.”

The absence of breath is discounted in the book by the statement that:

According to the testimony of numerous physicians and curiosity seekers, her vital functions slowed alarmingly, with her heart beating sluggishly and respiration becoming imperceptible.... The two Kellogg doctors, Merritt and John, believed she suffered from catalepsy, which, as the latter described it, "is a nervous state allied with hysteria in which sublime visions are usually experienced. The muscles are set in such a way that ordinary tests fail to show any evidence of respiration, but the application of more delicate tests show there are slight breathing movements sufficient to maintain life." (Page 19).

While we do not hold that the physical phenomena are a "test" of the prophet, we can hardly pass by the distortion presented in this paragraph. Countering such flimsy support for the proposition that the physical phenomena was but a slowing down of bodily functions is the published testimony of many observers, one of which was Elder George I. Butler when as president of the General Conference he wrote in 1874: For nearly thirty years past these visions have been given with greater or less frequency, and have been witnessed by many, oftentimes by unbelievers as well as those believing them.... The time Mrs. White is in this condition has varied from fifteen minutes to one hundred and eighty. During this time the heart and pulse continue to beat, the eyes are always wide open.... They exhibit a pleasant expression. There is no ghastly look or any resemblance of fainting. The brightest light may be suddenly brought near her eyes, or feints made as if to thrust something into the eye, and there is never the slightest wink or change of expression on that account: and it is sometimes hours and even days after she comes out of this condition before she recovers her natural sight. She says it seems to her that she comes back into a dark world, yet her eyesight is in nowise injured by her visions.

While she is in vision, her breathing entirely ceases. No breath ever escapes her nostrils or lips when in this condition. This has been proved by many witnesses, among them physicians of skill, and themselves unbelievers in the visions, on some occasions being appointed by a public congregation for the purpose.

When she goes into this condition, there is no appearance of swooning or faintness, her face retains its natural color, and the blood circulates as usual. Often she loses her strength temporarily and reclines or sits; but at other times she stands up. She moves her arms gracefully, and often her face is lighted up with radiance as though the glory of Heaven rested upon her. She is utterly unconscious of everything going on around her, while she is in vision, having no knowledge what ever of what is said and done in her presence.—[The Review and Herald, June 9, 1874](#), 43:201.

Similar testimony from others could be cited, but the witness is so uniform there is little reason to take the space required.

While we would not wish to overemphasize the importance of the physical phenomena, it is one evidence among others that cannot be ignored, nor does the evidence presented in *Prophetess of Health* look well in the face of incontrovertible testimony of a large number of people, including disbelieving physicians and one of the witnesses cited on this point, Dr. Merritt G. Kellogg.

While it is true and can be easily documented that “numerous physicians” testified that her respiration in vision became “imperceptible”—she *did not breathe*—if there were even *one who examined her in vision* who testified that “her vital functions slowed alarmingly with her heart beating sluggishly” it has not come to the attention of the White Estate. The testimony before us, uniform in its nature, with reports often based on the examinations of physicians, indicates that although “*while in vision her breathing entirely ceases*,” “her heart and pulse continue to beat” and “her face retains its natural color.” And she often was noticeably active, walking about the room and speaking in a natural voice. These are hardly the symptoms of “vital functions slowed alarmingly with her heart beating sluggishly.”

[36] Then the reader is switched to the unsupported assertion that the visions were the result of “catalepsy” said to be allied to hysteria, at which time while “tests fail to show any evidence of respiration” “the application of more delicate tests show that there are slight breathing movements sufficient to maintain life” (page 19). The intimation is that this was Ellen White’s experience.

The line of argument in these two paragraphs deserves careful examination.

On the surface the reader is led to believe “numerous physicians” testified that Ellen White’s “vital functions slowed alarmingly with her heart beating sluggishly.” *Prophetess of Health* cites only one person who ever testified that her heart beat sluggishly during her visions—Merritt Kellogg, and the reference cited for this in Note 32 on page 216 is not the correct one. We do not know the source of this assertion. Merritt and John Harvey Kellogg are introduced as medical witnesses who propose “catalepsy” and related “hysteria” as a cause of the visions, but no reference is made to Merritt Kellogg’s earlier unequivocal testimony reporting his observation of several visions which does not accord with the above. (See his letter quoted on pp. 15-16, this critique.) While it is asserted in footnote 32 on page 216 that “both men witnessed many vision,” there is no known record that Dr. J. H. Kellogg *ever saw her in vision*, much less examined her in vision.

Nor is there evidence that either Dr. W. J. Fairfield or Dr. William Russell, cited as witnesses in the foot notes, *ever saw Ellen White in vision*. For comments on this see *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pp. 75-81.

*Ellen White’s personal ambitions*—(page 21) Through Chapter One, “A Prophetess is Born,” Ellen White is pictured as being motivated by “personal ambitions.” It is stated:

Although somewhat shy, Ellen was not embarrassed by her assignment. Religious work was socially acceptable for a young woman, and *she was not without personal ambition*. Indeed, she feared that her new responsibility might make her proud. But when an angel assured her that the Lord would preserve her humility, she determined to carry out His will. Only one obstacle stood in her way: the need for a traveling companion... Mr. Harmon had too many mouths to feed at home even to consider chaperoning his daughter on her travels. Her hopes thus thwarted, Ellen once again sank into depression and wished to die. (Emphasis supplied.)

The sources cited strongly counter the allegation of her “personal ambition,” and hopes “thwarted.” Coming out of her second vision in which she was told that she must go and relate to others “what had been revealed to her,” she declared that “I was exceedingly troubled” ([Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 69](#)) and then gave the reason:

It seemed impossible for me to perform this work that was presented before me; to attempt it seemed certain failure. The trials attending it appeared 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.... I coveted death as a release from the responsibilities that were crowding upon me. At length the sweet peace I had so long enjoyed left me, and despair again pressed upon my soul.—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 69-70](#).

The experience in which “the angel assured her that the Lord would preserve her humility” *came after* her experience of sinking into the depression and wishing to die, not before as portrayed in *Prophetess of Health* and this spoils somewhat the “personal ambition” concept which is no more than an assumption, totally without support in the records.

Three decades later, a letter written to J. N. Loughborough strongly undercuts the projection of personal ambition. She wrote:

I have felt for years that if I could have my choice and please God as well I would rather die than have a vision, for every vision places me under great responsibility to bear testimonies of reproof and of warning, which has ever been against my feelings, causing me affliction of soul that is inexpressible. Never have I coveted my position, and yet I dare not resist the Spirit of God and seek an easier position.—[Letter 2, 1874](#).

Somewhat in the same vein is the statement on page 29, “Her humiliation was over; her prophetic role, now secure. The lessons of this experience [the 1855 recognition of the place of the visions] were not lost on Ellen White, who was now emerging as the dominant force among Sabbatarians. In the future the mere threat of divine displeasure helped to sustain her influence.” It is further stated that, “Through the remainder of Ellen’s life Adventist leaders coveted her approval and submitted, in public at least, to the authority of her testimonies.”

What these passages illustrate more than anything else is the author’s inability or unwillingness to take seriously Ellen White’s own understanding of her mission as God’s messenger. It is one thing to dismiss from serious consideration the possibility of supernatural inspiration, it is quite another to fail to recognize that Ellen White’s

own faith in her divine mission was unshakable and inescapable. This may seem to some to be an evidence of “personal ambition,” but how would it be possible for one who believed fully in the value and importance of her divine call not to care whether her fellow believers profited from the divine guidance her ministry afforded them? Was she jealous for God or jealous for herself?

### The 1851 Time

On pages 26-27, in introducing the expectation that Christ would come in the fall of 1851, suggested by Joseph Bates in his 1850 pamphlet on the “Typical and Antitypical Sanctuary,” *Prophetess of Health* seeks to link the Whites with its support. Then as if to implicate them in the time movement and its failure, it is stated, “Surely the Whites, who had sacrificed so much, could not be blamed for His delay. In Ellen’s mind the responsibility rested squarely on the shoulders of those Millerites... who failed to endorse the seventh day Sabbath and visions like her own.” The footnote No. 49, page 218, states that “The meager evidence available suggests that Ellen privately accepted Bates’ view, but gave it up no later than June, 1851.”

[37]

It appears that F. E. Belden, bitter and unreliable, is credited late in his life with making this assumption. What evidence may have been produced by Belden in his letter to Colcord in October, 1929, is not known to us since we have been unable to obtain a copy from the Ballenger-Mote collection in Riverside, California. Belden was not born until several years after the event and maintaining the attitudes which he did as a hostile critic in 1929, serious question may well be raised about his witness.

*Prophetess of Health* need not have leaned on the frail evidence provided by F. E. Belden’s recollections because there is documentary evidence from 1851 bearing on this subject. Bates projected his views in 1850. If James and Ellen White had received them, certainly the *Review* would have carried articles on the expected advent so near at hand. This was the one event to which all Adventists looked. Ellen White’s correspondence certainly would contain supporting evidence. But the facts are that James White in August, 1851, makes his first reference to this time setting, declaring that “It has been

our humble view for the past year that the proclamation of the time was no part of our present work... and we have felt it our duty to let the brethren know that we have no part in the present movement on time” ([The Review and Herald, August 19, 1851, 2:13](#)).

A month earlier James White had included in the *Review and Herald Extra* Ellen White’s stricture on timesetting based on the vision of June 21, 1851, in which she declared:

I saw that some were getting a false excitement arising from preaching time.... 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.—[The Review and Herald Extra, July 21, 1851](#). See [Early Writings, 75](#).

White in his article published in August lists six reasons why he had been unable to accept the 1851 time.

Bates, on the basis of Ellen White’s message had dropped it in June. Reporting a conference in Oswego, New York, in September, White informed the believers that:

The subject of the seven years time was not mentioned. In fact, we know of no one in this State [New York] 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.—[The Review and Herald, September 16, 1851, 2:32](#).

Only by pure assumption can either James or Ellen White be implicated in the 1851 timesetting. Ellen White’s “time is almost finished” statement of 1850, and other like statements, must be read in the light of the fact that as she wrote in 1883, “The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me.” ([Selected Messages 1:67](#)) She cites Paul in [1 Corinthians 7:29](#), “the time is short,” and [Romans 13:2](#), “the night is far spent, the day is at hand.” John is introduced with his testimony, “the time is at hand,” [Revelation 1:3](#). But this offered no basis for focusing on a particular time on what James White declared to “rest on inference.” For a fuller discussion of the 1851 time see *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pp 253-266, and *Ellen G. White Messenger to the Remnant*, pp. 41-43.



## Deleting Shut Door Teachings

On page 26 after mentioning that the Whites by 1851 had “abandoned much of their shut door doctrine the problem was what to do with all of Ellen’s inspired testimonies indicating the door of mercy had been shut.” *Prophetess of Health* explains that:

She and James collected her early writings, systematically deleted passages that might be construed as supporting the shut door, and published the edited version as Ellen’s first book, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White* in 1851.

It is asserted that “from then on the Whites publicly denied that Ellen had ever been shown that the door was shut.”

As mentioned on page 33 of this critique the shut door matter is very involved and must be approached in the setting of the times. As to James and Ellen White publicly denying that “she had ever been shown that the door was shut,” her 1883 statement, quoted on page 34 of this critique gives an accurate picture.

Now it is true that as materials were drawn from *Present Truth* articles and broadsides for her 1851 book, not all that had been published up to that time was included. The 64 page book carried the title *A Sketch of the Experience and Views*. Writing of this in later years Ellen White recounted that they “had been very short of means, and were able to print at first only a small pamphlet.” ([Selected Messages 1:53](#)).

In introducing her first vision in this pamphlet she wrote, “Here I will give the view that was first published in 1846. In this view I saw only a few of the events of the future. More recent views have been more full. I shall therefore leave out a portion and prevent repetition” (*Experience and Views*, p. 9).

This she did. Among items not included is a phrase embodying the words, “All the wicked world God had rejected.” ([A Word to the Little Flock, 14](#), available in all Adventist Book Centers in facsimile reprint, and in *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pp. 561-584).

But, interestingly, her first little book contained a chapter on “The Open and the Shut Door,” now published in [Early Writings, 42-45](#), under that title. On page 45 these words appear: “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.”

If James and Ellen White were systematically combing the writings to delete all reference to the shut door, why was this statement not expunged? See “Historical Prologue” to *Early Writings*, pp xxvii-xxx. See also *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, chapters 13-15.

[38]

### The Power Struggle of 1855

The closing pages of Chapter One (pp. 27-30) are given to what is portrayed as of a power struggle between James White, on the one side, and 23-year-old Uriah Smith and Ellen White on the other. A careful review of the source documents reveals that the *Prophetess of Health* account omits significant evidence and misreads other evidence. Such words as “doubtless,” “ostensibly,” “probably,” characterize the presentation. Here is how *Prophetess of Health* portrays the “struggle:”

1. In 1851 there was perplexity over the visions “doubtless” because of Ellen White’s changing stand on the “shut door” and a resentment over publishing private testimonies revealing sins and names and because the visions were elevated above the Bible.

2. In 1851 James White decided not to print the testimonies in the *Review*, saving them for an EXTRA which would from time to time supply the believers.

3. The result was that Ellen White not being allowed to publish the visions in the *Review* for the next four years and being allowed only seven non-vision articles became an exile among Sabbathkeeping Adventists.

4. Her visions unappreciated she became discouraged, the visions diminished in frequency and she feared her gift was about gone. With her public ministry dependent almost entirely on the visions she resigned herself to that of a Christian wife and mother, which she held to be a significant role.

5. James provided little or no encouragement, being galled by the accusation that he made his wife’s visions “a test.”

6. In October, 1855, White exploded and in an editorial angrily asked: “What has the *Review* to do with Mrs. W’s views?” The Bible and the Bible alone, the only rule of faith and duty was the motto of the *Review*. Not one vision, he declared, had been published in the *Review* for five years.

7. The same issue of the *Review* announced that a group of Battle Creek Adventists were taking over the publication of the paper, *ostensibly* because of James White's failing health.

8. James White longed to be freed from the "whining" complaints of critics, *probably* those "who criticized him for his attitude toward the visions."

9. A short time later he was asked in the *Review* to apologize for his low estimate of his wife's gift.

10. With Ellen White in the shadows during the early 1850's, and with the denomination not prospering and with James White's outspokenness, he was made the "scapegoat" and at a general meeting in November, 1855, his colleagues replaced him with 23 year old Uriah Smith.

11. This was followed by a committee of elders sorrowfully confessing the unfaithfulness of the church in ignoring God's chosen messenger. They made a special point of repudiating James White's "visions not a test" position.

12. Smith as one of his first acts as new editor reopened the *Review* pages to Ellen G. White.

13. Ellen White's humiliation now over and with her prophetic role now secure, she declared that God would now smile on the church.

14. Quick to sense the shift, Ellen White now emerged as a dominant force among Sabbatarians, being in a position to threaten God's displeasure to sustain her influence.

15. From this time forward, "Adventist leaders coveted her approval, and submitted in public at least, to the authority of her testimonies."

16. Despite occasional inconsistencies and insensitivities, "most members clung to the belief that she represented a divine channel of communication."

Now let us look at the documented facts. Only as the documents of the times are reviewed are the distortions uncovered. We shall review these points one by one.

1. The perplexity over the visions. "The visions trouble many," (Letter to Brother and Sister Dodge, July 21, 1851). This is attributed in *Prophetess of Health* to three probable causes:

a. The changing stand on the shut door.

b. Resentment over publishing private testimonies “revealing secret sins and names.”

c. The visions were elevated above the Bible.

As to the shut door matter, the deletion of the phrase from Ellen White’s first vision, “all the wicked world which God had rejected” occurs first in the [The Review and Herald Extra, July 21, 1851](#). The same material appeared in her first book printed from the same type as the July 21 *Extra*. So the only publication which might link the perplexity to the “shut door” was not in the field when Ellen White said “the visions trouble many.” The day she wrote the letter they were folding the sheets for the July 21 *Extra*. This rules out the “shut door” conjecture.

As to the publishing of private testimonies with names and sins specified, this did not take place until some years later. None had been published up to this time.

As to elevating the visions above the Bible, this was a charge repeatedly made by Sundaykeeping Adventists, but there is no evidence of it among Sabbathkeepers. James White’s position was “The Bible and the Bible alone, the only rule of faith and duty” ([The Review and Herald, October 16, 1855](#), 7:61).

A more feasible explanation of why many were troubled by the visions is that there was among the general public a resistance against such manifestation from the very start. James White dealt with this in 1847 in *A Word to the Little Flock* and referred to it a number of times later. We must not forget that this was only a few years after the 1844 murder of Joseph Smith, leader of the Mormons, and there was great resistance throughout the land to any claims to visions.

[39] With the new interest made possible by people now willing to listen to the message and with the influx of new members, which began in 1850, not all had had an opportunity to judge concerning the visions. As expressed by James White in the *Review Extra* carrying the date of the letter to the Dodges, July 21, strong prejudice existed in many minds against a portion of the contents of the *Extra*. (See the *Extra* in full in facsimile reprints of Ellen G. White *Review and Herald* articles, Volume 1, pp. 13-16.)

2. As a result, James White announced his plan to not include the visions in the regular issues of the *Review* now being used as

a missionary paper designed for spreading the message. The facts are that while a number of the visions appeared in the *Present Truth* (published till November, 1850), Volume 1 of the *Review and Herald* (published from November, 1850, to July, 1851), contained no communications from Ellen White, so this omission of visions was not an altogether new policy. The apostle writes that “prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them that believe” (1 [Corinthians 14:22](#)). The believers who were well acquainted with the visions would be supplied in some manner other than through the regular issues of the paper. A fully documented treatment of this episode is given in *Messenger to the Remnant*, pages 51-53.

3-4. This expediency on James White’s part was very likely supported by Ellen White. The *Review and Herald* now reached the believers with only occasional references to the Spirit of Prophecy and no actual accounts of visions. Although this contributed to a general decline in appreciation for the Spirit of Prophecy and a lessening of the importance accorded it in the work, this does not mean that Mrs. White was an “exile” among her own people. The records reveal that she continued to function as she had. The visions continued. She continued to travel and speak to the believers and to write in personal communications. The records indicate, however, that as time advanced her ministry became less appreciated, so that by 1855 there was a decline in the number of visions and she lost her burden for the believers. Of this she wrote in January, 1856:

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](#) 7:118; *Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 52.

There were factors other than the lack of the appearance of the visions in the *Review* which contributed to this. She specifically mentions that she was discouraged as she saw “how little the visions have been heeded, and what little affect they have had upon others.” We must remember that Sabbathkeeping Adventists were finding their way in these things. She did state in the January 10, 1856, *Review* that “the gifts had been slighted and neglected.”

5. What about James White's attitude? Were the visions a test? Any unbiased observer can see that James was in a difficult position. Never at any time did he waver concerning the visions. But the fact that the agent of God's choice was his wife put him in an awkward and sometimes defensive position. This was particularly so in the matter of a defense of the visions. "My relation to the instrument of the Lord's choice," he felt was "sufficient excuse for my silence. My position was one of trial" ([The Review and Herald, February 14, 1856](#), 7:158).

He continued, "I have ever been slow to speak of Mrs. White's visions in a public manner, but in consequence of the almost utter silence of those who should have spoken fit words in season," he explained that he had spoken and acted as he did "with the welfare of the cause" in mind.

6. *Prophetess of Health* reports that in October, 1855, James White exploded and angrily asked, "What has the *Review* to do with Mrs. White's views?" Such a sentence did appear in the October 16, 1855, issue of the *Review and Herald*. We put it in its proper context:

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."

After quoting the one sentence, *Prophetess of Health* states, as if to link the seemingly likely events together, "The same issue of the *Review and Herald* containing this outburst also announced that a group of Battle Creek Adventists were taking over the publication of the paper, ostensibly because of James White's declining health."

An examination of the records of the time reveals no connection between James White's statement on the visions and the change in the editing and management of the *Review*. In fact the documentation demolishes such an argument.

We will deal with the vision question first and James White's "angry" question, "What has the *Review* to do with Mrs. White's views?" The reader of *Prophetess of Health* is not informed that in the same October 16, 1855, issue of the *Review* four and three-fourths

columns are given over to James White's discussion of the prophetic gift and its place in the remnant church—forty-seven column inches. This defense appears under such titles as:

(a) "Adding To and Taking From," with reference to last day manifestations of the gift of prophecy in the Sacred Canon.

(b) "Peter's Testimony" providing the argument of Joel and Peter to the last day expectation of the gift of the spirit of prophecy.

(c) "Jannes and Jambres" deals with the resistance to the Spirit of Prophecy which can be expected in the last days and the declaration that the manifestation of the Holy Spirit promised in [Joel 2](#), "Will of course fully attend the last message of the last days, when in its greatest power and glory.... No man can show that God has taken away the gifts He put in the church."

(d) "The Counterfeit and No Genuine" showing that such would be absurd, and as the counterfeit is in the field we are assured "the genuine exists."

(e) Then under the title "A Test" James White takes up the charge that "The *Review* and its conductors *make the views* of Mrs. White a test of doctrine and Christian fellowship." It is in his defense of the proposition that it was the policy of the *Review* to present *doctrinal* [40] *views* from the Bible, for as a people we are not dependent upon the visions of Mrs. White for our doctrinal holdings, that White goes on to point out the unfairness of declaring as some of the enemies of the cause did that the *doctrinal views* presented in the *Review* were the "vision view," and "not the Bible view of the subject."

He then names a number of major points held by "the body of Sabbath keepers" that were brought out from the Scriptures before Mrs. White "had any view in regard to them." It is in this setting, and not in "anger," that White asked "What has the *Review* to do with *Mrs. White's* views? The sentiments published in its columns are all drawn from the Holy Scriptures" ([The Review and Herald, October 16, 1855](#), 7:61).

"Now," wrote James White as he closed his four and three-fourths column presentation, "we shall go right along believing and teaching the word of the Lord. This is our business. And if we choose to believe Mrs. White's views which harmonize with the Word, this is *our* business, and *nobody's else*. But if we should leave the Word and look for a rule of faith and duty by some new revelation, then

it would be the business of the church to silence me as a religious teacher.” (*Ibid.*)

In its proper and full setting, ignored in *Prophetess of Health*, James White’s declared position and one traceable back to 1847, emerges sound and consistent. Apparently some were disturbed, perhaps focusing, as does *Prophetess of Health* on a few phrases rather than on the presentation as a whole.

As to the relationship of this significant extended presentation by James White to changes in management and editorial staff of the *Review and Herald*, it is purely coincidental. James and Ellen White were just back from a three month trip and just as soon as he was able to pull things together he did two things: (1) He began to take the steps for the reorganization of the publishing work he had proposed earlier; and (2) He also took steps to set the Spirit of Prophecy before the church as he held it, in a clear manner. And both appeared in the same issue. If the change in the management of the *Review* was based upon his declared position on the visions, marked by his outburst on the relation of the *Review* to Mrs. White’s views, as is inferred, how is it that the one is mentioned in the same issue of the *Review*, October 16, 1855, as the other? It could hardly be a cause and effect relationship. Until this particular issue of the paper, White had been silent for many months on the subject of the visions, and if the action of the brethren was to be dependent upon his published statements, the result could not have come about until a later time.

7. Now as to the power struggle portrayed on pages 28-30. The full review of the documentation over a period of several months presenting the body of facts tells a different story than that set forth in the book. It is said that “ostensibly” because of James White’s broken constitution “a group of Battle Creek Adventists” took over the publication of the paper and “his colleagues replaced him with ... 23-year-old Uriah Smith.” Linking this with White’s position on the visions which they are said to have repudiated, it is strongly implied that Uriah Smith won out in the power struggle and Ellen White was also a winner, for with Smith as editor the paper was reopened to Ellen White, who now emerged “as a dominant force among Sabbatarians.”



We ask the reader to follow through a further presentation of the facts. First, we reiterate that there is no coercive evidence linking James White's four and three-fourths column presentation on the visions and what is portrayed as a power struggle. The fact that one paralleled the other is purely coincidental. It must be remembered, too, that the events portrayed took place in the formative period five years before serious steps were taken toward church organization, and before there was any regular support for the ministers. While Sabbath keeping Adventists had contributed \$700 to the purchase of the press, type and other equipment and supplies, the publishing enterprise had not only been managed by James White, but he was solely responsible for its finances and for any debts incurred in the business.

There came a time when these burdens were too great for one man to carry. James White's health had been deteriorating for the past two years. In mid-June, 1855, White, with "one great object," "the restoration of health," and in the hope of not being "compelled to leave the work" ([The Review and Herald, September 4, 1855, 7:36](#)), embarked with his wife on an eleven week journey to the New England states, the vicinity of his birth, boyhood days and early ministry.

In Vermont as he reported in the *Review* of August 7, he took up with the brethren the question of the ownership and control of the office of publication, which he maintained belonged to the church, and he declared:

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.—[The Review and Herald, August 7, 1855, 7:20](#).

White ascertained that the brethren in Vermont were willing and ready to assume the responsibility of the publishing enterprise if it was thought best to locate it there. It is obvious he thought a more central location was preferable.

In a letter he wrote on August 20, from Paris, Maine, he outlined several steps he felt should be followed, among them the following:

"Let Brother Uriah Smith be resident Editor. James White, R. F. Cottrell, J. N. Andrews, J. H. Waggoner, corresponding editors—

all five to have an equal voice in conducting the paper and each to be paid for services according to the judgment of the financial committee.”—James White letter to A. A. Dodge, Aug. 20, 1855.

He enumerated in five numbered points the steps he felt should be taken, and then proposed: “Let Brother Smith as resident Editor, attend to office matters, prepare matter for the press, read proof, etc.”—*Ibid.*

Returning from the East to the Rochester, New York, headquarters on August 31, Elder White was now prepared to report:

[41] We are happy to say that 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 and Herald, September 4, 1855, 7:36.](#)

And James White added, “It will be our duty and privilege to be freed from the office at present, at least.” It is significant that the September 4 issue of the *Review* carries no editor’s name on the masthead. White had declared his intention to shift the load and made it clear by dropping his name as editor.

White hastened on to Michigan to confer with the brethren there. On Sunday, September 23, at a meeting with J. B. Frisbee, acting chairman, and A. A. Dodge as secretary, the major business was:

a. “That the Advent Review office still remain the property of the church.”

b. “That the Advent Review office be moved to Battle Creek, Michigan.”

c. “That a financial committee of three be chosen” to “move the office and publish the *Advent Review*.”

d. And that this committee devise and propose through the *Review* a plan for conducting the editorial department of the paper. ([The Review and Herald, October 2, 1855, 7:56.](#))

In the next issue the committee made the following proposal: Let there be chosen by the Church a Resident Editor, whose duty it shall be to take charge of the local interests of the Editorial department. Also let the Church select four or six brethren, from different portions of the field to act as a Committee, or corresponding Editors,

who shall have equal voice in conducting, assist in the Editorial department as their circumstances may admit, and who shall have equal voice with the Resident Editor in deciding what is proper to be published in the *Review*.—[The Review and Herald, October 16, 1855](#), 7:60.

Except for the number of corresponding editors, this was exactly what James White had recommended back in August.

The same issue on the last page called for a General Conference in Battle Creek November 16. The object of the meeting was declared to be “the choice of men to conduct the *Review*.” There was a call for delegates from the field and letters expressing viewpoints on the matter to be considered. The December 4 issue of the *Review*—the first published in Battle Creek—carries the minutes of the business session of the November 16 Conference.

A committee was appointed to investigate the financial condition of the *Review* office.

The committee appointed on September 3 was designated as the committee to “hold in trust the press for the benefit of the church.”

Vermont. These are,—with the addition of Pierce, the men whom James White had recommended for these positions.

James White was to receive pay for his investment in the office with the church being requested to furnish the funds.

In the management of the publication and sale of books James White was to be subject to the advice of the financial and publishing committee.

There was a vote of thanks to Brother White for his valuable services as editor in spreading the light of present truth.

While the masthead had carried no name as editor since James White on September 4th had announced that the brethren in Michigan would take upon themselves the “responsibilities of the *Review* office” and rejoiced in his “privilege to be freed from the office at present,” the issue of Dec. 4, 1855, reporting the selection of Uriah Smith as resident editor carried Smith’s name prominently on the masthead.

James White for reasons he had already stated, had called upon the church to take over the office and the paper for it belonged to the church. The church responded and the shift was made comfortably and promptly, with James White clearly engineering the step by

step transfer. The issue carrying the name Uriah Smith, resident editor, also carried a note by James White reporting the completion of the new office building in Battle Creek, erected by four brethren in Michigan, the safe and propitious removal from Rochester of the press, type, etc., and that all connected with the office were entering upon their work “with fresh courage and pleasing hopes” ([The Review and Herald, December 4, 1855, 7:78](#)).

While Smith did not initial his editorials and articles, nearly every issue carried articles and notes initialed by James White (JW) and J. H. Waggoner (JHW), with White’s much in the majority. White was grateful to be relieved of the nitty gritty of publishing and editing, but he did not slink away as “one who had been made the likely scapegoat” of an unfortunate situation, “replaced” by “his colleagues” who “chose 23-year-old Uriah Smith” to edit the paper as *Prophetess of Health* insinuates.

These added pieces of evidence lead to conclusions quite different from those of *Prophetess of Health* and illustrate the necessity of weighing carefully all the evidence on the topic before reaching a conclusion.

8. The whining complaints of critics are said by *Prophetess of Health* probably to be from those who “criticized him for his attitudes toward the visions.” Taken in context the intent of the phrase in question is clear. The “whining complaints” concerning James White’s financial management of the office, not his attitudes towards the visions:

We must have freedom and repose, or go into the grave. Our interest in the precious cause has not abated. All we can do, we will do, but we desire freedom from our present position, and that the cause may be freed from the effects of the whining complaints of jealous ones.

[42] Those persons take care and not come to us with their complaints; but we meet their poisonous letters addressed to others relative to our course in all quarters. Be it known to such that Office affairs are open to the investigation of any committee of decent men, at any proper time and place.—[The Review and Herald, August 7, 1855, 7:20](#).

9. James White asked to apologize—in the communications column of the February 14, 1856, issue of the *Review* there appears

a letter from a layman, Hiram Bingham, expressing the perplexity of some of the believers in his area concerning James White's statements about the visions. They were concerned that White did not make them a test. They asked, "If duty demands he make some apology through the *Review*," this would relieve the minds of those troubled. There was no formal request for an apology as might be implied.

In his response White declares that he did not make the visions the "rule of our faith," nor would he test all men by the visions, and as it was known that he "was in union with the 'address of the Conference' published in No. 10 (Dec. 4, 1855) and my relation to the instrument of the Lord's choice, were a sufficient excuse for my silence." He closed his response with the words, "I believe them [the visions] to be the property of the church, and a test to those who believe them from Heaven" ([The Review and Herald, February 14, 1856, 7:158](#)).

10. The replacement of James White by Uriah Smith as *Review* editor has been dealt with above.

11. A "Conference Address" represented the conclusion of the believers attending the conference held at Battle Creek November 16, 1855. It made clear the inconsistency of holding that the visions came from God, harmonizing with "His written word" and at the same time that such believers would "not be tested by them." Believers should be tested by the visions, but tolerance should be exercised with unbelievers. As noted above, James White was in full harmony with this.

12-16. The emergence of Ellen White as the winner in the power struggle is dealt with above

## Chapter 2—In Sickness And Health

Chapter Two with the exception of occasional exaggerations reflects the historical record quite well. In a few cases conclusions from the facts cited in the record are set forth, for which supporting documentation would be difficult to muster. For example:

“From childhood to middle age she enjoyed few periods without some physical or mental suffering” (page 31). It is true that Mrs. White was often afflicted with illness, but the statement is too sweeping. The early years were hard. During her pregnancies she was often quite ill. But she frequently writes of being blessed with good health. In September, 1850, she declared, “We are all quite well here now.” (Letter 14, 1850). In November, 1850, she informed some friends, “James and my health is quite good now.” (Letter 28, 1850). Again, in August, 1853, she wrote, “My health is quite good,” (Letter 6, 1853), while a month later she was well enough to act as nurse to a houseful of sick people. She told the Loughboroughs “I have felt thankful that my health is so good, but I am getting worn out.” (Letter 8, 1853).

Similar comments may be found scattered all through her correspondence. Through middle life, as a rule, she enjoyed good health. Like most of us, she was apparently inclined to mention the periods of suffering and remained fairly silent when all went well.

### Consulting Physicians

The attention of the reader is focused on the stance of the believers in the late 1840's and early 1850's on consulting physicians in case of illness. After recounting on page 32 several occasions when Ellen White was healed in response to prayer, the book states that “with divine help so readily available, Ellen saw no reason to resort to physicians.” In the concluding paragraph to an 1849 broadside ... she counseled her readers not to seek medical assistance. The passage in question reads:

If any among us are sick, let us not dishonor God by applying to earthly physicians, but apply to the God of Israel. If we follow His directions ([James 5:14, 15](#)) the sick will be healed. God's promise cannot fail. Have faith in God, and trust wholly in Him, that when Christ who is our life shall appear we may appear with Him in glory.—1849 Broadside, “To Those Who Are Receiving the Seal of the Living God.”

*Prophets of Health* then makes a good point; “Given the low state of the medical arts at the time, her advice probably did little harm” (page 32). This view is supported by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes' remark of 1860 (quoted on page 49) to the effect that “if the whole materia medica, as now used, could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be all the better for mankind, and all the worse for the fishes.” To consult a physician at the time of which we write was to invite a high risk of death.

There is ample evidence, also, that many miracles of healing were experienced among the Sabbathkeeping Adventists during that period. In a letter to William Miller, Otis Nichols said of Ellen Harmon during her very early ministry—1845-1846:

The Spirit of God is with her and has been in a remarkable manner in healing the sick through the answer of her prayers; some cases are as remarkable as any that are recorded in the New Testament.—Otis Nichols Letter to William Miller, April 20, 1846.

Here are a few brief samples of similar healings:

Sister Pentfield's miraculous healing after physicians had given her up to die (see [Letter 1, 1848](#)); the instantaneous healing of Frances Howland ([Spiritual Gifts 2:42](#)); William Hyde's complete and sudden restoration from the bloody dysentery ([Spiritual Gifts 2:44](#)); and the healing of Clarissa Bonfoey when Hiram Edson “laid hands on her in the name of the Lord” ([Letter 14, 1850](#)).

[43]

On March 6, 1853, Anna White, who was living at Rochester with James and Ellen White, wrote Brother and Sister Tenney: “I am now living with a people who believe that God is able and willing to heal the sick now, and who when sick, apply nowhere else for aid.”

Luman Masten, non-Adventist printer hired by James White to superintend the work done in the newly established Rochester printing office, recounts his experience in 1852 when taken with cholera. He lived in a rooming house near the White home. Masten

called a physician whose “first treatment was to bleed” and “after administering a variety of remedies ended his process with doses of calomel.” Such treatment he reports “is pronounced by some of the most skillful physicians as sure death” ([The Review and Herald, September 30, 1852](#), 3:86). It was to his landlady, who, stricken at the same time, received the same treatment. She died.

When a second physician pronounced Masten’s case as hopeless, his Adventist friends prayed for him and he made a good recovery.

Elder J. N. Loughborough writes of the experiences in Rochester: When in 1852, I accepted the third angel’s message and the Sabbath truth, we did not have the light on healthful living as now so clearly developed among this people. When there was sickness among us, we had not the light on the treatment of disease by the use of nature’s remedies, but were requested to bring our sick ones to the Lord in prayer, following the rule in the fifth chapter of James. In the Rochester church for many months every case thus brought to the Lord was healed. This led some to conclude that every case thus presented to the Lord would be healed. For this conclusion we had not, however, had any such instruction from either Brother or Sister White.—[Pacific Union Recorder, September 16, 1909](#), p. 9.

He then refers to the experience of Nathaniel White who died at Rochester on May 6, 1853, just three months after Anna White’s statement. Special prayer was offered for his healing and he was anointed. While he was greatly blessed, he was not healed. Loughborough reports that soon the news spread among our people, Nathaniel White is dead. This was unexpected news to those who thought that those prayed for could not die. Sister Seely, who had taken part in several of these praying seasons for Nathaniel, said, He is not dead. He can’t die, for we have prayed for him. Be it remembered, however, that there had been no such instruction given to us. In answer to prayer for those perplexed over such an experience Sister White had a vision, a writing-out of which is found in [Testimonies for the Church 1:120, 121](#):

“Man is erring, and although his petitions are sent up from an honest heart, he does not always ask for the things which are good for himself, or that will glorify God. When this is so, our wise and good Father hears our prayers, and will answer, sometimes immediately;



but He gives us the things that are for our best good and His own glory.”

“It was presented to me like children asking a blessing of their earthly parents who love them. They ask something that the parent knows will hurt them; the parent gives them the things that will be good and healthful for them, in the place of that which they desired. I saw that every prayer which is sent up in faith from an honest heart, will be heard of God and answered, and the one that sent up the petition will have a blessing when he needs it most, and it will often exceed his expectations. Not a prayer of a true saint is lost if sent up in faith from an honest heart.”

To the Rochester company Sister White said, “The Lord has heard and answered prayer in Nathaniel’s case. He has gently let him down to the grave in a manner that was no burden to any one. He knew the future best, and the dangers to that ambitious young man. While in a well-prepared state of consecration He has let him fall asleep.”—[Pacific Union Recorder, September 16, 1909, 9:1](#).

*Prophets of Health* asserts that “it was not the poor quality of medical care that prompted” Ellen White’s advice for Adventists to avoid physicians (pages 32, 33), and to be sure, she does not mention this factor in her statement. Still, she could not have been ignorant of the fact that medical care was often ineffective and sometimes the source of added suffering. One would not want to rule this factor out entirely.

We do know that to go to physicians in the 1840’s and 1850’s was often at the risk of losing one’s life, if so, could it be that God in His mercy spared us this? We only wish the records we are dependent upon were more full so that we might be able to judge the matter more accurately. In 1860 in discussing the case of Mrs. Prior, Ellen White wrote:

Could it also be that, as in the days of the apostles, for the encouragement of the early Adventist believers and to place heaven’s seal of approval on their ministry, there were in the initial years many miracles of healing? If so, we would expect to read less of miracles as time went on. Or do we understand from the record that in the case of the apostles there was no slacking of the performance of miracles of healing and this situation continued throughout their ministry so that all the sick they encountered were raised up to health? How

about Paul's unanswered prayers for healing? (See [2 Corinthians 12:7](#)).

[44] We believe in the prayer of faith; but some have carried this matter too far, especially those who have been affected with fanaticism. Some have taken the strong ground that it was wrong to use simple remedies. We have never taken this position, but have opposed it. We believe it to be perfectly right to use the remedies God has placed in our reach, and if these fail, apply to the great Physician, and in some cases the counsel of an earthly physician is very necessary. *This position we have always held.*—[Spiritual Gifts 2:135](#). (Emphasis supplied).

As the case of Mrs. Prior is discussed on page 35, it is suggested that on account of Ellen White's position that brethren should "never" apply to earthly physicians, she died. Observe that the more general and less prohibitive statement of the 1849 Broadside is, "Let us not dishonor God by applying to physicians," but in *Prophetess of Health* this is firmed up to be that believers were "never to apply to earthly physicians."

As to the Prior case, the only reference we have to her death, which occurred in 1853, comes from Mrs. White's own pen. Here is the complete account:

While in Lipton, Iowa, March, 1860, we met the report that I frequently traveled with Bro. A. This is the only time I ever rode with Bro. A. without my husband, and on this occasion Sr. Bonfoey was with me. Other reports equally groundless were circulated by a Mr. M. who had moved from Camden to Iowa, relative to the death of Sr. Prior, It was stated that we were the cause of her not having medical aid. I will briefly state that we knew nothing of Sr. P.'s sickness, were in Rochester, about one hundred miles from Camden, when this matter occurred, and we had no knowledge of her death until a brother from Camden visited Rochester and brought us the intelligence. There were but two families engaged in this matter. After this we visited Camden, and I was shown in vision that there had been a lack of judgment in regard to the case of Sr. P. in giving their influence against her obtaining medical aid. I saw that they had carried matters to extremes, and that the cause of God was wounded and our faith reproached, on account of such things, which were fanatical in the extreme. The reproof given and the plain testimony

borne in regard to these things was the cause of E.W.W. turning from me and taking his position with the ‘Messenger’ party in circulating falsehood calculated to injure *me*.—*Spiritual Gifts 2:134*.

In evaluating the account of Sister Prior’s death, the following points should be borne in mind:

1. The poor quality of medicine generally practiced at that time would not have encouraged Sister Prior to go to a physician for help.

2. The frequent miracles performed on behalf of the believers would doubtless have led her to hope for the restoration of her own health by this means.

3. After the initial publication of her 1849 advice in the Broadside against going to physicians, Mrs. White did not include this counsel in any later publication, though she did in 1851 republish most of the 1849 Broadside in her first book. Could it be that the statement imperfectly expressed her views?

4. In 1860 Mrs. White insisted that she had never intended for her earlier statements to be so rigidly interpreted as to mean that a doctor should *never* be consulted, under any circumstances.

5. Mrs. White herself went to a physician in the spring of 1854.

6. Mrs. White is our sole source of information concerning Sister Prior’s death. She had no fear of memorializing the episode by putting the details into print.

These are all the facts we have. We wish we had more. It may not be possible for us to prove to the skeptic that Mrs. White was telling the truth in 1860.

### Dietetic Counsels

*Influence of Joseph Bates.*—*Prophetess of Health* declares on page 38 that a major factor in leading Ellen White to begin speaking out on tea, coffee and tobacco in 1848 was probably the influence of Joseph Bates upon her. The documents of the times do not indicate that Bates had such a strong influence on Mrs. White. When two years before, early in 1846, Bates pressed the Sabbath truth on Ellen Harmon she “did not feel its importance and thought that he erred in dwelling upon the fourth commandment more than the other nine” (*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 95*). But from the *Scripture*

evidence presented in the Bates pamphlet on the Sabbath published in August 1846, both James and Ellen White took their stand.

According to James White, Bates did not press on the Whites or anyone else his views on dietetic reforms. He had given up tea, coffee, and tobacco as early as 1836 (See *Life of Bates*, pp. 178, 314, 342), but Mrs. White did not start speaking out against the use of these three stimulants until after her visions on the subject in 1848. Bates gave up the use of flesh meats in 1843 (*The Health Reformer*, July, 1871, 6:21), yet Mrs. White said nothing on the subject until twenty years later, when God showed her that “animal food was not the most healthy article of food for man” (4SG 121). Whatever influence Bates may have had on Mrs. White was apparently very little compared with the influence of the visions.

*The Use of Pork.*—*Prophetess of Health* on page 43 introduces the question of the White’s attitude toward the use of pork. Reference is made to the James White *Present Truth* article of November, 1849, in which he defends the use of swine’s flesh, and then the 1858 vision is introduced in which some extremists who were pressing the point of swine’s flesh were reproved.

This actually provides an excellent exhibit that tends to refute *Prophetess of Health’s* contention that the Whites were influenced in dietary matters by their contemporaries. In this case where the matter of swine’s flesh was being agitated, the Whites failed to accept the basis for the agitation, and Ellen White in 1858 declared that “if God requires His people to abstain from swine’s flesh, He will convict them on this matter” (*Testimonies for the Church* 1:207).

We must recognize that the Lord leads His people along only as they are able to follow intelligently. He did this through Bible study and the visions.

[45] The prohibition on the use of swine’s flesh is not mentioned in the Ellen G. White writings until the presentation of the 1863 vision. This emphasizes the point that the Whites as leaders were unwilling to make moves of a far-reaching character without clear Biblical support or a clear call from God through the visions given to Ellen White. This is in harmony with James White’s *Word to the Little Flock* statement of 1847, and his observations when the question of church organization was being discussed in 1861: “We take the Bible and the gifts of the Spirit; embracing the faith that

thus the Lord will teach us from time to time” ([The Review and Herald, October 8, 1861](#), 18:148).

During the first fifteen years of our history, our pioneers, while very clear on the Decalogue of [Exodus 20](#), were not at all certain on all phases of what are termed the laws of Moses. In 1858 and 1859, when we launched the tithing system, they hesitated to use the word “tithe.” They were not then certain that tithing was not one of those points which were nailed to the cross. Therefore, they adopted a plan of “systematic benevolence on the tithing principle.” Our spiritual forefathers soon became clear that the plan for the tithe was one which did not end at the cross. James White in his 1849 article on swine’s flesh took into account arguments of scripture and called attention to the references in Isaiah. He declared that the texts had no bearing for this time, because they were dealing with idol worship which involved the burning of incense upon altars of brick, remaining among graves and lodging in the mountains, and sacrificing in the garden. These were all clearly linked with idolatry and the eating of swine’s flesh was tied in with that. The other Old Testament support would be the general rule determining clean and unclean meats, and this he assumed was done away at the cross and came under the declaration of the apostles in Jerusalem relating to the ceremonial law.

So, a good many Adventists continued their use of swine’s flesh. James White is reported by H. E. Carver as “having just put down a two hundred pound porker” probably in the late 1850’s, and Mrs. J. N. Andrews’ first entry in her diary, October 25, 1859, reports the slaughtering of a hog. In the 1858 experience referred to above certain believers took extreme positions and were advocating the non-use of swine’s flesh on the basis of afflicting their bodies and rigid economy. Ellen White counseled that there was no need for manufacturing crosses to distress the body. She declared to these folk:

I saw that your views concerning swine’s flesh would prove no injury if you have them to yourself; 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 burdens 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.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:206-7](#).

In the vision of June 6, 1863, in which the broad health reform program was set forth, not only was the use of meat introduced, but also the prohibition on the use of swine's flesh. Ellen White was shown that pork should not be eaten for it is unclean and it produces disease (4SG 146). This settled the question and the church at the time saw this to be entirely in harmony with the 1858 statement, that is, If God wished His people to take a stand on this point He would make it clear to them. He did. All the evidence supports the position that the Sabbathkeeping Adventists were led by the Lord and not well-meaning folks advocating their own singular positions on diet.

### **Civil War Involvement and Speculations**

Pages 46, 47 of *Prophetess of Health* make references to the attitudes of Seventh-day Adventists toward the Civil War and James and Ellen White's relation to it. The Whites are depicted as comfortably situated in Battle Creek during the Civil War with a salary as president of the Publishing Association of \$7 to \$10 per week and selling Bibles, concordances and Bible dictionaries to double this. While the Civil War in the early sixties seldom touched the White household, James as editor of the *Review and Herald* is said to have given progress reports on the War, limited his involvement to raising bounties for volunteers and securing conscientious objector status for Adventist draftees and speculating on writing paper and envelopes to turn him a quick 100 percent profit. One might be tempted to conclude that James White was more interested in making money for himself than with his country's agony. Yet, evidence drawn from the columns of the local Battle Creek newspapers and the *Review and Herald* demonstrates that Elder White's bounty-raising efforts involved him deeply in community affairs. He was a member of the Battle Creek committee which raised funds for the purpose of compensating young men who volunteered for military service. According to the *Battle Creek Journal* of October 24, 1862, a large war meeting was held in that city on October 20 to take the

preliminary steps necessary to fill up the quota of men due from the city under the call of the government for 600,000 men. The audience voted down the proposal of a committee to recommend a bounty of \$100 for each volunteer, and substituted an offer of \$200 in its place. A committee of nine was chosen to raise funds, among whom were at least two Sabbathkeepers, J. P. Kellogg and Elder James White, representing the second and third Battle Creek wards.

When in 1863 the Congress of the United States enacted a draft law, provision was made for a drafted man to purchase his exemption by payment into the U.S. Treasury of \$300—the equivalent of a year's wages. James White, without lessening his own "systematic benevolence" payments to the church for its work, set aside an equal amount to help drafted ministers. A year later he claimed as "one privilege," the payment of "ten dollars to each efficient minister who shall be drafted from among us, to help him pay the \$300" ([The Review and Herald, September 27, 1864](#)).

Just what this finally meant to the White finances is not a matter of record, but it does demonstrate that the Whites were not callous to the dire Civil War situation.

As editor of the *Review and Herald* during the war years, Elder White frequently published articles against slavery and the "Southern Rebellion," and he constantly kept the columns of the *Review* open to those who wished to discuss war issues, particularly the draft and how Seventh-day Adventists as non-combatants and Sabbathkeepers should relate to it.

Early in 1865 he recommended "that prayer and giving of thanks for those in authority constitute a proper portion of their Sabbath and other seasons of public worship, and also, of family and private devotions," also that "the second Sabbath in each month be especially set apart to fasting and prayer in view of the present terrible war" ([The Review and Herald, January 31, 1865, 25:77](#)).

[46]

A few weeks later Elder White appealed to the church members to set aside four days as a period of "earnest and importunate prayer" for the early termination of hostilities ([The Review and Herald, February 21, 1865, 25:100](#)). In March he printed that portion of Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address which began, "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away" (RH 25:128, [Maranatha, 21, 1865](#)). When the

conflict finally ended, James White wrote, with obvious relief and gratitude:

The air rang with shouts, Richmond is taken! And Lee has surrendered! Cities and villages were illuminated. Bonfires and rockets streamed up to the heavens, while cheers for Lincoln, Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan rang again. But God's loyal people were on their knees, blessing Heaven for the answer of their prayers, and weeping with joy over the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His Word.—[The Review and Herald, April 24, 1865](#), 25:164.

As to family finances, Mrs. White worked full time without salary. She constantly entertained visiting brethren in her home, and she had to employ two hired girls in order to keep up with all of her extra responsibilities. The Whites also as leaders took the lead in pledging for every worthy church enterprise. This is why James White found it necessary to augment his salary (*Defense of Elder James White and Wife*, p. 9). When these facts are taken into consideration, there is little danger that one will conclude that James White was a self-serving speculator.

*The Whites Treat Diphtheria*.—On page 47, Chapter Two closes as does Chapter Three, on a note reiterated several times in *Prophetess of Health*. The Whites read an article on treating diphtheria in a country newspaper nearly six months before the health reform vision was received on June 6, 1863, and putting its counsel into practice brought their children through an attack of the disease. “At last,” it is said, “she had stumbled onto a system of medicine that really worked.” We bypass the point here, but will deal with it later in its fuller setting.



## Chapter 3—The Health Reformers

This well written and intensely interesting presentation setting forth the historical background of the Health Reform Movement in general, will be perused with profit. Since this chapter is used as a background against which much that appears later in the book will be placed, it is important. The reader will pause at the comment on page 58 that three of the health reform writers influenced noticeably the thinking of Ellen White. Just why and how much she, after doing her initial writing on health, searched their writings to find practical application of ways of putting into use principles opened to her in vision is a point worthy of discerning investigation. This will be touched upon later.

Another point the reader may wish to examine carefully is the statement on page 61 that Ellen White “saw obedience to the laws of health primarily as a requirement for entry into heaven, and only secondarily as a means of living a more enjoyable life on earth.” It would be difficult to find support for such a concept of salvation by works in Ellen White’s writings, which place such stress on righteousness by faith.

### Phrenology

Phrenology is introduced on page 67. This is an area which calls for a careful approach. *Prophetess of Health* says little about the phrenological concepts which pervaded nineteenth century America generally, or of some of its positive contributions.

“Phrenology today,” says John D. Davies in his standard work on the subject, *Phrenology: Fad and Science* (Archon Books, 1971, © 1955), “is considered a harmless quackery.” And indeed, anyone reading the treatment of the subject in *Prophetess of Health* would not find that assumption disturbed. But Davies goes on to say:

In its own time phrenology, like Freudianism, was a serious, inductive discipline, accepted as such by many eminent scientists,

doctors, and educators; its aberrations were the results not so much of charlatanism or credulity as of the limitations of early nineteenth century scientific method and medical techniques. However mistaken some of its anatomical deductions may have been, *scientific it was in its determination to study the mind objectively*, without metaphysical preconceptions. Its priority in this field is recognized in the histories of medicine and psychology, and *many of its fundamentals are as commonplace today as they were radical a century ago.*—pp. x, xi (Emphasis supplied).

Granted, the purpose here is to show the relationship of phrenology to the health reform movement and not to give a general treatment of phrenology as such, yet if the reader is left with no clue as to phrenology's contributions to education, the treatment of mental illness, or penology; if the reader is given no clue as to the positive contributions of phrenology, then his understanding of its significance in connection with the health reform movement is seriously distorted. If he views phrenology merely as "quackery," then he will probably tend to view those health reformers who accepted it in the same light.

[47] Another important general point which should be made in connection with phrenology is the widespread infiltration of its terminology. Davies says: "Through lectures, societies, magazines, book and periodical articles, phrenological tenets were dinned into American ears until the appropriation of their peculiar vocabulary by fiction and popular speech made them familiar to everyone."—Davies, p. ix.

## Chapter 4—Dansville Days

The heart of *Prophetess of Health* is Chapter Four “Dansville Days.” In its historical treatment it deals in detail with the major points which constitute the crux of the issue of the book. Because there is some back tracking here and there and the introduction of a number of items of minor importance, we outline the principle points: <sup>1</sup>

1. Beliefs and practices concerning health reform of early Seventh-day Adventists prior to June 6, 1863.

2. The experience of the Whites in February, 1863, in successfully treating three cases of diphtheria by employing hydrotherapy as outlined by James C. Jackson.

3. The writing and publishing of the health reform vision of June 6, 1863.

4. The question of Ellen White’s dependence on the teachings of others in writing her vision.

5. The Whites’ acceptance of health reform and teaching it in their public ministry.

6. The Whites’ first visit to the Dansville institution.

7. Ellen White and phrenology.

8. Ellen White and the reform dress.

9. Publication of *How to Live*.

10. Illness of health reformers.

11. The Whites’ second visit to Dansville.

12. The December 25, 1865, vision at Rochester.

13. James White’s recovery in Battle Creek and Greenville.

Because some of the points are basic to the thrust of the book, we must explore them in depth. To do so extends this review, but because of their importance we ask for a careful reading, noting particularly the exhibits we present which somehow were overlooked in the book under discussion.

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<sup>1</sup>See chronology of events p.

In introducing the chapter “Dansville Days,” on pages 77-81, *Prophetess of Health* devotes several pages to what is referred to as an Adventist involvement in health reform paralleling the Advent movement from the early 1840’s on. It asserts, on page 79, that “Sabbatarians developed more than passing interest in the health reform movement.”

### **What Did Adventists Know in 1863?**

Certain exhibits are presented in support of the view that Adventists had considerable knowledge of health reform and practiced its principles prior to the health reform vision of June 6, 1863. Reference has been made to this in our general introductory statement. This premise puts under a cloud Ellen White’s clear-cut declarations relating to her knowledge in health lines prior to the vision. Seventh-day Adventists hold that it was the vision given to Ellen White in June, 1863, that led them to accept health reform. They hold that with a few notable exceptions church leaders and the rank and file of church members were by and large ignorant of and indifferent to the basic elements of physiology and nutrition. This is attested to by the witness of leading Adventists of that time.

In support of *Prophetess of Health’s* basic premise of a rather general knowledge of health reform on the part of Adventists prior to the vision, the following facts are cited:

Joseph Bates ... adopted Grahamism in 1843 and spent decades as a temperance crusader. John Loughborough took to eating Graham bread and reading the *Water Cure Journal* in 1848, after learning about health reform from an uncle in western New York. J. P. Kellogg, of Tyrone, Michigan—father of Merritt, John Harvey, Will Keith, and thirteen other children—raised his sizable brood by the *Water Cure Journal* and sent three of his older sons, including Merritt, to reform-minded Oberlin College—page 79

*Prophetess of Health* contends that “All these men were closely associated with the Whites and undoubtedly spoke to them of their experiences in health reform” (p. 79). Others more or less familiar with aspects of health reform are noted. Among them *Prophetess of Health* says that “Uriah Smith’s sister Annie... spent several months at a water cure before her death in 1855” (p. 79). These exhibits are

followed by reference to, “The unpublished diary of Mrs. Andrews [which] reveals that she and her husband [Elder J. N. Andrews] were routinely using water treatments in their home by the spring of 1863” (p. 88).

Reference is made to the Jackson article on diphtheria that was published in the [The Review and Herald, February 17, 1863](#), and its publication is cited as “one of the first” indications of a health reform awakening. The reader is then informed that:

During the month of May, James White continued to focus on hygienic living in the *Review and Herald* with a note from Dio Lewis on dress reform and two extracts from *Hall’s Journal of Health*, one urging a meatless, low-fat diet during spring and summer, the other recommending two meals a day.—page 80.

The three items published in [The Review and Herald, May, 1863](#), were very brief selections. Two were but half a column each and the third a little less than two columns. On the basis of the bits and pieces of health knowledge possessed by scattered Adventists, together with these few brief notes in the *Review* as well as the Jackson article on diphtheria, *Prophetess of Health* concludes that “by June of 1863, Seventh-day Adventists were already in possession of the main outlines of the health reform message” (pp. 80-81). It is then asserted: “What they now needed to become a church of health reformers was not additional information, but a sign from God indicating his pleasure” (p. 81).

[48]

But will a close look at the experiences and testimonies of the persons mentioned sustain these conclusions?

The argument that Seventh-day Adventists were “in possession of the main outlines of the health reform message” is not supported by the documents of the times. The fact that among the 3500 Adventists, records can be found of a dozen or so families that had at some time tried some phase of hydrotherapy, and had used Graham bread, or had discarded meat, or had read one of the health journals, comes far short of the picture of “Seventh-day Adventists” by June, 1863, “being in possession of the main outlines of the health reform message.” Of those referred to, five persons or families stand out:

Joseph Bates

John Loughborough

The J. P. Kellogg family

The J. N. Andrews family

Annie Smith

Annie Smith, after leaving the employment of the *Review* office in 1854 because of ill health, underwent hydropathic treatment. According to her mother, she felt better, but she “became satisfied that she was no better” and returned home to die of tuberculosis.

Joseph Bates, said to have “adopted Grahamism” (p. 79) nowhere in writing of his experiences refers to Graham as the source of his regimen. His health reform views stemmed from his own observations as a keen-minded sea captain. He took steps in healthful living, discarding various harmful habits in this order:

Alcoholic beverages, 1821 -1824 Tobacco, 1824 Tea and coffee, 1837 Meat, 1843 Butter, cheese, pies, and cakes, 1843

He would hardly be one to speak with enthusiasm to the Whites of his views on health, as *Prophetess of Health* intimates, for, reported James White, he “did not mention his views of proper diet in public at that time nor in private unless interrogated upon the subject” (*Life of Bates*, p. 311). James White further reports that, “When many of his fellow laborers embraced the principles of health reform,” “he joined with great gladness of heart” (*Ibid.* 312).

J. N. Loughborough is cited as “eating Graham bread and reading the *Water Cure Journal* in 1848 after learning about health reform from an uncle in western New York” (p. 79).

Loughborough in recounting his experience in health reform in the *The Medical Missionary, December, 1899*, tells how in August, 1848, he visited his uncle and this uncle had secured a copy of the lectures of Sylvester Graham and had adopted the dietary program of using “bread and mush made from unbolted wheat meal.” John Loughborough was then 16 years of age. He continues:

About the same time I learned of Graham bread we secured some of the writings of O. S. and L. N. Fowler and their *Water Cure Journal*. The water cure of that time consisted almost exclusively of the use of cold water with vigorous exercise. An institution for such treatment was opened in Rochester, N.Y., and many persons were greatly benefited, especially those who had enough bodily vigor to “take a brisk walk of one to three miles” after a bath in ice-cold water; but with feeble patients—those whose vitality was insufficient

to cause a reaction—the result was far different.... Cold water cannot relieve all the ills resulting from violation of nature's laws.

He closes his article by stating:

To illustrate the meager instruction given in hygienic lines in those days, I will state that in 1850, when I began preaching, I had slight hemorrhages of the lungs. As a remedy for this difficulty, I was advised to use tobacco. I could not smoke a pipe, but I very soon contracted the habit of cigar smoking. Although we had some light as to good, wholesome bread and cold-water bathing, this resort to cigar smoking shows how vague were our ideas of healthful living—*Medical Missionary and Gospel of Health* 10:7, December 1899.

The fact that J. N. Loughborough really was not a health reformer until 1864 is evidenced by his statement appearing in the *Review and Herald* of December of that year. He depicts the steps he took:

Since the close of the tent season, I have accompanied Bro. and Sister White in their appointments in Maine, Vermont, and Rhode Island. I can say for myself, that I have been greatly benefited in this trip, not only by their instruction in spiritual things, but also by the excellent information they imparted on health, diet, etc...

And here I would say, that the instruction I have received on health, I am trying to practice. For the short time I have been striving to live strictly in accordance with the laws of life, I have been greatly benefited. It is, however, about one year since I commenced a reform in relation to meat-eating. As I had been in the habit of using meat three times a day when I could get it, for the first two months I only ate meat twice a week. Then for a month once a week. Then for three months once a month. And for the last four months no meat has passed my lips. And for the last two months I have eaten but two meals a day. Never was sleep sweeter, or health better, or my mind more cheerful, since I first started in the service of God at the age of 17 years, than for the last two months.

With the short experience I have had, I would not, for any consideration, go back to the meat, spice, pepper, sweet cake, pickles, mustard, head acne, stomach-acne and gloom, and give up the good wholesome fruit, grain, and vegetable diet, with pure cold water as a drink, no headaches, cheerfulness, happiness, vigor and health. But

I do not urge these things upon others, or judge them about their meat. But I do esteem it a privilege to tell them what a temporal blessing I have found in this direction.—[The Review and Herald, December 6, 1864](#), 25:14.

So we would hardly be able to list Loughborough as one of the number of early health reformers who before June, 1863, undoubtedly spoke to James and Ellen White “of their experience in health reform.”

The Kellogg family: For the support of J. P. Kellogg, the father of John Harvey Kellogg, as one of a number of the early health reformers, the author states that “J. P. Kellogg raised his children” by the *Water Cure Journal*. The documentation cited is: “John Harvey Kellogg Autobiographical Memorial,” Oct. 21, 1938, and “My Search for Health,” Ms. Jan. 16, 1942. (JHK papers, Michigan Historical Collection).

The Kellogg family records reveal that shortly after the *Water Cure Journal* began publication (1846) the Kelloggs became subscribers. This was a widely distributed journal. The Kelloggs made an effective use of its methods when their children were attacked with measles. They may have put into practice other hydropathic methods, but we lack information that it made them advocates of health reform in its broader sense.

That the vegetarian dietary program had not been adopted by the family is evidenced by the fact that John Harvey, who was born in 1853, recalled that as a child two foods appealed to him particularly—ox tails richly browned in the oven and the candy his father kept in one corner of the store. The Kellogg cellar even contained a keg of ale to be used “for weak stomach.” (See [The Medical Missionary, March, 1905](#), 14:82. Quoted in Richard W. Schwarz’ dissertation *John Harvey Kellogg*, p. 10.)

It would have been possible for the Kelloggs to speak to the Whites “of their experience in health reform” (p. 79), but if they did it must have been limited to a very few features. John Harvey Kellogg writing in 1890 in a statement quoted earlier, referred to Ellen White’s first writings on health. Said he: “At the time the writings referred to first appeared, the subject of health was almost wholly ignored, not only by people to whom they were addressed, but by the world at large” (J. H. Kellogg, Preface to CTBH, p. iii).



J. N. Andrews, is the one remaining significant witness cited. *Prophetess of Health* states:

It is not clear how or when he first learned of Our Home, [the Jackson institution].... The unpublished diary of Mrs. Andrews reveals that she and her husband were routinely using water treatments in their home by the spring of 1863, and that in January, 1864, John's co-laborers offered to send him to Our Home for a few weeks of rest and treatment.—p. 88.

Andrews declined, “but a few months later sent his badly crippled six-year-old son Mellie (Charles Melville) for a fifteen week stay” (*Ibid*).

The J. N. Andrews family offers an excellent example of the Adventist progress toward health reform in these years.

Mrs. Andrews, the former Angeline Stevens, has left a diary for the years 1859 through 1864. The diary opens with the announcement that the family had just butchered a pig. A little later in 1860 we find Mrs. Andrews recording the death of a neighbor:

Canon Beeman died this morning about 5. He had had a sore throat for some days. Yesterday he had it lanced.... About 11 his wife gave him a dose of morphine which the Dr. had ordered. He immediately went to sleep from which he never woke. Some attribute this sudden death to one thing, some another. The doctor calls it the putrid sore throat.

No health reformer would have been in doubt about the cause of death. Yet Mrs. Andrews gives no indication that she knew.

A week or so later Angeline's father, Mr. Stevens, had a sore knee. He was treated with cloths wet in salt water to his knees and cloths wet in smart weed poultice to his feet.

In the fall of 1862, the little daughter, Mary, contracted whooping cough. Her mother on several occasions wrapped the baby in wet sheets in an apparent attempt to reduce her fever. The local doctor was called in two or three times and administered a hodge-podge of poisons and herbal remedies. Among these were ipecac, nitre, and quinine, the latter given as a “tonic.”

Ipecac was a harmless enough emetic, and one can still buy it in the local drugstore. However, to force a weak, sick infant to vomit up the little nourishment she had been able to eat is certainly questionable therapy!

Nitre, or salt-peter, was a mineral and a poison which depressed the heart beat and undoubtedly made its contribution to the deaths of many patients.

Quinine was, of course, a specific for malaria. Once physicians discovered this, they began to prescribe it for everything. But quinine had side effects:

In moderate doses it weakened the heart and pulse, caused gastrointestinal irritations, and produced nervousness and giddiness. These side effects were accentuated by repeated doses of the drug. In large doses—and physicians were often extraordinarily liberal in their dosage of quinine—it produced... ringing of the ears, and in severe instances, deafness, blindness, and other toxic effects.—William G. Rothstein, *American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 52.

In her desperation Mrs. Andrews was willing to try anything. She secured a recipe for syrup from her sister in Battle Creek. After some searching, she found the ingredients and, as the story is told in the diary, “We gave her a dose immediately. I think Mary has never been sicker than this afternoon. Medicine has no effect to vomit her as I supposed it would.”

When Angeline’s mother was sick, she received similar treatment: “Gave her ipecac and lobelia until she vomited.” The mother got temporary relief, but the next day she was very sick again, and this time the neighbors were called in to anoint her with oil and pray for her.

[50] All this took place in Iowa. Meanwhile, J. N. Andrews was working primarily in New York. Finally, in February of 1863, Angeline takes her children and moves to Rochester to be with her husband. When she arrives on February 17, John is just recovering from diphtheria. This is particularly interesting since the *Review* published that very day carried a reprint of an article by Dr. James C. Jackson recommending water treatment for diphtheria. James White endorsed the article with an editor’s note. From this point on, we find the Andrews family showing more interest in “packs” and “warm baths” in the treatment of illness.

That the other features of reform advocated by Jackson were not observed is made clear from several of J. N. Andrews’ articles appearing in the *The Health Reformer*, July, 1869, pp. 44-45, and March, 1872, pp. 76-77. The July, 1869, article opens with:

The subject of health reform has engaged my earnest attention for more than five years. During this entire period of time I have endeavored, as a matter of conscience, strictly to regard and live out the principles of this noble reform. As its effects upon myself have been very marked, and such that all with whom I have been associated for this period have observed them, I take pleasure in briefly stating my own experience.—p. 8.

In his February, 1872, article he pinpoints the beginning of the health reform program in their home as nine months after the health reform vision of June 6, 1863; “It was in March, 1864, that myself and wife decided to adopt the principles of health reform.”

The following is significant on this point: “At the time that the subject of health reform first arrested my attention, one circumstance contributed to fix its importance in my mind, and establish it permanently in my esteem” (*Ibid*, p. 9).

This, he points out, was the recovery of his son from a serious leg difficulty, an experience several times referred to. A clear answer to his prayer seemed to come in the command impressed on his mind: “Send the child to Dansville,” and Andrews comments: “I had then very little knowledge of that institution, but what I had learned of the principles of health reform caused me to regard the method of treating disease there in use, as worthy of confidence” (*The Health Reformer*, July, 1869, 4:9).

Resolved to adopt the full Dansville program in their own home for the benefit of the child on his return, which they did, Andrews wrote: “Such was our *beginning in earnest to be health reformers*” (*Ibid*). (emphasis supplied). Andrews then described the surprises which came to him as the result of the change in the way of life, quite unlooked for on his part. He closes with these words:

“I find myself possessed of excellent health, which, under God, I owe to the light on the health reform. Thank God that I have ever seen its light” (*Ibid*).

In the four-article series “My Experience in Health Reform” published in 1871 and 1872, he goes more into detail and mentions:

We had no *Health Reformer* then to give instruction.... I had seen some numbers of the *Laws of Life*, and I knew that there was a hygienic institution at Dansville, N.Y., but I had *so little knowledge of the* hygienic system in general, and of this institution in particular,

that *I was not by any means decided that this was the only system to be relied upon for the preservation or recovery of health*—*The Health Reformer, February 1872, 7:44*, (emphasis supplied).

In his detailed description of their March, 1864, turn around, Andrews mentions putting away from their table “spice, pepper, vinegar,” “butter, meat, fish, and substituted graham flour for fine flour.” They took pains to secure “plenty of good fruit, vegetables, grains,” and “used some milk and a very little salt” (*The Health Reformer, March, 1872, 7:76-77*).

These clear-cut, direct references disclose the fact that until March, 1864, the Andrews family had but little knowledge of the Dansville institution and Dr. Jackson. On the main features of health reform Elder Andrews had seen a few issues of the *Laws of Life*, but most certainly had not adopted any part of the Jackson program unless it be water treatments, but nowhere does Andrews mention even these. They are mentioned by his wife in her diary for 1860-1864, but apparently Graham had had little or no influence on them. Could it be that the Andrews experience typified that of other Sabbathkeeping Adventists? The contemporary records would seem to indicate so. Can the reader of *Prophetess of Health* gain a true picture of the state of Adventist knowledge and practice of health reform when such relevant evidence as presented above concerning that knowledge and practice is omitted?

We have heard from the principal witnesses cited by *Prophetess of Health* in support of its basic premise, that is: “By June, 1863, Seventh-day Adventists were already in possession of the main outlines of health reform.” *Their full testimony comes far short of sustaining the all-important premise.*

### **What Did James and Ellen White Know?**

Here is another point to consider: Why was it that, if, as *Prophetess of Health* avers, “by June of 1863 Seventh-day Adventists were already in possession of the main outlines of the health reform message,” (pp. 80-81) and a sizable number of individuals, friends of the Whites, who had accepted various phases of health reform had spoken to them, why was it that, we repeat, when the 1863 vision was given to Ellen White outlining the main features of reform it

seemed foreign to her? Why did she feel so incapable of presenting intelligently what she had seen in vision? Why did she write: “I was astonished at the things shown me in vision. Many things came directly across my own ideas” (Ms 7, 1867)? See Appendix B.

Willie White is quoted as reporting that about two weeks after the vision when Dr. Lay pressed Ellen White to give details of what she was shown in the vision, she “at first demurred, saying ‘that she was not familiar with medical language, and that much of the matter presented to her was so different from the commonly accepted views that she feared she could not relate it so that it could be understood’” (p. 82).

*The Whites treating diphtheria in February, 1863.*—Another premise basic to *Prophetess of Health* is that in February, 1863, when confronted with two of their children with Diphtheria, James and Ellen White found Jackson’s article on the dread disease in a rural New York newspaper and employed successfully in their family the methods of treatment advocated (pp. 47, 76, 80). The book declares: “At last she had stumbled onto a system of medicine that really worked. With the fervor of a convert she began sharing her faith in hydropathy, and to her death she remained one of its staunchest advocates.” (p. 47).

[51]

This point, vital to *Prophetess of Heath’s* thesis that the Whites had accepted the basic tenets of health reform, or at least hydrotherapy, as “a system of medicine” four months before the vision of June 6, 1863, is reiterated in the next chapter:

Of all Jackson’s writings, probably the most influential in terms of long-range effects was a modest-looking article on diphtheria published January 15, 1863, in a rural New York newspaper, the *Yates County Chronicle*. At the time of the article’s appearance, a severe diphtheria epidemic was raging through much of the United States, and by a twist of fate, the paper fell into the hands of an anxious mother who was nursing her two sons through an apparent attack. When the simple water treatments described by the Dansville physician proved successful, the grateful mother at once began sharing her discovery with others and thus embarked upon a lifelong career as a prophetess of health reform. Her name was Ellen G. White.—p. 76.

Is this all-important deduction really supported by the facts? True, two of the White boys stricken with diphtheria recovered in response to the treatment. True, the employment of these methods with Elder Hull's six-year-old son resulted in an early recovery. True, James White declared in introducing the article that he "had a good degree of confidence in his [Jackson's] manner in treating diseases." This was logical, if only transitory. *But that this means she had "stumbled onto a system of medicine that really worked,"* or that Ellen White "*began proclaiming its wonders far and wide,*" fails of support in the records.

Although James White printed the article in the *Review* of Feb. 17, 1863 and they reprinted Jackson's article again in 1865 in the *How to Live* pamphlets, neither James nor Ellen White, or others in subsequent months or at any future time, made any reference to this supposedly landmark experience with diphtheria or the discovery of a new system of medicine. At no time is this cited as one of the first indications of a health reform awakening. This is *Prophetess of Health's* assumption.

If, as *Prophetess of Health* avers, Ellen White had found a "system of medicine that really worked" (p. 47) and their experience "embarked" her "upon a lifetime career as a prophetess of health reform" (p. 76), why is it that even after the June 6 vision, in December, 1863, when their oldest son Henry contracted lung fever (pneumonia) the Whites called a local physician? There is no evidence that they were prepared to employ water treatment or indeed did so. They stood helplessly by while their boy died ([An Appeal to the Youth, 24-31](#)). *Prophetess of Health* pictures Mrs. White *almost a year before this*, beginning to share her faith in hydrotherapy "with the fervor of a convert" (page 47). Is it not strange that she failed to use her supposed "system of medicine" (*Ibid.*) to save her son's life?

The records are very scanty. None of those who report the event mention any attempt to employ water treatment in Henry's case, although such may have been considered. Neither James nor Ellen White make mention of such, despite the fact that only ten months before, wet packs, etc. had been used successfully in treating two of their children with diphtheria. Except for casual mention of the death of her first born son, Ellen White's only reference to the experience is the decision she and her husband made when Willie a few weeks later

contracted the same dread disease. Writing in August, 1864, a few months after the experience, Ellen White contrasts the procedures in each case:

In the winter of 1864, my Willie was suddenly and violently brought down with lung fever. We had just buried our oldest son with this disease, and were very anxious in regard to Willie, fearing that he, too, might die. We decided that we would not send for a physician, but do the best we could with him ourselves by the use of water, and entreat the Lord in behalf of the child.—4SG, pp. 151-152.

She tells of the steps taken and reports that after the crisis, “He came up rapidly, and has had better health than he has had for several years before” (*Ibid.*).

Another clear indication of the tentative nature of the Whites’ early knowledge of health reform is the fact that they confined Willie to a closed, heated room until Mrs. White was instructed in another vision that “He needs air.” This is in spite of the fact that a year earlier James White had written of the importance of fresh air and mentioned that he and his wife slept with their windows open summer and winter. This is also in spite of the fact that Jackson in his article on diphtheria had clearly and pointedly argued the value of “pure atmospheric air” both as a curative and a great preventive. In fact, Jackson was so insistent on the need for his patients suffering from diphtheria to have fresh air that he advocated in this article breaking a window pane or poking a hole in the wall to get it. James White had declared that he had a “good degree” of confidence in Jackson’s methods, but when it came down to the crisis with their own son suffering from pneumonia, they failed to generalize and apply his advice.

Why? Apparently their understanding of, or acceptance of his ideas, was limited and anything but firm and fixed. Only when instructed in a vision to do so did Mrs. White act to properly ventilate the sickroom. This episode goes far toward supporting her claim that her light came from the Lord, not from physicians.

Here was a case when even though she had read what a physician had to say on the value of fresh air, she did not fully accept it and practice it. The light from the Lord was the motivating force.

We should also note that, although the health reform vision had occurred before Henry's death, the vision had stressed the abandonment of harmful practices in the treatment of illness, specifically drug-taking, as well as health and dietary practices which would prevent illness. She was instructed to point the people to "God's great medicine: water, pure soft water, for disease, for health, for cleanliness, for luxury" ([Letter 4, 1863](#); [The Story of Our Health Message, 78](#)).

[52] The vision did not give practical, positive instruction in the treatment of specific illnesses. It dealt with principles, not with the minutiae of their application. Ellen White was left to learn how to give water treatments in the same way that anyone else would gain this knowledge.

The Jackson article then, did contain various fragmentary ideas on health, but they were linked specifically to the treatment of diphtheria and the Whites apparently did not gain any systematic approach to health from it.

We now turn to the implications of the Jackson article appearing in [The Review and Herald, February 17, 1863](#). It helped the White family and James White felt it could help others. It should be noted that the allusions in the article to proper diet are very brief and ambiguous. They certainly do not give enough information upon which to base a whole system of medicine. The same is true of the statements about dress. Jackson's recommendations about dress deal again with the clothing of the extremities in cold weather, but are further limited to little girls rather than to all women. He boldly asserts that diphtheria is not contagious—hardly a sound plank for a platform of a system of medicine that really worked. Jackson did mention the importance of fresh air in the sickroom, at least for the diphtheria patient. <sup>2</sup>

The last part of Jackson's article is concerned with the water treatments to be given for diphtheria. He tells in detail how to administer a sitz bath, a pack, a rub, and wet bandages. But it was far from giving the Whites a "system of medicine" which they were ready to apply in other cases. As noted, in Henry's case it is

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<sup>2</sup>Jackson prescribed, "upon being wrapped in the wet sheet the windows are opened, and thorough ventilation and lowering of temperature is secured." ([The Review and Herald, February 17, 1863, 21.90](#))



obvious that their understanding of how to treat the sick by methods of health reform was still fragmentary. They were still very unsure of themselves.

The evidence is that neither the February experience with treating the children for diphtheria nor the handful of short items on health published in the *Review and Herald* in May, made the impact on Ellen White asserted in *Prophetess of Health*. One thing is crystal clear: Before June 6, 1863, Ellen White had not stumbled onto “a system of medicine that really worked.” Nor is there any evidence whatever that the February experience with diphtheria led her to “proclaim” the wonders of hydrotherapy “far and wide” (p. 47), “sharing her discovery with others” (p. 76).

Even by December, 1863, six months after the vision, neither James nor Ellen White had had an opportunity to give study to applying the principles. James was too busy. Ellen would not read till she had written what was shown her.

### The Health Reform Vision and Its Publication <sup>3</sup>

*Prophetess of Health* devotes pages 81 to 85 to recounting quite accurately what took place in connection with the health reform vision and Ellen White’s experience in relating and writing it for publication.

Considerable space is given to the question of the relationship of her presentations as they related to available books and journals on health. As she recounted orally, soon after the vision, what she was shown she was told by some that her statements were similar to views expressed by certain of the health reformers. They remarked:

You speak very nearly the opinions taught in the *Laws of Life*, and other publications, by Drs. Trall, Jackson, and others. Have you read that paper and those works?—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867, 30:260.](#) <sup>4</sup>

And Mrs. White reports:

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<sup>3</sup>The reader’s understanding of the following material will be facilitated by the chronology of events appearing on p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>See appendix A for the full *Review and Herald* article in which Ellen White deals with questions on the Health Reform vision.

My reply was that I had not, neither should I read them till I had fully written out my views, lest it should be said that I had received my light upon the subject of health from physicians, and not from the Lord.—*Ibid.*

She elaborated on that point in her answer in the *Review and Herald*:

I did not read any works upon health until I had written *Spiritual Gifts*, vols. iii and iv, *Appeal to Mothers*, and had sketched out most of my six articles in the six numbers of *How to Live*. I did not know that such a paper existed as the *Laws of Life*, published at Dansville, New York. I had not heard of the several works upon health, written by Dr. J. C. Jackson, and other publications at Dansville, at the time I had the view named above [on June 6, 1863]. I did not know that such works existed until September, 1863, when in Boston, Mass., my husband saw them advertised in a periodical called the *Voice of the Prophets*, published by Elder J. V. Himes. My husband ordered the works from Dansville and received them at Topsham, Maine. His business gave him no time to peruse them, and as I determined not to read them until I had written out my views, the books remained in their wrappers.—*Ibid.*

*Prophetess of Health* asserts that:

In her anxiety to appear uninfluenced by any earthly agency—“My views were written independent of books or of the opinion of others”—Ellen White failed to mention certain pertinent facts. Not only did she ignore her reading of Jackson’s article on diphtheria nearly six months before her vision, but she incorrectly gave the time when James had first learned of Jackson’s other works.—p. 84

It is important to note that in the statement in question Ellen White makes a clear distinction between “works,” by which she obviously means “books,” and “papers,” meaning, of course, periodicals or magazines. Indeed, she was quizzed in the latter category only about the *Laws of Life*.

Since she had not studied the books written by contemporary health reformers nor known of the magazine *Laws of Life* at the time, she answered her questioners accordingly.

[53] It is easy for us today to suggest that she would have given a better response if she had recited every scrap of information about health which she had picked up prior to her vision, including the

Jackson article on diphtheria, which she had found in a rural newspaper. As noted earlier, that article apparently made little lasting impression on her.

In the flood of light provided by the vision, any lesser glimmers paled into insignificance in her mind. She did not list in her response every health item the *Review* had published or that she may have read prior to the vision. She *gave* the message she received in vision. She gave the message *because* she had received it in vision. This is the substance of her argument.

*Prophetess of Health* points out that Mrs. White was incorrect in regard to the exact time when James White ordered health books from Dansville (p. 84). He apparently ordered the books in mid or late June; she says *she* did not know such books existed until September.

Mrs. White never claimed to have an infallible memory when it came to recalling biographical data. This is indicated in the preface to her autobiographical sketch published in *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, where she tacitly acknowledges having a faulty memory for dates ([Spiritual Gifts 2:iii](#)).

We must bear in mind that prophets are human beings with “frailties like our own” ([James 5:17](#), NEB). The apostle Paul in [1 Corinthians 1:14-16](#) acknowledges the possibility of a faulty memory respecting the number of people he baptized in Corinth.

It is, of course, very possible that Mrs. White, a busy woman, may have been unaware that James had ordered the books in June. But even if she had once known, she could easily have forgotten the exact month by the time she wrote her account of the purchase of the health books four years later. At the time she wrote out her recollections she was in the midst of a busy speaking tour and may have inadvertently tied the ordering of the books to an event she did remember—the time she saw the ad in Boston ([The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#), 30:260). Why did not James correct her recollections? We do not know. Perhaps he too had forgotten the exact time.

But the point that needs to be emphasized is this: It is of little importance when James White ordered the books or whether his wife learned of their existence in June or in September, so long as she *did not read them until after she had written out her account of*

*her vision*. Her main point is that she got her views from the Lord, not from physicians. We repeat: What *is* important is *not* whether she was mistaken regarding a date, but whether she *did not read* the works of other health reformers before publishing her account of her vision.

### What Did Ellen White Borrow?

While *Prophetess of Health* refers to the contribution current health literature made to Mrs. White's writings, no literary dependence on the writings of other health reformers is shown in *Appeals to Mothers*, published in April 1864.

And although there is an attempt to do so, no convincing evidence of specific literary dependence can be shown in the chapter on "Health" which appeared in *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 4, in August of that year.

*Prophetess of Health* on page 83 asserts that that chapter "reads in places like L. B. Coles," and declares, "She recited the established principles of health reform, attributing them to her recent vision."

At this point the book seems purposely cautious in this assertion compared with statements that in some of Mrs. White's later health writings she made free use of Coles (p. 162) and she "borrowed from Coles" (p. 166).

Now, Mrs. White freely acknowledges that some time *after* publishing *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 4, and sketching out her six articles on "How to Live," she read the works of other health reformers. Thus, her *later* employment of similar phraseology is an entirely different question from the alleged similarities between her *Spiritual Gifts* chapter and the writings of L.B. Coles.

In a footnote, *Prophetess of Health* cites four brief passages from Ellen White's basic *Spiritual Gifts*' chapter on health and lines them up in parallel columns with extracts from L. B. Coles' books (pages 232, 233). How can these seeming similarities be explained?

First, as one examines these parallels and compares the wording he is struck by the similarity of sentiments expressed, but an absence of Coles' phraseology. Second, both Ellen White and L. B. Coles lived in the same era and culture, they inherited the same language patterns, and they were discussing the same subject. It is not sur-

prising, therefore, that some of the same words were employed in expressing similar thoughts.

At this point the reader should avoid the subtle pitfall of assuming that because there is a similarity of sentiment, one writer was indebted to another. Natural laws relating to physiology and nutrition may be discovered through research or may be given by revelation. If the findings of research are sound, they are bound to harmonize with revelation, for God is the author of these laws. It is neither correct nor in harmony with the facts to conclude that *similarity* of views or even language necessarily proves that Ellen White gained her information from men instead of from God.

Another point is also important. In the four brief passages which *Prophetess of Health* claims are similar to Coles, the statements in the case dealing with physicians and drugs are so remote from each other in their linguistic patterns that one strains to see any possible literary relationship. The other three passages all deal with tea, coffee, or tobacco—subjects on which Ellen White had received visions as early as 1848 and about which she had spoken and written ([Testimonies for the Church 1:224](#)) and concerning which the *Review and Herald* had been publishing articles for years.

J. N. Andrews wrote in 1856:

That tobacco is a *stimulant*, producing in many cases partial intoxication, is also an undoubted fact. That it is an active *poison*, seriously deranging the systems of those who use it, admits of the clearest proof. What right has any man to destroy his own nervous system and cut short his days by the habitual use of poison? What excuse can a man offer to God for intoxicating himself with tobacco?—[The Review and Herald, April 10, 1856](#), 8:5. (Emphasis supplied.) [54]

In 1859 James White wrote:

Thank God that it has been our privilege, as a people (though all have not acted upon it) to add to our faith virtue, knowledge and temperance, so as to dismiss the filthy weed, tobacco, and the useless herb, tea. But if the spirit of reform on these things had never entered our ranks, the poorest among us, who might be slaves to these *slow poisons* would surmount every obstacle in their way of obtaining them and would use them freely.—[The Review and Herald, June 9, 1859](#), 14:22. (Emphasis supplied.)

John Bostwick of Minnesota also used terminology that was commonly used at the time to describe tobacco. In an article appearing in the *Review* of June 11, 1861, he says:

I have seen individuals who came for miles to get the advice of a hydropathic physician in abandoning the use of tobacco.... All will agree that it is generally a habit, and a dirty practice, and when the understanding is enlightened on this subject is it not a sin to thus pollute our bodies with this *insidious* poison?—[The Review and Herald, June 11, 1861](#), 18:24. (Emphasis supplied.)

James White comments editorially:

The habitual use of tobacco is injurious to the constitution. As one proof of this we refer to those who have become so nervous and shattered by long using this *slow poison* that they are compelled to abandon it.—[The Review and Herald, December 3, 1861](#), 19:4.

It is interesting to note that in describing tobacco the expressions “insidious poison” and “slow poison” are used. Thus it is apparent that when Ellen White used terminology that *Prophetess of Health* suggests came from Coles, the evidence indicates that it was not peculiar to him, but was used by people in general.

As to tea, M. B. Smith of Marion, Iowa, quotes numerous doctors on its deleterious effects. Observe the language commonly used at that time to describe these effects:

Dr. Wm. A. Alcott says, “One evidence that tea is *poisonous*, is found in the fact that, like alcohol, stramonium, belladonna, and many other medicines, it produces its specific disease—the tea disease.” This will be more fully appreciated, coming as it does from one who is so generally known in this country, and one who has written so much on the subject of life and health.

John Cole, member of the Royal College of surgeons in London, has written much on the tea disease, and has paid much attention to the effects of tea on the human system. He shows that all tea-drinkers are liable to the tea disease just as much as every dram-drinker is liable to the delirium tremens. He gives a list of ten patients who were suffering from this disease, and says that they were almost all cured by the disuse of tea.

The Catechism of Health, says that “tea when drank strong, and in large quantities, impairs the powers of the stomach, produces nervous symptoms,” etc.

Dr. Hooper, in his Medical Dictionary, says of tea, “When taken too copiously, it is apt to occasion weakness, tremor, palsies, and various other symptoms arising from narcotic plants.”

Dr. Beaumont, a surgeon in the United States army, whose experiments have attracted the attention of the whole medical world, says “Even coffee and tea, the common beverage of all classes of people, have a tendency to *debilitate* the digestive organs.”—[The Review and Herald, May 21, 1861](#), 18:6. (Emphasis supplied.)

In October of the same year the *Review* published another article by M. B. Smith, this one on coffee. Again notice the language commonly used to describe the effects of coffee:

Coffee is a medicine, a *narcotic*. To prove this we will cite some of the best medical men of Europe and America.

Hooper, in his medical dictionary, says, “It possesses nervine and astringent qualities. It is said to be a good antidote against an overdose of opium, and to relieve obstinate spasmodic asthmas.”

Dr. Paris says, “It is suspected of producing palsies, and not without foundation.”

Do we need any stronger evidence of its *narcotic* tendency?

Dr. Combe, in his work on Diet and Regimen, says, “It acts as a strong *stimulant*, and certainly *increases our comfort for the time*. Like all other stimulants, however, its use is attended with the disadvantage of *exhausting the sensibility* of the part on which it acts, and *induces weakness*.”

He elsewhere says, “Coffee, like tea, is a *slow poison* to all under all circumstances.”—[The Review and Herald, October 1, 1861](#), 18:142. (Emphasis supplied.)

Thus three of the four paralleling exhibits presented in *Propheticess of Health*, pp. 232-233 for the purpose of linking Ellen G. White’s 1864 *Spiritual Gifts*, statements on tobacco, tea, and coffee with Coles fade into insignificance for she and others were freely discussing these matters in terms common to all, years in advance of the basic health reform vision of June 6, 1863. (See [Testimonies for the Church 1:224](#)).

Even though Ellen White may have used words and phrases employed by Coles and Mann and other speakers and writers, we believe that the views and concepts behind these words and phrases came to her not from Coles and Mann and others but from God.

In other words, the selection of words from human sources to express concepts received by divine inspiration does not mean that the concepts are of purely human origin.

[55] Of the groups of parallels cited in *Prophetess of Health* all are found in the writings of L. B. Coles except one group from the works of Horace Mann. It should be noted that the Mann parallels were included in those portions of *Mann's Lecture* which James and Ellen White had themselves selected to become a part of *Health; or How to Live*, Number 6, "Words from Horace Mann, Extracts from His Lectures," pages 25-47. This was in 1865, after Ellen White had done her basic writing on health.

Articles from Coles' *Philosophy of Health* are used on a number of occasions in the *How to Live* series. In *How to Live*, Number 2, his article "Particular Directions to Parents and Guardians" is used. In Number 3, a section titled "Cure Without Drugs" is included from *Philosophy of Health*. In *How to Live*, Number 4, Coles is represented by "The Respiratory System," and in Number 5 two articles of his appear: "Lung Affections," and "Spirits, Coffee, and Tea." In Number 6, his "Obligations to Law" is included.

In the light of these facts, it is clear that Mrs. White was not trying to deceive anyone. Two of the passages which *Prophetess of Health* cites on pp. 166 and 167 were borrowed and published in later years, and were in 1865 published and distributed in *How to Live* right along with her own initial writings on health.

To summarize: In 1864, *after* she had published her account of her June 6, 1863, vision, which Mrs. White declares she received from God, not men, she did borrow phraseology from Mann and Coles, both of whom she includes among those health reformers whose views were "nearly in harmony" with what the Lord had revealed to her. But let it be emphasized, according to all evidence found to date these borrowings began to appear in her writings *only after* the time she freely acknowledges she read these very writers.

### **Inspiration and Borrowed Phraseology**

How do these facts relate to Mrs. White's claims about the source of her writings? Mrs. White has said, for instance:



Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#), 30:260.

What was Mrs. White's point? Her point was that she had to find her own words to express the thoughts the Holy Spirit impressed upon her mind. The Holy Spirit only rarely dictated the very words she should use. In a few cases, the process of finding the best language to express what the Spirit had revealed involved using the phraseology of other writers. Thus, for example, when writing on historical topics the words of historians were sometimes used when their statements afforded "a ready and forcible presentation of the subject" ([The Great Controversy](#), 12).

### **The Visit to Dr. Jackson's Dansville Institution**

*Prophetess of Health* on pages 88-93 deals with the visit of James and his wife to the James C. Jackson institution at Dansville, New York. The trip was made right after Ellen White had finished her work on *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. IV, which contained her basic article on health. As to the reasons for the trip, James White wrote: In the month of September, 1864, Mrs. White and self spent three weeks at the health institution at Dansville, Livingston County, New York, called, "Our Home." Our object in this visit was not to take treatment, as we were enjoying better health than usual; but to see what we could see, and hear what we could hear, so as to be able to give to many inquiring friends a somewhat definite report—*How to Live #1*, p. 12.

He gave a comprehensive report of what they saw and heard. Ellen White a little later wrote of the care that those must exercise who visit "a popular water cure." "They have to carry along with them at all times the gospel sieve and sift everything they hear, that they may choose the good and refuse the bad" ([Testimonies for the Church 1:490](#)).

Two elements stressed in *Prophetess of Health* in connection with the visits of the Whites to Dansville call for careful study: They are:

1. Phrenology
2. Reform Dress

James White in his report on the Dansville visit referred to above, writes concerning the reform dress, but says nothing about phrenology. Ellen White in a letter to Brother and Sister Lockwood—published as appendix D of this critique—mentions the reform dress and while she does not employ the term phrenology, she does report on Dr. Jackson’s pronouncement on “Willie’s head.”

### Willie’s Phrenological Examination

To better be prepared to pass judgment on the incident, the reader is urged to turn to appendix D to read the full setting of a letter written to a close friend in Battle Creek, in which there appears the one single E. G. White reference to the matter. Here is the sum total of her allusion to phrenology:

Adelia and the children have been examined today. The doctor pronounces Adelia sick. We shall have their written prescriptions this week, then you can know more in regard to them. I think Dr. Jackson gave an accurate account of the disposition and organization of our children. He pronounces Willie’s head to be one of the best that has ever come under his observation. He gave a good description of Edson’s character and peculiarities.... I think this examination will be worth everything to Edson.—EGW [Letter 6, 1864](#).

The reader can judge if the information thus justifies the strong wording employed in *Prophetess of Health* on page 90.

Fascinating to Ellen White was the “science” of phrenology, which Dr. Jackson practiced at five dollars a reading. Soon after the arrival of Edson and Willie she took them to the doctor for evaluations of their “constitutional organization, functional activity, temperament, predisposition to disease, natural aptitudes for business, fitness for connubial and maternal conditions, etc., etc.”

<sup>5</sup> Writing to friends, she could scarcely conceal her elation with Jackson’s flattering analysis.

[56] The Whites were at a medical institution—all evidence points to their taking their children and their lady helper, Adelia Patten to

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<sup>5</sup>Note: The wording here presented is token from Dr. Jackson’s advertisement in *Lows of Life*, July, 1867, six years after the White visit to Dansville

Dr. Jackson for routine medical examinations soon after their arrival at Dansville. Note Ellen White's wording: "Adelia and the children have been examined today. The doctor pronounces Adelia sick" ([Letter 6, 1864](#)).

Dr. Jackson, in an advertisement published in 1867, described the examinations he had been giving for the past three years (which would include the time Ellen White was at Dansville) as evaluations of "constitutional organization, functional activity, temperament, [and] predisposition to disease." This is what he offered. But there is no indication that James and Ellen White particularly sought a phrenological examination which turned out to be just a part of the routine exam given at the time.

The written report of Dr. Jackson's examination of Willie White is extant and is published in Appendix D. It deals primarily with his physical constitution although it touches on his temperament.

While Jackson's examination doubtless included some phrenological aspects, it was not for a "phrenological" examination primarily that Ellen White took her children, and her taking the children to Jackson was not necessarily motivated by an interest in phrenology.

Adelia Patten, the young lady who assisted the Whites and accompanied them to Dansville, and who was examined by Jackson along with the White boys, also wrote about her experience to the Lockwoods:

We passed examination a day or two ago. As my turn came he [Jackson] set me [in] a chair and said, 'My dear you are sick, ain't you.' Bro. White gave him a little sketch of our Graham life during the past summer and of what my cares and labors had been. He said that I had evidently overworked that I must make a decided change, and take a rest or it would tell seriously by and by. He gave advice, etc., and said when I got thoroughly initiated to their style of living if I took proper exercise and rest I would enjoy better health than ever before. I have their system about one half of it practically *learned*.—*Adelia Patten to Sister Lockwood*, Sept. 15, 1864; Appendix D.

If head reading was a prominent part of the examination, why does not Adelia make some mention of it? But she does not.

Another factor to be considered is the actual form of Jackson's report on his examination of Willie White. It is a simple four-page

handwritten prose document, not a phrenological chart indicating the relative strength and weakness of the usual phrenologist's thirty-seven mental areas. (See Appendix D for the full report.) This fact alone is very revealing since the standard phrenological exam yielded such a chart—indeed, anyone sitting for such an exam would feel greatly cheated were he not to receive such a report.

A reading at Fowler and Wells entitled the patient to a copy of Fowler's *Practical Phrenology*, a chart and commentary bound in the front part of his standard book, *Phrenology Proved*. [See Davies, p. 37, 38, 47 and *Prophetess of Health*, page 68.] The Fowler chart had blanks for the names of the patient and his examiner, as did, presumably, most of the other charts offered by phrenologists.

Jackson stated his own position on phrenology in July of 1862. A correspondent sent in the question:

“What would you think of having some pieces on Phrenology in the ‘*Laws [of Life]*’? We think that the mental and physical systems of man are so closely connected, that it will not seem out of its place in a Health Journal.”

Jackson replied:

I am a believer in Phrenology. I think it the only sound mental philosophy. On no other basis in my judgment can human nature be properly illustrated or held responsible for its peculiar exhibitions and conditions. I am sure that I can demonstrate to the satisfaction of any candid man, that it is entirely compatible with the most orthodox views of religion. As a Christian, therefore, I feel no indisposition to its acceptance; and as a physician who has largely to deal with morbid conditions of body, originating in states of mind that are abnormal, I feel greatly gratified with the knowledge I derive from a belief in it; yet I do not choose to devote the *Laws of Life*, which is peculiarly a Health Journal, to the discussion of mental philosophy in the abstract.—*Laws of Life*, Vol. 5, July, 1862, p. 101.

Jackson is obviously a believer but not an advocate at this point. He does not feel the connection between phrenology and health so close as to necessitate any discussion of it in his journal. Such a position accords quite well with the evidence from the examination of the White children two years later. Phrenology was a part of the examination, but not a prominent part.

Finally, in this case Ellen White merely reports to a friend concerning the examination and the Jackson statement about her son's head. Nowhere do we find any other reference to the experience. Nowhere do we find her advocating cranioscopy (headreading). It is significant that the best medical authorities of her time made a marked distinction between the brain regions with various intellectual faculties and the idea that these faculties might be recognized on the exterior of the cranium. (See Davies, p. 135.) Medical authorities were willing to entertain the former notion, but not the latter.

A passing reference to cranioscopy—"He pronounces Willie's head to be one of the best"—indicates only a passing interest in a single incident and it is significant that Ellen White never took up the advocacy by either private or public endorsement of cranioscopy.

The fact that she did not say more about it is far more remarkable, given the widespread acceptance which the practice enjoyed in her time.

*Prophetess of Health* considers Ellen White's one single reference to a phrenological reading in a private letter of sufficient importance to give space to it in the text, and also to introduce three appendix items relating to it. These are the only exhibits considered of sufficient importance to rate appendix status. The reader can easily discover the weight they actually carry.

[57]

The contributions of phrenology to education, the treatment of mental illness, etc., and the fact that its concepts and terminology pervaded nineteenth century America was discussed on pages 46, 47 of this critique.

Ellen White's use of phraseology linked with phrenology is dealt with in Chapter Six, "*Short Skirts and Sex.*"

### The American Costume and the Reform Dress

*Prophetess of Health* on page 91 introduces Ellen White's reaction to: "The American Costume" consisting of "short skirts over pants worn by Dr. Harriet Austin and the other women of Our Home." It is said that this "caught Ellen's fancy."

In Chapter Six, "*Short Skirts and Sex,*" it is said that Ellen White, while having condemned the American Costume when she made

her first visit to Dansville, “began having second thoughts about the reform dress” (p. 125).

What is not stated is that a reform in dress was a part of the June 6, 1863, vision. James White makes reference to this in his 1870 retrospective statement:

“When the Lord saw that we were able to bear it, light was given relative to food and dress” ([The Review and Herald, November 8, 1870](#), 36:165). (Emphasis supplied.)

Ellen White in her September 14, 1864, letter to W. M. Lockwood after referring to the styles of dress worn at Dansville stated, “I am going to get up a style of dress on my own hook which will accord *perfectly with that which has been shown me*” ([Letter 6, 1864](#), quoted in Appendix D). (Emphasis supplied.)

In her October 8, 1867, Review and Herald article answering questions (see appendix A) she describes the attire of three groups of women that passed before her in the vision. Yet, “no one precise style” of dress was given to her “as the exact rule to guide all in their dress” ([The Story of Our Health Message](#), 442).

Quite naturally, then, she observed with interest the dresses of the women at Dansville who were attempting reforms in female attire. She had both positive and negative reactions to the dress styles worn at Dansville. With the vision clearly in her mind, she determined to get out something she would have a part in designing.

### After Dansville

After staying three weeks at Dansville, the Whites continued on their trip east which extended through September, October, and early November. They did not, as portrayed in *Prophetess of Health*, head “home to Battle Creek brimming with enthusiasm for sitz baths, short skirts, and Graham mush.”

When they returned to Battle Creek in November, Mrs. White and her husband launched into the preparation of the *Health; or How to Live* pamphlets and her work on the reform dress she hoped to develop was delayed. The reform dress is discussed in Chapter Six of this critique.

## Health or How to Live Pamphlets

On pages 93-95 the work of James and Ellen White in assembling the material for and publishing the six *Health; or How to Live* pamphlets is discussed. The historical narrative is presented quite accurately. Mrs. White's six *How to Live* articles are available today in [Selected Messages 2:409-479](#).

## Illness of Health Reformers

*Prophetess of Health* on pages 85 and 96 discusses the illnesses of the early health reformers. The account of James White's stroke and recovery appearing on pages 96-101 is quite accurate. Ellen White's recital on the restoration of James White's health is presented in the W. P. Bradley postscript, pp. 91, 92.

Ellen White wrote glowingly of the benefits of health reform in *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 4, published in August, 1864. Her health had "never been better" (see pages 153-154).

James White in reporting their visit to Dansville in September 1864 explained that they "were enjoying better health than usual," and the object of their visit was "not to take treatment" (*How to Live*, No. 1, p. 12). But James did have a break in health a year later—in August 1865. Ellen explains the reasons for his presumption, which led to a break in his health:

The reform my husband had made in his diet previous to his sickness, [the September, 1865 stroke] had a very beneficial influence upon his health. His head was generally free from pain and never felt clearer. By eating no meat, but grains, fruits, and vegetables, simply cooked, his appetite was good, and he partook of his food with a keen relish. His brain felt so clear that he thought it safe for him to labor on, trusting much to the beneficial influence of his simple diet; and in addition to the labors and burdens he had hitherto borne, he added the Health Reform—making extra efforts to teach Sabbathkeeping Adventists how to live to preserve health and enjoy the blessing of God.—Ms 1, 1866.

As to other suffering Adventists, it must be remembered that it takes time for changes to be made. Ellen White's vision was published in August 1864. The summer of 1865 marked the low

point in health of a number of workers. It could hardly be expected that the full fruitage of health reform would be seen so soon.

It was not long, however, till the *Review* and the *Health Reformer* carried the testimony of many who greatly benefited.



In this chapter *Prophetess of Health* reviews the experience of Seventh-day Adventists at a time when their membership could be numbered at about 5,000, had a very limited trained medical personnel or adequate financial resources, yet launched a medical institution. *Prophetess of Health* provides a good deal of interesting history, even though some of it is presented in such a way as to demean these pioneering efforts. The reader is referred to the D. E. Robinson well-documented presentation of this topic in *Story of Our Health Message*, chapters 12, 14 and 15.

### Adventists Launch a Medical Institution

*Prophetess of Health* states on page 103, that “While politicians in Washington quarreled bitterly over the best method of healing a divided and scarred nation, the Adventists of Battle Creek dedicated themselves to curing mankind with water.”

This sentence, though rhetorically appealing, does less than full justice to Adventist activities and interests during this period. They were following developments in Washington with keen interest through the pages of the *Review*, but this statement would tend to picture them as oblivious to anything except the water cure. Actually, they were also launching a health program destined to bring physical relief to hundreds of thousands.

On page 109 the *Health Reformer* is introduced and it is stated that “Ellen White contributed a composition, ‘Duty to Know Ourselves,’ based on L. B. Coles’ theme that to break one of the laws of life is ‘as great a sin in the sight of Heaven as to break the ten commandments.’”

Since this kind of dependence and relationship is so difficult to prove, might it not be better to state that Mrs. White’s article merely “carried the same theme which L. B. Coles had earlier enunciated?” The concept, after all, was as common as water among the health

reformers, and to say it was “Coles’ theme” is a little strong in any case.

*Prophetess of Health* on page 110 refers to the hostility of the *Health Reformer* to medical practice of the times. The state of regular medicine being what it was in the 1860’s, was such hostility to be wondered at? We are told, “This hostility reflected not only a genuine distrust of orthodox physicians, but also deep-seated feelings of inferiority.”

This is the author’s judgment, his interpretation of the editor’s [Dr. H. S. Lay] feelings. The article cited in the next sentence was in fact written to reassure readers that although many of the articles in the *Health Reformer* were not written by M.D.’s they could still be relied on. Lay’s first argument was that the writers had in their own experience acquainted themselves with health reform, and secondly, he added, “To those, however, who must have the magic of an M.D. to inspire confidence, we would say that all these articles are examined professionally and endorsed, before they are laid before the reader” (HA, 1:32, Sept. 1866).

Charles Rosenberg, a leading authority on American medical history, says: “The American medical profession was in transition in 1866. While medical science had already entered an age of heroic achievement, the practitioner of medicine still occupied much the same lowly status he had in 1849.”—*The Cholera Years*, pp. 213-241.

Why then should Adventists be singled out for ridicule as suffering from feelings of “inferiority” and engaging in an “ironic” denunciation of the medical profession in their time? The Adventist attitudes should not be contrasted, as they are here, with the finest achievements and advances of the profession at this time, but to the common popular image of the medical practitioner. Seen in this light, Adventist opinions are not “ironic.”

### **Plans for Enlarging the Battle Creek Institution**

On pages 111-116 *Prophetess of Health* deals with the attempt to enlarge the newly established health institute. To give an accurate, factual background for the events calls for a somewhat detailed presentation. The reader of the book finds a discussion of the problems

surrounding a proposed large addition to the Health Reform Institute in 1867 and the “shadows” that this episode cast on both Ellen and James White.

Mrs. White is accused of being “largely supportive” of her husband’s “erratic” behavior. But we must follow the story from the beginning in order to get a proper perspective.

It was in response to Ellen White’s appeal at the 1866 General Conference Session that the Western Health Reform Institute was established. It was a very ambitious undertaking for a denomination of about 5,000 members, with few regular ministers, only a fledgling financial system, and scarcely any qualified physicians. The original call for \$25,000 to establish the institute, made in June, 1866, was more than seven times the General Conference budget for that year (see [The Review and Herald, May 22, 1866, 27:196](#), and [The Review and Herald, January 1, 1867, 20:48](#)). Still, the appeal met an enthusiastic response in the purchase of stock and in pledges. Only six months later, on January 8, 1867, Dr. Lay was back, pleading in the *Review* for another \$25,000 to erect an additional “large building” ([The Review and Herald, January 8, 1867, 29:54](#)). A close study of the financial reports issued weekly in the *Review* shows that even the first \$25,000 was not completely collected from the members until August of 1867, more than a year after the original appeal. But now, in January of 1867, only four months after the Institution had opened its doors, the people were confronted with another call for money.

Uriah Smith, editor of the *Review*, endorsed Lay’s plan for an additional building in the January 29 issue, but he added another ominous possibility by indicating that the amount necessary would be “from twenty-five to fifty thousand dollars” ([The Review and Herald, January 29, 1867, 29:90](#)). So \$25,000 was merely the *minimum* figure given in the second appeal. All this came at a time when only a “little over half”—\$13,950—of the original \$25,000 had even been pledged ([The Review and Herald, January 1, 1867, 29:48](#)), and only \$10,194.97 had actually been paid in for the purchase of stock. [59]

Bear in mind that Mrs. White had not yet published any account of her vision of December 25, 1865, which would give the people in written form the call for the Institute project. True, she had called for

it at the General Conference of 1866, but the people, and especially the directors of the institute, were still without any written call for support of the new enterprise. No doubt everyone expected that such would be contained in her next pamphlet, Testimony No. 11.

James White's illness had seriously delayed Mrs. White's writing plans, but on January 22, 1867, the same month in which Lay and Smith had issued the call for the second \$25,000, James White announced that Testimony No. 11 would be "ready in a few days." It was to cover the subjects of the reform dress and hoops, as well as addresses to ministers and to the laity. White added, "Testimony No. 12, may be expected soon; but the matter for No. 11, is regarded as of such importance at this time that it is thought not best to wait till the matter now designed for No. 12 can be prepared" ([The Review and Herald, January 22, 1867](#), 29:84).

The directors of the Institute were well aware that Mrs. White had received light calling upon Seventh-day Adventists to establish a medical institution on principles God could approve. They had even put out a circular, according to Smith, promising that the instruction given in the vision as it pertained to the Institute would appear in the next Testimony. Now they had the material for the Testimony in their hands and it contained nothing about the Institute! Naturally, they were perplexed. Since they already had the plans for enlargement, they badly needed the support the Testimony could give. So, on February 5, Uriah Smith addressed a letter to Mrs. White. He opened by observing that Loughborough had just returned to Battle Creek and had met with Aldrich, Amadon, Walker, and himself "in regard to the institute which is now the great question before us"

Loughborough had apparently heard Ellen White preach at Wright and Monterey, Michigan, and reported that she gave "good testimony in regard to the Institute and Dr. Lay."

The brethren, Smith reported, thought that "by all means this should go into Testimony No. 11" Though Smith does not mention the plans for the new large building, he does point out that, "A great many are waiting before doing anything to help the Institute, till they see the Testimony." He naturally felt that for it to go out without any word would be detrimental to the Institute. Smith continued: It has therefore been thought best by all the Brn. mentioned above that the

Testimony be delayed till you can write out what you have seen on this point, and send us, which we hope you can do immediately....

The manuscript you have here is all in type.... It makes forty pages, leaving eight pages that can be added as well as not. We shall print the first thirty-two in the morning, and let the other stand till we hear from *you*.—*Uriah Smith to Ellen White*, Feb. 5, 1867.

In a postscript, Smith observed that some of the people felt that health reform was not necessarily a part of the “cause of present truth” and he and the other men thought that “the connection of this work [of health reform] with the cause of truth should be made plainly to appear.”

On page 112 of *Prophetess of Health* Smith is called “brash” to even dare to suggest what needed to be said. But since Loughborough and doubtless others of the men had already heard Mrs. White make her oral presentation on this point, and since they were probably already familiar with the basic outline of the message she had to present, Smith can hardly be called brash for telling her what aspects of the message the people seemed least to understand and to suggest where the emphasis needed to be placed.

Mrs. White had no doubt intended to write about the Institute in No. 11 but had delayed the work. Most of her time had been spent in caring for her partially paralyzed husband. James and Ellen White had been absent from Battle Creek since mid-December. They had stayed first with the Root family in Wright, and at the time the letter reached them, they were living with the Maynards in Greenville, Michigan.

James White reports that on Thursday and Friday, February 9 and 10, they were at Orleans, about ten miles from Greenville, meeting with the Orleans and Fairplains churches. “As Mrs. W. had important writing on hand, she proposed,” James White writes, “that we conduct the morning service and she would the afternoon.” It seems likely that the “important writing” referred to was the article on health reform and the Institute that Smith had requested, since his letter had been penned four or five days earlier.

Ten days later the published testimony, complete with the last-minute addition, was ready for mailing:

“We mail Testimony No. 11 this week. It has been unavoidably delayed till this time,” White said ([The Review and Herald, February 19, 1867](#), 29:132).

The testimony was a general one, pointing to the importance of health reform and asserting, “I was shown that we should provide a home for the afflicted, and those who wish to learn how to take care of their bodies that they may prevent sickness.” ([Testimonies for the Church 1:489](#)). “Here, I was shown, was a worthy object for God’s people to engage in; and where they can invest means which will advance the glory of God.” ([Testimonies for the Church 1:492](#)).

This was a *general* statement calling for general support of the Institute. It does not mention the new large building plans just announced, and Ellen White herself, at this point, may not have realized the practical difficulties that would follow when this general endorsement, based on a vision more than a year earlier, was applied to the ambitious plans afoot in Battle Creek. It is one thing to receive divine instructions. It is another thing to apply them at the proper time and place.

[60] James and Ellen White returned to Battle Creek on March 13, 1867, and must certainly have had opportunity then to get information about how things were moving at the Institute. Now she began to have misgivings about the situation.

On May 1, 1867, she addressed a letter to Dr. Lay in which she expressed her serious concern, based on what she had been shown in vision, about the amusements being conducted at the Institute and about the general level of spirituality there. She wrote:

I cannot feel that things are moving at the institute as God would have them move. I fear that He will turn His face from it. I was shown that physicians and helpers should be of the highest order.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:566-567](#). (See 1867 ed. p. 91 for date.)

The annual General Conference Session convened in Battle Creek on May 14, 1867. James White was present that afternoon when the meeting opened, a meeting at which the following action was taken:

Resolved, That we recognize the hand of God in the successful establishment of the Health Institute, and that we invite the continued action of our people in order that this may be enlarged to meet

the wants of its patients.—[The Review and Herald, May 28, 1867](#), 29:284.

As yet no building had been done, but by this time James White would most likely have known of the action endorsing the general plan for enlargement. He excused himself from the meeting on that day on grounds of his illness, but certainly he was aware of the plans even before they were put into effect. This tends to show that Kellogg's allegations made in a 1907 interview (and reported on page 115 of *Prophetess of Health*) about James White tearing down the building because he was not consulted are not well founded. Kellogg was a boy of 15 at the time.

In June Mrs. White wrote Dr. Lay again, saying that she had been shown how he had accepted many of the ideas of Dr. Jackson of Dansville in regard to amusements and exercise. In both this letter and the letter in May to Dr. Lay, we see Mrs. White's increasing concern over Lay's course. The visions might give her insights into many problems, but she had to meet these problems in a practical way as they arose.

### The New Building

It was not until July 8, 1867, that construction on the new building actually began. The *Health Reformer* for that month announced: "On the 8th inst. the work of erecting a brick edifice 40 x 100 feet and five stories high including basement was commenced" ([The Health Reformer, July, 1867](#)). At last the exact dimensions of the ambitious plan were plain. The vision had endorsed a health institution, but how large? How soon? How could it be staffed with faithful and competent workers? Could the church carry the financial burden? All these questions had to be answered as they arose. The answers sometimes hinged on such factors as whether Dr. Lay would heed the counsels given him.

On August 27, 1867, the *Review* carried E. S. Walker's appeal for an additional \$15,000. He stated that all the timber and finishing lumber had been bought and paid for. This had cost \$6,000. The first story, made of stone, had been completed as well, and now the directors of the Institute needed money for the brick to complete the four top stories. Actually, between the time Lay had first suggested the

new building in January, and the appearance of Walker's appeal for an additional \$15,000, the Institute had received \$14,735.65 in cash on the purchase of stock and payment of pledges, but this included a good deal of money from the original pledges. What with the cost of the stone, the cost of the lumber, the operating expenses of the Institute, and the salaries for doctors, helpers, and now builders, this money was apparently all consumed. Little wonder. Plans for financial operations made no allowance for reserve funds or depreciation. At the stockholders meeting in May, 1867, the directors had reported a patient income of \$9,584.05; cost of labor, food, etc., was \$7,980.62; leaving a balance of \$1,753. This allowed, it seemed to them, a dividend payment of 10 percent to the stock holders.

While the building was at a standstill and the directors were apparently waiting for more funds to come in, Testimony No. 12 appeared. It was ready for distribution by September 17, 1867. The announcement said: "*Testimony for the Church*, No. 12, is now ready. It contains 100 pages of most important matter." Among that important matter was another article titled "The Health Reform." Here cautions were sounded and the explanations given concerning the relationship of Testimony No. 11 to Testimony No. 12.

Mrs. White referring back to her December 25, 1865, vision, wrote:

I saw that a very extensive work could not be accomplished in a short time, as it would not be an easy matter to find physicians whom God could approve and who would work together harmoniously, disinterestedly, and zealously.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:554](#).

But how long is a "short time?" How does one determine if a group of physicians can work together "harmoniously, disinterestedly, and zealously?" In January there had appeared to be no urgent need for such caution, but now, confronted with the practical developments of the problem, a new picture had emerged. Mrs. White did concede that she should not have yielded to pressure and issued what she did in February in Testimony No. 11 without the cautions contained in Testimony No. 12. Even if the situation did not look so critical in January, the cautions, if given at that time, might have headed off the premature expansion of the Institute. Mrs. White conceded that she did wrong in yielding to human influence in this regard: "I yielded my judgment to that of others and wrote what



appeared in No. 11 in regard to the Health Institute, being unable then to give all I had seen. In this I did wrong.” ([Testimonies for the Church 1:563](#)).

It was in Testimony No. 12 that she spoke specifically about the speed at which and the size to which the institution should expand:

As to the extent of the accommodations of the Health Institute at Battle Creek, I was shown, as I have before stated, that we should have such an institution, small at its commencement, and cautiously increased, as good physicians and helpers could be procured and means raised, and as the wants of invalids should demand; and all should be conducted in strict accordance with the principles and humble spirit of the third angel’s message.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:558](#).

[61]

She went on to note that in many private conversations and in letters she had urged the “brethren” to move cautiously. ([Testimonies for the Church 1:558](#)).

She still favored providing means for the Health Institute, but things must be kept in balance:

The Health Reform is closely connected with the work of the third message, yet it is not the message. Our preachers should teach the health reform, yet they should not make this the leading theme in the place of the message.... Our people should furnish means to meet the wants of a growing Health Institute among us, as they are able to do without giving less for the other wants of the cause, and let the Health Reform and the Health Institute grow up among us as other worthy enterprises have grown.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:559](#).

James White and other church leaders had been trying to educate the local churches concerning their responsibilities in Systematic Benevolence. The cause had many other needs, but now, with the tremendous burdens of constructing such a large building, things were becoming unbalanced. Very poor people, people who did not even own homes of their own, saw the promise of a good yield on their investment and were putting from one-fifth to one-third of all their possessions into Health Institute stock. This, Mrs. White said, was wrong ([Testimonies for the Church 1:560](#)). These poor people themselves should be charity cases at the Institute instead of investing their meager funds in it. “I do not see the providence

of God in making great calculations for the future,” Ellen White wrote, “and letting those suffer who need help now. Move no faster, brethren, than the unmistakable providence of God opens the way before you” (*Ibid.*).

The implication that James White’s actions were somehow irrational in tearing down the incomplete building and the suggestion that he might have been mentally unbalanced, are manifestations of the hostile biases of certain witnesses relied upon in the *Prophetess of Health* account of these events. A look at the original sources allows a more generous and favorable interpretation.

On September 24, a week after the *Review* announced that Testimony No. 12 was ready, E. S. Walker, secretary of the Health Reform Institute, wrote a letter to James White proposing to buy some property which White had offered to the Institute. In his letter, Walker stated, “We have commenced the new building and have progressed so far that it would require a great amount of labor and be attended with considerable expense to undo what we have already done.” Walker concluded:

We think it best to erect the new building as soon as practicable and put it under roof where it can stand and be finished off as we get the means. We are confident that this can be accomplished in a short time by the aid of yourself and Sister White. If we understand Sister White’s views, our errors have been more in the management of the Institute in the treatment of patients, than in providing suitable rooms for lodging, lectures, etc. And we are now determined to work a change in the matters of error pointed out to us, so that Sister White and yourself can feel to work for the Institute as you did at its commencement.—E. S. Walker to James White, Sept. 24, 1867.

This letter indicates that the unfinished building still stood while the directors debated what should be done with it. Walker felt it should be finished; evidently other members of the board felt otherwise. Even after Mrs. White’s Testimony No. 12, they were not sure what to do, and some thought the best thing would be to complete the project.

At the stockholders meeting held earlier that year (May 17, 1867) the following were elected as directors:

J. N. Loughborough, J. N. Andrews, U. Smith, J. P. Kellogg, J. M. Aldrich, E. S. Walker, and N. N. Lunt ([The Review and](#)

[Herald, May 28, 1867](#)). All the stockholders voted, and the top seven vote-getters were elected to the board. They are listed in descending order according to the number of votes they received.

The implication that there was some “hocus pocus” involved in the decision to tear down the building is based on the report of an interview which took place at the time Dr. Kellogg was disfellowshipped in 1907. As Kellogg is speaking, Amadon interrupts, saying, “You know we had a regular hocus-pocus, a foundation one time; then they had to be all taken out. Brother Loughborough and J. M. Aldrich encouraged it.” (Mimeographed report, “An Authentic Interview ...” [with] Dr. John Harvey Kellogg on October 7th, 1907, p. 88, White Estate Document File #45k.)

Amadon says that Loughborough and Aldrich—both members of the Board of Directors of the Institute—encouraged “it”—presumably they favored the plan of tearing down the large building, selling the materials, and rebuilding on a more modest scale. Thus the decision was not James White’s alone.

It is inconceivable that he would have been able to tear down the building without the majority support of the board whose legal responsibility it was. We know the names of two board members who supported the move and for all we know the decision may have been unanimous. James White most certainly did not act independently and arbitrarily.

And there may very well have been reasons not easily detected by all which motivated James and Ellen White in their attitude toward premature enlargement. Note the following reference to the experience, written by Ellen White in 1903:

Another time I was shown a large building going up on the site on which the Battle Creek Sanitarium was afterward erected. The brethren were in great perplexity as to who should take charge of the work. I wept sorely. One of authority stood up among us, and said, “Not yet. You are not ready to invest means in that building, or to plan for its future management.”

[62]

At this time the foundation of the sanitarium had been laid. But we needed to learn the lesson of waiting.—[Letter 135, 1903](#), quoted in [The Messenger, 11](#).

It should be noted here that it was not until June 16, 1868, a year after the construction began, that James White announced,

“The large building is given up for the present, and the material is being sold. Still a debt of several thousands will be resting upon the Institute after this is done” ([The Review and Herald, June 16, 1868](#), 31:409). Apparently months passed before the decision was made about what to do. Such a delay does not support the contention of *Prophetess of Health* that James White’s actions demonstrate “erratic” behavior.

At the meeting of the stockholders on May 15, 1868, James White and G. W. Amadon were elected to the Board of Directors. J. P. Kellogg and N. N. Lunt were not re-elected. Thus in June, when James White announced an alternative to the large building, he was an official member of the board. A smaller building was to be built for \$7,000. Then two cottages were to be purchased for \$6,000. Presumably this could be done as funds became available so that the project would not again serve to unbalance the denominational resources. The total of these two proposed projects, admittedly, would be \$13,000, just \$2,000 shy of the \$15,000 that some felt would complete the original plan. But the \$15,000 was called for “immediately,” whereas the new plan required only \$7,000 for a smaller new building, then \$6,000 when needed for additional space.

Based on these facts, *Prophetess of Health* should have:

1. Shown the true context and justification for the Uriah Smith letter of February 5.

2. Given a fuller account of the difficulties which were encountered in actually raising the amounts called for.

3. Shown the true extent of the “influence” to which Mrs. White yielded—that it was merely a matter of issuing Testimony No. 11 without the cautions contained in Testimony No. 12. Then shown the difference between issuing general endorsements for a project and meeting the specific problems as they arose and developed.

4. Shown that James White’s behavior concerning the 1867 building was not erratic or independent, but that he had acted as a member of the Board of Directors. (The book does mention that he had the concurrence of at least two board members.)

5. Shown that James White’s call for additional funds was not so “audacious” when it is noted that the money was to be raised in stages.

## The Program at the Institute

On pages 116-117 *Prophetess of Health* says, “Much more disturbing were the ubiquitous signs of worldliness: patients and staff enjoying Dansville-style amusements, physicians demanding higher wages than ministers, and workers calling each other ‘Mister’ and ‘Miss’ rather than ‘Brother’ and ‘Sister.’”

The selection of material for this paragraph is such as to leave the impression that Mrs. White’s counsel to the Institute was trivial, fanatical, and straight-laced.

The reader who does not check the original context ([Testimonies for the Church 1:634](#)) would be left to assume that Mrs. White made a big point of the “Mr.” and “Mrs.” terminology whereas in fact she merely mentioned it as an illustration of the “spirit of compromise.”

The matter of terms used for the days of the week, first day, second day, etc., is brought in at this point to further heighten the air of strangeness. But can a single Adventist be produced who refused ever to use common days of the week until the 1880’s? Certainly there was some use of the “first-day” “second-day” terminology, but it was always mixed with the common names and no one made an issue of the matter. A quick scanning of the reports from traveling ministers all through the period reveals this.

The relevance of Mrs. White’s counsel on amusements might also be shown by reference to what was actually going on at the Health Institute within a few months of its opening. Notice, for instance, the program for the Thanksgiving celebration:

1. *Magic Music*, so called because persons by it were directed to perform certain things, according as the instrument gave out loud or low tones.
2. A Charade.
3. An Acting Charade.
4. A Song.
5. *Tableau*, “Fan-Fan”
6. *An Acting Charade*, “Mis-sis-sip-pi” which was well executed by Messrs. Miller and others.
7. *Selected Article* [several humorous poems]
8. Music.
9. *Comic Advertisement* was read, which caused much laughter.

10. Tableau.
11. Dame Fashion, a song.
12. Pantomine.
13. Another Pantomine
14. *Medley*, by several gentlemen, which was mirth-provoking.

The program was concluded with four “Toasts” ([The Health Reformer, December, 1866](#)). Little wonder Mrs. White wrote, “When I saw these things, I said, this is not that which was shown me as an institution for the sick which would share the signal blessing of God. This is another thing” ([Testimonies for the Church 1:634](#)).

### **James and Ellen White Stand in Support**

In this same testimony, given in the spring of 1868 during the time of uncertainty when building operations were suspended, Mrs. White assures Adventists everywhere that she and husband have not withdrawn their support for the Institute. She proved her point in the most practical way:

[63] The friends of humanity, of truth and holiness, should act in reference to the Institute on the plan of sacrifice and liberality. I have five hundred dollars in stock in the Institute, which I wish to donate, and if my husband succeeds with his anticipated book, he will give five hundred dollars more.... Let the sums, small and large, come in.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:639-640](#).

Later that spring, as a member of the Board of Directors, James White assures Adventists everywhere that investments in the Institute are safe. *Prophetess of Health* on page 117 attributes a decline in Institute business to Mrs. White’s “harsh criticisms that had tarnished the institute’s reputation among Adventists.” But there were other more realistic reasons for the decline. Dr. Richard W. Schwarz, in his book *John Harvey Kellogg*, elaborates on the charity patient problem:

During the next several years a policy of accepting needy church members as patients at half rates brought a severe financial setback to the Health Reform Institute. By the fall of 1869 it had only eight patients paying regular prices, and the Institute had fallen \$13,000 in debt.—p. 60.

Yet another factor in the decline is identified in *Prophetess of Health* on page 119. Trall had been drawn in to provide a special department for the *Health Reformer*, and the content had degenerated into arguments over salt, milk, and sugar. All the while, the editor [William Gage] used these articles himself. Mrs. White said the *Reformer* lay “at the very foundation of the success of the Institute” (31 175). Her analysis certainly seems correct in this case. As the *Reformer* went, so went the Institute. The people, offended by the extremes of the *Reformer* were apparently not keen on patronizing an institute where they might have to submit to such a regimen.

The actual course of events, briefly stated, is this: In January, 1867, Mrs. White in a hastily prepared article presented a call for a medical institution and gave a general endorsement of the Institute in Testimony No. 11. In September, 1867, she issued Testimony No. 12 which sounded cautions, and in October, 1867, she further reproved the managers of the Institute in Testimony No. 13 and her *Review* article of October 8, 1867. That fall a revival in Battle Creek apparently resulted in improvements, and in the spring of 1868 she issued a Testimony reviewing the developments at the Institute and announcing her renewed support of it (Testimony No. 14). But the reputation established in the first two years and confirmed, to be sure, by Testimonies No. 11 and 12, continued to cling to the Institute. Furthermore, Trall’s condemnations of salt, milk, and sugar, led to a decline in the *Health Reformer’s* fortunes and a matching decline in the Institute’s fortunes until in the fall of 1869 there were only eight paying patients.

James White stepped in as editor of the *Reformer*; steered it away from all extremes, the *Reformer* picked up steam, and, sure enough, as *Prophetess of Health* notes on page 121, “By the early 1870’s the financial outlook of the Institute and the *Reformer* appeared fairly bright.”

Mrs. White tells how she and her husband had “labored side by side” for the Institute to pull it up from its sad condition in the fall of 1869. She tells how the doctors—Ginley, Chamberlain, and Lamson “worked with earnestness and energy, for small pay, to build up this sinking institution” ([Testimonies for the Church 3:175](#)). These factors should be considered in interpreting the fortunes and misfortunes of the Western Health Reform Institute.

On page 120 *Prophetess of Health* states: “The fact that Trall left the *Reformer* at the height of its success, and apparently with the White’s blessing gives the lie to later charges by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg that he was the one responsible for the magazine’s earlier difficulties.”

In a sense, this is so—after all, when William Gage was editor he encouraged Trall to be more radical than he might otherwise have been, but when James White was editor, he kept Trall’s extremes out of the journal. In this sense William Gage could be blamed for the magazine’s earlier difficulties along with Trall. Still, it was Trall’s writings which were so disgusting to subscribers. Trall could have been responsible for the magazine’s early difficulties and still have stayed on until the *Reformer* reached the height of its success, because in its successful days Trall was somewhat controlled by White.

### **J. H. Kellogg and the Battle Creek Sanitarium**

On page 126 *Prophetess of Health* discusses Kellogg’s early efforts to turn the Battle Creek institution into a scientifically respectable one. Continuing, the book states:

In this task he found a ready and powerful ally in Ellen White, who was beginning to resent having “worldlings sneeringly [assert] that those who believe present truth are weak-minded, deficient in education, without position or influence.” A first-rate medical center would prove her detractors wrong and bring fame and honor to Seventh-day Adventists.

Mrs. White’s statement, cited in support of these assertions, has been interpreted in its narrowest sense. The detractors become “her detractors.” Her desire to see her fellow workers excel in intellect becomes a prideful desire to bring “fame and honor” to the denomination. What is the real spirit and intent of the original statement:

Those who occupy responsible positions should so educate and discipline themselves that all within the sphere of their influence may see what man can be, and what he can do, when connected with the God of wisdom and power. And why should not a man thus privileged become intellectually strong? Again and again have worldlings sneeringly asserted that those who believe present truth



are weakminded, deficient in education, without position or influence. This we know to be untrue; but is there not some reason for these assertions? Many have considered it a mark of humility to be ignorant and uncultivated. Such persons are deceived as to what constitutes true humility and Christian meekness.—[Testimony for the Physicians and Helpers of the Sanitarium, 8.](#)

On page 126 *Prophetess of Health* states: “When Kellogg [in 1877] approached the prophetess with plans for a large multi-storied sanitarium, he met a warm response. And when Ellen had a dream sanctioning the erection of a large building, it was all James needed to volunteer to raise the necessary funds.”

[64]

These statements are based on J. H. Kellogg’s *Autobiographical Memoir* written in 1938, when he was 86 years old. They give the impression that Mrs. White approved in advance a “large multi-storied sanitarium.”

But just what did the Whites have in mind? The Whites for five years had been convinced that the Health Institute needed qualified physicians before it could advance and the buildings be enlarged. Now (1877) the physicians were available, and James White announced: “The time has come to bring up this branch of our work equal to others, so that all our institutions here shall be number one.” ([The Review and Herald, May 24, 1877, 49:164.](#))

But what did he have in mind? “Not less than \$25,000 will be laid out in building the present summer” (*Ibid*). Contrast this with the final cost that Kellogg mentions in his *Memoir*—\$125,000.

Kellogg himself admits that the plans “expanded while building” from a “three story building about one hundred feet long to one twice as long and four stories high with a rear extension.” (*Autobiographical Memoir, Oct. 21, 1938, P. 7.*)

In the next paragraph *Prophetess of Health* states:

“By the spring of 1878 an imposing new Medical and Surgical Sanitarium stood on the old Institute grounds. But the Whites were not pleased... Now that the building was finished, it reminded her of ‘a grand hotel.’ ... Out went a testimony reprimanding the prodigal Sanitarium managers for their extravagant outlay.”—p. 126.

But it should be made clear that Mrs. White was not criticizing the size of the building as such. What she objected to was the thousands of dollars wasted on “perfection of arrangement and finish,”

and on “experimenting with various plans—building up and tearing down,” and on “furnishing the new building.” Indeed, she even mentioned that the money which could have been saved on furniture could have been used in “providing additional facilities.”

The testimony involved here is *Testimony for the Physicians and Helpers of the Sanitarium*, for which *Prophetess of Health* suggests a publication date of 1880 (p. 126). This is a sound suggestion, based upon internal evidence.

So Mrs. White did not rush out with the testimony on completion of the Sanitarium in 1878. It was not until two years later that these reproofs were included in a collection of counsels.

It is significant that this *Testimony to Physicians* was not a general testimony, advertised and circulated to the whole church. It was for those to whom it was specifically addressed—physicians and helpers of the Sanitarium. When it was published generally, in *Testimony No. 30* in 1881, Dr. Kellogg’s name was removed entirely, as was all of the criticism of specific persons and practices at the Sanitarium, and all of the material pointing out that the Sanitarium was too extravagant. (See especially [Testimonies for the Church 4:571-574](#)).

This was a special testimony issued to a special audience. Furthermore, it was not merely a condemnation of the extravagance shown in the new Sanitarium building. Mrs. White began with praise of Kellogg and his associates. On the first page she said:

The physicians [at the San] are not quacks nor infidels, but men who are thoroughly educated, and who understand how to take care of the sick; men who fear God, and have an earnest interest for the moral and spiritual welfare of their patients.—[Testimony for the Physicians and Helpers of the Sanitarium, 1](#).

She said further in the testimony:

Dr. Kellogg has not been satisfied with a superficial education, but has made the most of his opportunities to obtain a thorough knowledge of the human system, and the best methods of treating disease. This has given him an influence. He has earned the respect of the community as a man of sound judgment and nice discrimination,—one who reasons carefully from cause to effect; and he is highly esteemed for his courtesy of deportment and his Christian integrity.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:7](#).

All through the pamphlet there is encouragement and praise as well as counsel and reproof. If the image of Mrs. White portrayed in this portion of *Prophetess of Health* represented the facts in their true light, the reader would know that this testimony was (1) not issued until more than a year after the Sanitarium was completed, (2) it contained a balance of praise and reproof, (3) it was circulated to a special audience only, and (4) it was in full harmony with the documentable, earlier counsel which Mrs. White gave.

## Chapter 6—Short Skirts <sup>1</sup> And Sex

The chapter on “Short Skirts and Sex” opens in *Prophetess of Health* on page 129 with two headnotes:

“God would not have His people adopt the so-called reform dress.”—EGW 1863.

“God would now have His people adopt the reform dress ...”—EGW 1867.

In the footnote to the second of these quotations, the book makes a much-needed distinction between the “so-called reform dress” and the “reform dress.” However, this distinction is blurred in the chapter itself. Ellen White was not referring to the same costume in these two statements.

The “so-called reform dress” is the style of attire *disapproved* by Ellen White in 1863. On the other hand, she *commended* the “reform dress” in 1865 and onward. The phrase “so-called” is not a chance one, but is used consistently by Ellen White over a period of years in characterizing the American Costume. Unfortunately, *Prophetess of Health* persistently confuses these two terms throughout this chapter.

Ellen White referred to those who adopted the American Costume as “so-called” dress reformers. She wrote in 1865 in her sixth of the *How to Live* articles:

There is still another style of dress which will be adopted by a class of so-called dress reformers. They will wear the cap, pants, vest, coat, and boots, the last of which is the most sensible part of the costume. Those who adopt and advocate this style of dress, are carrying the so-called dress reform to very objectionable lengths. Confusion will be the result.—*How to Live*, # 6, p. 62 ([Selected Messages 2:477](#)).

In contrast with this she described a style of dress which she hoped might be developed. It would include the following features:

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<sup>1</sup>Note: The reader is directed to the presentation on the “reform dress” in *The Story of Our Health Message*. Chapters 9, 10, 11, and its “Appendix,” and to *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pp. 136-160.

The female form should not be compressed in the least with corsets and whalebones. The dress should be perfectly easy that the lungs and heart may have healthy action. The dress should reach somewhat below the top of the boot; but should be short enough to clear the filth of the sidewalk and street, without being raised by the hand. A still shorter dress than this would be proper, convenient, and healthful for females, in doing their housework, and especially, in view of those women who are obliged to perform more or less out of door labor. With this style of dress, one light skirt, or, at most two, are all that is necessary, and these should be buttoned on to a waist, or suspended with straps.

Whatever may be the length of the dress, females should clothe their limbs as thoroughly as the males. This may be done by wearing lined pants gathered into a band and fastened about the ankle, or made full and tapering at the bottom; and these should come down long enough to meet the shoe. The limbs and ankles thus clothed are protected against a current of air.—*How to Live* #6, pp. 63-64 (In [Selected Messages 2:478, 479](#)).

Here Ellen White described a healthful style of dress that would allow women to maintain their distinctive feminine appearance, yet was appropriate for northern climates. The principles she outlined soon led to the development of the reform dress adopted by many Seventh-day Adventist women within the next two or three years.

### Short Skirts and Pants

On page 129 *Prophetess of Health* speaks of the “short” skirts and pants of the reform dress. It should be remembered that the “short” skirts advocated by Mrs. White had a hemline about nine inches from the floor. The pants were a loose-fitting garment, visible only below the hemline of the skirt.

On page 134 *Prophetess of Health* says that Adventist women were not to wear the hoop skirt, for God’s people were to be “peculiar.” The word “peculiar” can mean more than one thing. It can mean “odd” or it can mean “unique.” The Bible, in [Deuteronomy 14:2, 2618](#); [1 Peter 2:9](#); [Titus 2:14](#), KJV, uses the word in the latter sense. (See the RSV and NEB on these texts.) Ellen White, probably

drawing on the KJV usage, had the latter in mind when she opposed the wearing of hoops. Concerning the wearing of hoops she wrote:

While traveling in the cars and stages, I have often been led to exclaim: Oh Modesty, where is thy blush! I have seen large companies crowding into the cars, and in order to make any headway, the hoops had to be raised and placed in a shape which was indecent. And the exposure of the form was tenfold more with those who wore hoops, than with those who did not.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:277](#).

God's people were to be "peculiar" or "unique" in the sense that they were to be modest, not in the sense that they were to be "odd."

### Ellen White Initiates a Reform Dress

On page 135 Ellen White is said to have had "second thoughts" about the reform dress. This is an inaccurate statement and is based entirely on the assumption that her expressions "reform dress" and "so-called reform dress" referred to the same attire.

When she went to Dansville it is clear that she carried in her mind the view of women wearing a dress embodying reforms over the prevailing styles. See her description of the vision in exhibit A. See also her letter of September 14, 1864, to Mrs. Lockwood in Appendix D in which she makes mention of a style of dress shown to her in vision.

[66] At Dansville she had an opportunity to appraise several styles of reform dress for the American costume was not the only one worn there. She said, "They have all styles of dress here. Some are very becoming, if not so short." But she consistently criticized the American Costume, referring to it as the "so-called reform dress."

In Testimony No. 10, which appeared in January, 1865, she declared, "God would not have His people adopt the so-called reform dress." In that same Testimony she gave her reasons for this counsel. *Prophetess of Health* refers to these, but, for emphasis, we mention them here. There were four factors in Ellen White's mind which led to her strictures against the American Costume, or "so-called" reform dress. These were:

1. *It was immodest*—"It is immodest apparel, wholly unfitted for the modest, humble followers of Christ.... With the so-called dress

reform there goes a spirit of levity and boldness just in keeping with the dress. Modesty and reserve seem to depart from many as they adopt that style of dress” ([Testimonies for the Church 1:421](#))

2. *It was mannish*—“There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible, and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination” (*Ibid*).

3. *It was identified with a certain kind of political movement*—“Those who feel called out to join the movement in favor of women’s rights and the so-called dress reform might as well sever all connection with the third angel’s message” (*Ibid*).

4. *It was identified with spiritualism*—“Spiritualists have, to quite an extent, adopted this singular mode of dress. Seventh-day Adventists, who believe in the restoration of the gifts, are often branded as spiritualists. Let them adopt this costume, and their influence is dead. The people would place them on a level with spiritualists and would refuse to listen to them” (*Ibid*).

Since in the June 6, 1863, vision Ellen White had been given instruction about an improved dress for Adventist women, she doubtless then began to consider how such a reform could be effected. Of one thing she was certain: Any dress reform adopted by Seventh-day Adventists must be different from the American Costume. This she made crystal clear. Any one of the four reasons she gave should be enough to lead Adventists to adopt a style that would be distinct from the “so-called” reform dress. Her visit to Dansville, New York, in the late summer of 1864 provided a natural opportunity for her to consolidate her own thoughts on the subject. From Dansville, she wrote her friends, the Lockwoods, that she planned to develop a reform dress that would accord perfectly with that which had been shown her. “They have all styles of dress here,” she wrote,

Some are very becoming, if not so short. We shall get patterns from this place and I think we can get out a style of dress more healthful than we now wear and yet not be bloomer or the American costume. Our dresses according to my idea should be from four to six inches shorter than now worn and should in no case reach lower than the top of the heel or the shoe and could be a little shorter even than this with all modesty. I am going to get up a style of dress on

my own hook *which will accord perfectly with that which has been shown me.*

Health demands it. Our feeble women must dispense with heavy skirts and tight waists if they value health. Brother Lockwood, don't groan now. I am not going to extremes, but conscience and health require a reform. We shall never imitate Miss Doctor Austin or Mrs. Doctor York. They dress very much like men. We shall imitate or follow no fashion we have ever yet seen. We shall institute a fashion which will be both economical and healthful.—[Letter 6, 1864](#). (Emphasis supplied. See full letter in Appendix D.)

Thus it is seen that the visit to Dansville did not lead Ellen White to begin having “second thoughts” about the reform dress nor did she get her ideas on dress reform from Dansville. She got them, we believe, from the Lord. The Dansville experience helped her to implement them.

On page 136 Ellen White's reform dress is said to have been nothing but the American Costume with a lengthened skirt. But there were other differences. Note her letter to the Lockwoods, just quoted, where she objects especially to the mannishness of the American Costume. In her first appeal to her Adventist sisters for a reform dress (in June, 1865), she vigorously opposed anything like the Dansville sponsored American Costume because as we have noted it looked so much like the clothing worn by men.

### **The Length of the Skirt**

Page 136 of *Prophetess of Health* discusses several E. G. White statements concerning the desirable length of the woman's skirt. Insinuation is made that Ellen White was not consistent in her counsels about the length of the reform dress. The facts show that Ellen White was very consistent in this matter. It should be noted that her burden was to get them up off the floor or the street. There is some variation to the precise length mentioned in one statement and another. Note her wording carefully. In 1864 she wrote: “If women would wear their dresses so as to *clear the filth of the streets an inch or two*, their dresses would be modest, and they could be kept clean much more easily, and would wear longer” ([Testimonies for the Church 1:424](#)).



*Prophetess of Health*, in referring to this statement mentions that “alert readers were not slow in pointing out that ‘the top of the boot’ was a great deal higher than ‘an inch or two’ from the street” (p. 136). But Ellen White did not say “an inch or two from the street.” Hers was a functional, not a static definition. The dress was to be short enough so as to “clear the filth of the streets” by an inch or two. A year later she said that “The dress should reach somewhat below the top of the boot; but should be short enough to clear the filth of the sidewalk and street, without being raised by the hand” (*How to Live* #6, pp. 63-64. Quoted in [Selected Messages 2:478](#)). And she added that “a still shorter dress than this would be proper and convenient and ‘healthful’ for women doing housework and outside labor.” ([Selected Messages 2:64](#)).

In 1867, in a description of the 1863 vision, Ellen White declared:

A third class passed before me with cheerful countenances, and free, elastic step. Their dress was the length I have described as proper, modest and healthful.

It cleared the filth of the street and sidewalk a few inches under all circumstances, such as ascending and descending steps.—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#).

[67]

To meet these specifications the reform dress was prepared with a hemline “about nine inches from the floor” ([Testimonies for the Church 1:521](#)). Ellen White did not alter the thrust of her counsel or contradict herself with respect to the principle involved in the length of the reform dress. Her various expressions all mean the same thing—for health and convenience women should shorten their skirts. We should remember that those were the days of horse-drawn vehicles, when many city streets had to be cleaned every night. A dress nine inches from the floor would be about right to clear the filth of the street an inch or two under all circumstances.

On page 136 of *Prophetess of Health* Ellen White is said to have postponed “month after month” the “dreadful moment” of putting on the reform dress. In fact, a period of only three months elapsed from the date of her first appeal for a reform dress until the time she actually wore such a dress in public. In June, 1865, she published the *How to Live* pamphlet #6, in which she wrote for the first time, “My sisters, there is need of dress reform among us” ([Selected Messages](#)

2:473). In September, 1865, she for the first time wore the reform dress in public.

During the three months from June to September Ellen White and her husband could hardly have been busier. From June 8 to July 16 they were on a very arduous journey, with many preaching assignments. After returning home, extremely worn, they were thrown into very heavy labor in correspondence dealing with a critical situation in Ohio. Then they filled two weekend appointments, after which James White was stricken with paralysis on August 18. This illness called for Ellen White's full time in attending him for the next sixteen months. Under these circumstances the marvel is that she was able to think of the reform dress at all. She could hardly have developed it and worn it sooner than she did.

### **Reform Dress at the Institute**

On page 136 the physicians at the Western Health Reform Institute are said to have "urged incoming patients to dress in the manner revealed by God." There is no evidence to support this assertion—that is that the reform was imposed at God's command.

It must be remembered that a reform dress had been adopted at Dansville. The physicians there took the position that it was useless to attempt to treat the diseases of women if they continued to wear attire which made it impossible for them to breathe freely and exercise the body. Dr. Horatio S. Lay, who led out in the opening of the Adventist institution in Battle Creek in September, 1866, had spent several years at Dansville as a member of the staff. It is quite natural, then, that he should include a reform in dress as part of his regimen for the newly established Western Health Reform Institute. As a matter of fact, the other Institute physicians were equally enthusiastic about the dress reform aspect of their program, judging from articles they contributed to the *Health Reformer* between November, 1866, and January, 1868. During this period Ellen White was in northern Michigan fully occupied in caring for her partially paralyzed husband.

In a retrospective statement in the *Health Reformer* of March, 1868, J. H. Waggoner gives the history of the adoption of the reform dress at the Institute:

When the Health Reform Institute was established [in August, 1866], the physicians decided a better style of dress for women than the long, dragging skirts was desirable. Many, from the best of motives, opposed a change in this direction. They remembered the “bloomers;” and in some minds it seemed to be associated with spiritualism, free loveism, or anything immodest. But the physicians declared it was not only desirable, but necessary in the treatment of some cases; and that being so, it would be useless and wrong to receive such cases without adopting what they were assured was essential to effect cures.

Again, it seemed to be understood and conceded by all health reformers who had investigated the subject, that a reform dress was necessary, and if it was not adopted at the Institute, a class of patients should surely be driven to other institutions, where something different from the cumbersome, prevailing fashion was adopted. Therefore, to neglect this reform would be to sacrifice the best interests of the Institute and of a certain class who most needed its benefits.

In adopting the dress reform the physicians doubtless knew they would have Ellen White’s approval, but there is no evidence to support the contention that on the basis as a revelation from God they urged their patients to adopt the reform dress.

### **The Flight to Northern Michigan**

In *Prophetess of Health* on page 137, Ellen White is said to have withdrawn to northern Michigan because she had been deserted by her friends in Battle Creek. In none of the sources, contemporary or later, relating to the sojourn of the Whites in Wright, Michigan, in late 1866 and early 1867, is there a hint that the journey was made because of an adverse attitude toward the reform dress at Battle Creek and that she left there because she was deserted by her friends.

In a sketch of the experience, first published in 1867, she says:

Having become fully satisfied that my husband would not recover from his protracted sickness while remaining inactive, and that the time had fully come for me to go forth and bear my testimony to the people, I decided, contrary to the judgment and advice of the church

in Battle Creek, of which we were members at the time, to venture a tour in northern Michigan, with my husband in his extremely feeble condition, in the severest cold of winter.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:570](#).

In [The Review and Herald, January 15, 1867](#), James White reports on the trip from Battle Creek to Wright, Michigan, beginning December 19. He makes no mention whatsoever of the reform dress. In a reminiscent account of the experience, written years later, Ellen White states:

[68] Many years ago while my husband was bearing heavy responsibilities in Battle Creek, the strain began to tell on him. His health failed rapidly. Finally he broke down in mind and body, and was unable to do anything. My friends said to me, “Mrs. White, your husband cannot live.” I determined to remove him to a place more favorable for his recovery. His mother said, “Ellen, you must remain and take care of your family.” “Mother,” I replied, “I will never allow that masterly brain to fail entirely. I will work with God, and God will work with me, to save my husband’s brain.” In order to obtain means for our journey I pulled up my rag carpets and sold them.... I bought a covered wagon and prepared for the journey, placing in the wagon a mattress for father to lie on.—[Selected Messages 2:306](#).

The available evidence indicates that the trip was made because of James White’s poor health. *Prophetess of Health’s* account is speculative, an assumption based on the coincidence of the events, not on direct evidence.

### Length of the American Costume

On page 140 Ellen White is accused of stating that Dr. Harriet Austin wore her skirts about six inches above the knee. There is no Ellen White source for such a statement. This assertion is based on an allegation by H. E. Carver, one of the dissident Adventists in Iowa who, according to Ellen White, spent their time “gathering testimonies of falsehood from rebels and traitors” ([The Review and Herald, February 20, 1866, 27:89](#)).

Just how long was the “dress” of the American Costume? The issue cannot be decided on the basis of the picture on p. 133 of *Prophetess of Health* since the picture is not a photograph but an

artist's engraving. In Ellen White's 1864 letter to the Lockwoods, quoted above, she reported that they had "all styles of dress" at Dansville, and that some were "very becoming, if not so short." Three years later she described the typical American Costume as "reaching about halfway from the hip to the knee" (*Testimonies for the Church* 1:465). In 1871 James White stated that the American Costume "reaches hardly to the bend of the knee." (*The Health Reformer*, May 1871, 5:253).

The variation in length is illustrated in the question asked in July, 1863, of Dr. Austin in which she was called upon to harmonize "the Reformed Dress (especially when the ladies' skirts are shorter than the men's [coats]) with the fifth verse of the twenty-second chapter of Deuteronomy" (*Laws of Life*, 6:104, July, 1863).

This citation tends to support Mrs. White's 1864 statement that the American Costume was worn in all styles at Dansville and that some were quite short. It should be made clear that the only description of Dr. Austin's personal dress in any Ellen White source is found in her letter to the Lockwoods, where she wrote, "We shall never imitate Miss Doctor Austin or Mrs. Doctor York. They dress very much like men" (*Letter* 6, 1864).

On page 141 James White compares the Adventist reform dress with the American Costume. This statement, which appeared in his *Health Reformer* editorial of May, 1871, is the seventh in a series of articles on the rise and progress of health reform among Seventh-day Adventists. White is writing largely for a non-Adventist readership. He deals with the general arguments which called for change in the attire of women and then moves into the question of length, contrasting the two in appearance. He does not, however, touch the question of the mannishness of the American Costume, which was opposed so strongly by Ellen White, and which he himself had alluded to in his first mention of the subject. His initial report on the topic of dress reform was made soon after he and his wife had visited Dr. Jackson's "Home" at Dansville, where the American Costume was being promoted. At that time Elder White stated: "We recognize the principles from which arise avowed objections to the present fashionable style of women's dress, and look for a remedy that will save to the world her appearance as a woman." (*How to Live*, No. 1, p. 17).

We would gather from this statement, as well as the Ellen White descriptions cited above, that the typical American Costume had a certain mannistiness about it. However, it also is evident that the American Costume was made in a variety of shapes and styles.

Dr. Jackson declared:

Modifications of it have been made by ladies who have worn it since its original adoption by Miss Austin, and those modifications will continue to be made until a style shall have been inaugurated which will seem to meet in a great measure the needs of those who seek to wear a dress, which while it is convenient shall also be tasteful and in accordance with the laws of health.—*Laws of Life* 6:77, May, 1863.

A month later at the National Convention of the Dress Reform Association, a Rochester newspaper reported that: “The streets were lively half an hour before the meeting with the female reformers, who were dressed a la Bloomer, each having her own peculiar style in dress and pattern.” (*Union and Adv.* June 24. Quoted in *The Laws of Life* 6:125, August, 1863).

If the American Costume was worn in so many different styles “in dress and pattern” it may be assumed that some of them were more similar to the Adventist reform dress than others. James White’s comparison of the two dresses in his *Health Reformer* editorial appears to have been a rather loose generalization. since he was writing, not for an Adventist audience, but for the general public.

### Reaction to the Reform Dress

Pages 143 and 145 of *Prophetess of Health* only quote negative reactions to the reform dress. There were also a good many commendations. For example, Mary L. Priest of South Lancaster, Mass., was delighted with her new dress. She wrote the editor of the *Review and Herald*:

The Lord has so blessed me in it that I have really longed to speak my experience, desiring to use my influence to encourage those that are still halting, to move out.... My health has improved constantly, ... I have freedom of spirit, more liberty in prayer, my love and sympathy with the people of God is much increased.—[The Review and Herald, February 25, 1868, 31:171.](#)

In similar vein C. O. Taylor of Rouse's Point, New York, wrote: [69]  
"Mrs. Taylor is wearing it in this section for the first time. I have heard no one speaking ill of it. A number have spoken well. Some that would not think of wearing the American Costume say that they must have one of this style" ([The Review and Herald, September 3, 1867](#), 30:188).

When Dr. R. T. Trall visited Battle Creek for a series of lectures in 1868 he was able to report: "We had the pleasure of seeing nearly 300 women in the short dress. Indeed this dress has become so common in that place that it has ceased to attract any special attention in the streets" ([The Health Reformer, July, 1868](#), 3:14).

It is true that there was strong Adventist opposition to the wearing of the reform dress, but it was by no means universal.

Pages 145, 146 of *Prophetess of Health* says that the end of the struggle came on January 3, 1875. This is true. While many witnessed to the physical relief it afforded, its advocacy "had proved a battle at every step" ([The Story of Our Health Message](#), 441). "Because," as she wrote in 1897, "that which was given as a blessing was turned into a curse, the burden of advocating the reform dress was removed" (EGW [Manuscript 167, 1897](#), quoted in [The Story of Our Health Message](#), 441). However, it should be pointed out that Ellen White never made the dress reform a test question, nor did she approve of those who made the reform "the sum and substance of their religion." She had even advised those who had unbelieving husbands not to adopt the reform dress since it might lead to unhappiness "that would counteract all the good to be derived from its use."

She wrote further, "While none were compelled to adopt the reform dress, our people could and should have appreciated its advantages and accepted it as a blessing" ([Testimonies for the Church 4:639](#)).

Page 147 of *Prophetess of Health* says that Ellen White "presumably" supported the action of the General Conference in condemning those who shaved or colored their beards. This is not necessarily so. The fact that she had nothing to say on the subject of men's facial hair could just as likely indicate that she had no convictions at all in the matter. In later years she refused to become involved in discussions concerning the wearing of beards.

### Artificial Hair Pieces

On page 148 *Prophetess of Health* introduces two and a half paragraphs from an Ellen G. White *Health Reformer* article in which she writes of artificial hair pieces which fashion imposed on women, and she described certain baneful effects. The book declares, “Mrs. White’s fears in this instance were based upon her understanding of the so-called science of phrenology, widely current among health reformers.” (p. 148) What the book terms her “flirtation with phrenology” (p. 149) and her “proclivity to phrenology” are also mentioned. We think that these last named terms do not accurately describe the situation.

On the point of the ill effects of hair pieces however, taking into account all the facts known to us today, we do not have what could be considered a satisfactory explanation. It is a fact that the wigs of a century ago were quite different from those currently worn, and this should be noted. A striking description of a typical 1867 wig appeared in the *Health Reformer*:

It seems to us it would be hard to find a *man* in the city, or country either, who would say one word in favor of the monstrous bunches of curled hair, cotton, seagrass, wool, Spanish moss and other multitudinous abominations, of which the aforesaid bunches are composed.... They give to the wearer such a wide-awake look that I’ve often wondered if they, like Miss “Bly,” celebrated in song, “shut their eyes when they go to sleep.” To the best of our knowledge, it would be an utter impossibility to shut one’s eyes unless they took the chignon off.—*The Health Reformer, July, 1867, 2:7.*

The lady who wrote the above lines described the effects which wearing such a hair piece had upon her: “Our chignon was not imported, but had been shorn from the head of a dear friend; but that did not prevent it from generating an unnatural degree of heat in the back part of the head, and producing a distracting headache just as long as it was worn” (*Ibid.*).

Another *Health Reformer* article appearing in the January 1871 issue, quoting the *Marshall Statesman* and the *Springfield (Mass.) Republican* described the perils of wearing “jute switches”—wigs made from dark, fibrous bark. It seems that these decorations were



often infested with “jute bugs,” small insects which burrowed under the scalp of the wearer. One woman’s experience was described:

Her head became raw, and the hair began to fall out. Her entire scalp was perforated with the burrowing parasites, who betrayed their residence by little bunches, which, when punctured, would let them forth. It might be possible thus to slaughter them in detail, but for the fact that they breed under the skin, and their reproduction goes on endlessly. The lady has consulted several physicians, but without help; and has used every application which seemed to promise relief, but entirely in vain. She is represented as nearly crazy from the terrible suffering, and from the prospect of the horrible death which physicians do not seem able to avert.—HR5:136, Jan. 1871.

On the question of wigs as worn at the time, it could be that the several points enumerated by Ellen White in a single reference in a *Health Reformer* article constitute one of the perplexing matters concerning which we must acknowledge that we do not have an answer, and therefore, for our part, we choose to hold suspended judgment. In the opening pages we made reference to a few such problems. Could this be one of the “hooks” on which doubts may be hung? ([The Great Controversy, 527](#)). There must be some somewhere. Is this one of the perplexing instances where looking at the weight of evidence, we find our confidence unimpaired.

### “Phrenological Allusions”

On page 149 of *Prophetess of Health*, Ellen White is said to have taken her two sons to Dr. Jackson for head readings. The Whites took the boys for physical examinations of which the cursory phrenological examination was apparently a part. On this point see our comments on Chapter Four on pages 55-57. [70]

Page 149 says that Ellen White changed her attitude toward phrenology after her visits to Dansville. Earlier, she is alleged to have denounced it, but after visiting Dansville, she began using phrenological terms. The facts are that she manifested the same attitude all along toward phrenology.

In her 1862 testimony published in [Testimonies for the Church 1:290-302](#), she denounced phrenology as a tool used by the devil ([Testimonies for the Church 1:290](#)) but said it was “good in its place”

([Testimonies for the Church 1:296](#)). Two decades later she still was saying the same thing:

The sciences which treat of the human mind are very much exalted. They are good in their place; but they are seized upon by Satan as his powerful agents to deceive and destroy souls. His arts are accepted as from heaven, and he thus receives the worship which suits him well. The world, which is supposed to be benefited so much by phrenology and animal magnetism, never was so corrupt as now. Through these sciences, virtue is destroyed, and the foundations of Spiritualism are laid.—[The Signs of the Times, November 6, 1884](#), p. 10 ([Selected Messages 2:352](#)).

There is no necessary contradiction between her condemnation of phrenology and her later occasional use of terminology which is interpreted to be phrenological allusions. She condemned phrenology in a certain context, and then used its language in certain other, different contexts. As noted in our review of Chapter Three, the use of phrenological nouns and adjectives should not seem unusual in view of the fact that phrenological terminology was in common usage and had colored the language of the time. In fact, however mistaken some of phrenology's anatomical deductions may have been, it *was* an attempt to study the mind objectively. Today, both in medicine and in psychology, many of its fundamental concepts are commonplace and accepted. (See John D. Davies, *Phrenology Fad and Science. A Nineteenth Century American Crusade*, Yale University Press, 1971, p. x. quoted on pp. 46 and 47 of this critique.)

*Prophetess of Health* on page 149 makes the following statement:

In the years following her contacts with Dansville, however, phrenological allusions began appearing frequently in her writings. During her husband's extended illness, for instance, she complained that his "large and active" bumps of "cautiousness, conscientiousness and benevolence," all assets in time of health, were in sickness "painfully excitable, and a hindrance to his recovery."

The word "bumps" has been interjected in the heart of an Ellen G. White statement. The use of the term "bumps" makes Ellen White's statement seem more closely related to phrenology than it actually was. Ellen White did not use the word. There is nothing in the context that indicates that she meant bumps, phrenological

or otherwise. Is it only through phrenology that a person might be said to possess certain traits or characteristics? The source of the statement from which *Prophetess of Health* quotes, [The Review and Herald, February 27, 1866](#), is one not easy to check unless the reader is in possession of the reprints of the Ellen G. White *Review* articles. *Prophetess of Health* clearly intends that the reader shall gain a picture of Ellen White using the word “bumps” or some synonym meaning bumps. *She does not*. Here is the full paragraph from which the words are drawn. It appears in the heart of the 1866 article on “Our Late Experience:”

All who are acquainted with my husband know that his cautiousness, conscientiousness, and benevolence, have been large and active, and ruling traits in his character, and have been special blessings in qualifying him for his business career in connection with the work and advancement of the cause of present truth. But in the debilitated and excitable state of his nervous system during his illness, these special developments, which had been a blessing to him in health, were painfully excitable, and a hindrance to his recovery. [The Review and Herald, February 27, 1866](#), 27:98.

In the article as a whole she recounts the visit to Dansville for the recovery of her husband’s health, and their return to Battle Creek via Rochester. Near the close she reports, “My husband is improving. He is not troubled as much with nervousness, anxiety and fears.” Are these words also phrenology oriented?

True, Ellen White may not have understood all the mechanics of brain function and its relationship to personality, but everyone knows that one need not be an expert in this field to recognize that different people exhibit varying degrees of cautiousness, conscientiousness, benevolence, etc., and that in illness these traits can become accentuated to the point of imbalance, whereas the same characteristics in a healthy, well-balanced individual would serve him well.

Simply because we who live today speak of a person’s being “acquisitive,” or “combative,” or “spiritual”—all terms formerly used by phrenologists—does not at all mean that we are advocates of phrenology. By the same token Mrs. White’s use of words also used by phrenologists, does not mean she believed in phrenology.

*Prophetess of Health* on page 149 in the context of a phrenological atmosphere, declares: “Mrs. White herself was reported to be

a woman of singularly well-balanced mental organization, notable for her traits of benevolence, spirituality, conscientiousness, and ideality.” The statement is drawn from an 1878 work, *American Biographical History of Eminent and Self-Made Men of the State of Michigan, Third Congressional District*, p. 108.

Only a stretch of the imagination would link this with phrenology, unless it be that phrenological charts assigned to certain portions of the brain contain characteristics which carried similar labels.

On pages 149-150 Mrs. White’s statements on prenatal influences are said to be a part of “folklore.” They may have sounded like folklore until relatively recent years, but studies in this field since 1954 have strongly substantiated what Ellen White wrote on prenatal influence. See *Medical Science and the Spirit of Prophecy*, pp. 40-43.

[71]

### Teachings on Sex

Beginning with page 150 *Prophetess of Health* takes up Ellen White’s sex teachings, including masturbation, excesses, and abuses, which were common both within and outside the marriage relation. It is said that:

Ellen White followed another well-marked trail when she ventured into the potentially hazardous field of sex. From the appearance of Sylvester Graham’s *Lecture to Young Men on Chastity* in 1834 this subject had played an integral and highly visible role in health reform literature. Alcott, Coles, Trall, and Jackson, among others, had all spoken out on the dangers of what they regarded as excessive or abnormal sexual activities, particularly masturbation.—p. 150.

And it is further stated:

Given this background, and the knowledge that she possessed both Trall’s and Jackson’s books on sex by late 1863, it is not surprising that Ellen White’s very first book on health was a little volume entitled *An Appeal to Mothers: The Great Cause of the Physical, Mental, and Moral Ruin of Many of the Children of Our Time* (1864).—p. 150.

First of all, we call attention to Appendix C which is a full reprint of the Ellen G. White article “*An Appeal to Mothers.*” Some of the assertions and conclusions in *Prophetess of Health* declare on page

150, that there were certain health books (ordered by James White) in her home at the time *Appeal to Mothers* was written and published. But she says that since Elder White's "business gave him no time to peruse them, and as I determined not to read them until I had written out my views, the books remained in their wrappers" ([The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#), 30:260). A comparison of *Appeal to Mothers* with the writings on masturbation by others has failed to show any literary similarity between her work and the works of her contemporaries on this subject. Now let us consider another factor which, though not conclusive, certainly must be given some weight. When all the circumstances are taken into consideration, it seems that it would have been utterly impossible for Ellen White to have researched a field as new and foreign to her, and prepared the copy for a pamphlet within the time frame the full documentation allows.

The books on sex by Trall and Jackson most likely caught up with the White's in November 1863 at Topsham, Maine, while they were on their four months trip east. She says they "remained in their wrappers," yet *Prophetess of Health* implies she might have read them. Ellen White, who had had only about three years of formal education, was now the mother of three lively boys. In addition to her traveling and speaking she was trying desperately to finish her writing on *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 3.

Then while east in December, 1863, Henry contracted pneumonia and, on December 8, died. The family returned to Battle Creek for his funeral on December 17. Ellen White surely had no time for research in her bereavement as she was now faced with all the duties of a mother in the home after a four month's absence.

But she did press on with urgent writing. First she wrote personal testimonies based on the June 6, 1863 vision, for many subjects had been opened to her at that time. Then she prepared and published Testimony Number 10, an 80 page pamphlet, also based largely on the June 6 vision. It was ready for distribution on January 19.

In the meantime her mother died. Then in early February, Willie came down with pneumonia. With the decision to treat him themselves, James and Ellen White were driven to exhaustion during the next couple of weeks. Copy for *Appeal to Mothers*, also based on the June 6, 1863 vision must have been prepared in March for it was

published in early April and advertised as ready for sale on April 12 ([The Review and Herald, April 12, 1864, 23:160](#)).

It was one thing for a busy mother and housewife to squeeze in the time to write materials based on the June 6 vision so vividly in her mind. It would have been quite another thing, a seemingly incredible thing, for her under these circumstances to conduct research in various books in order to gather material for publication as is strongly implied in *Prophetess of Health*.

### A Significant Omission

*Prophetess of Health*, on pages 150 and 152 discusses Ellen White's writing in 1864 on masturbation which appeared in *Appeal to Mothers*. The book on page 152 quotes only a portion of one key statement:

“Her angel guide had directed her attention to the present corrupt state of the world. ‘Everywhere I looked’ she recalled with obvious horror, ‘I saw imbecility, dwarfed forms, crippled limbs, misshapen heads, and deformity of every description.’ Sickened by the sight before her, she learned that it had resulted from the practice of solitary vice, so widespread that ‘a large share of the youth now living are worthless.’”

But in a sentence omitted from the quotation cited, Ellen White attributes the deplorable situation of “imbecility,” “dwarfed forms,” “crippled limbs,” etc. to a broader spectrum of causes. “Sins and crimes and the violation of nature’s laws, were shown me as the causes of this accumulation of human woe and suffering,” *Appeal to Mothers*, p. 17.

Here is the full statement in its context. Ellen White introduces a particular scene opened up to her in the Health Reform vision and one she was on different occasions to come back to.

The state of our world was presented before me, and my attention was especially called to the youth of our time. Everywhere I looked, I saw imbecility, dwarfed forms, crippled limbs, misshapen heads, and deformity of every description. Sins and crimes, and the violation of nature’s laws, were shown me as the causes of this accumulation of human woe and suffering. I saw such degradation and vile practices, such defiance of God, and I heard such words of blasphemy, that my

soul sickened. From what was shown me, a large share of the youth now living are worthless. Corrupt habits are wasting their energies, and bringing upon them loathsome and complicated diseases.—See Appendix C.

Writing in *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 4, a few months later, and reporting the same scene in the health reform vision, she included intemperance in eating and drinking as causes for the deplorable state she had seen:

[72]

The present corrupt state of the world was presented before me. The sight was terrible. I have wondered that the inhabitants of the earth were not destroyed, like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. I have seen reason enough for the present state of degeneracy and mortality in the world. Blind passion controls reason, and every high consideration with many is sacrificed to lust.

The first great evil was intemperance in eating and drinking. Men and women have made themselves slaves to appetite. They are intemperate in labor.

A reform in eating would be a saving of expense and labor. The wants of a family can be easily supplied that is satisfied with plain, wholesome diet. Rich food breaks down the healthy organs of the body and mind. And how many labor so very hard to accomplish this.

Children who eat improperly are often feeble, pale and dwarfed, and are nervous, excitable and irritable. Everything noble is sacrificed to the appetite, and the animal passions predominate. The lives of many children from five to ten and fifteen years of age seem marked with depravity.—4SG, 131-132.

In early 1865 she published the *Health: or How to Live* pamphlets, and again discussed the causes of the deformities she had witnessed, this time pointing to the effects of drugs:

Physicians, by administering their drug-poisons, have done very much to increase the depreciation of the race, physically, mentally, and morally. Everywhere you may go you will see deformity, disease and imbecility, which in very many cases can be traced directly back to the drug-poisons, administered by the hand of a doctor, as a remedy for some of life's ills.—*How to Live* #3, p. 51.

In 1890 Ellen White in [Patriarchs and Prophets, 561](#), broadened the statement regarding the cause of deformities in children to include the excessive use of alcohol on the part of parents:

As the result of parental intemperance, children often lack physical strength and mental and moral power.... To a great degree, parents are responsible, not only for the violent passions and perverted appetites of their children, but for the infirmities of thousands born deaf, blind, diseased, or idiotic.

It is unfair to Ellen White, because she dropped into *An Appeal to Mothers* an impressive scene of the results of the violation of nature's laws, be it "intemperance in eating and drinking," taking poisonous drugs into the system, or corrupt or vile practice, to maintain that all the woes she viewed in the vision were traceable to masturbation.

Scientific studies of the last twenty years pin much in birth defects on alcohol and drugs as does Ellen White.

### **An Absence of Incontrovertible Evidence**

There are, of course, other diseases which Ellen White says are caused by masturbation and we note that this is one of the few areas of her teachings which has not yet been sustained by scientific studies.

An experienced psychologist, Dr. Elden Chalmers of Andrews University, who has done a great deal of careful study in this field reports that as he has made inquiry of recognized authorities in this field, the authors who have made mention of masturbation in their writings on the subject when pressed, have admitted that sound evidence is not available. No longitudinal studies have been conducted in this area. On the other hand, he declares that there has not yet been found evidence which would disprove Ellen White's teachings on masturbation or sex, popular thinking to the contrary. Notwithstanding, ministers and counselors will testify that they have interviewed people who in their youth in all innocence were masturbating, but did not connect it at all with distressing symptoms of illness. After they broke with the habit—some of them after reading Ellen White—they found lasting relief. Scientific tables would be meaningless to such, but they know some things from experience.



In his scholarly study on “Masturbatory Insanity; The History of an Idea,” (*Journal of Mental Science* 108:1, Jan., 1962), E. H. Hare refers to a study of 500 patients admitted consecutively to the Iowa State Psychopathic Hospital. He states that the authors of the study (Malamud, W., and Palmer, G., “The Role Played by Masturbation in the Causation of Mental Disturbances,” *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disorders*, 76:220, 1932) found that in twenty-two cases masturbation was “apparently the most important cause of disorder.”

He then continues;

The authors concluded that it was the mental conflict engendered by masturbation rather than the habit itself which led to the illness, and they believed this conclusion to be supported by the efficacy of psychotherapy directed towards readjusting the patient’s ideas about masturbation. Yet the fact that fifteen of the twenty-two patients suffered from depression must raise doubts about the validity even of this temperate conclusion, for the depressed patient is not only prone to blame himself for neglect of what he believes to be the rules of health, but also tends to recover from his illness whether treated by psychotherapy or not.—*Ibid.* p. 22.

Thus Hare questions the conclusions of Malamud and Palmer, but says, significantly, that their study is “one of the very few attempts (indeed, as far as my reading goes, the *only* real attempt) at a scientific study of the masturbatory hypothesis [the hypothesis that masturbation can cause insanity].”

After acknowledging that “there is no way of disproving the masturbatory hypothesis,” Hare offers his final conclusion: “All we can say, from the evidence, is that the association between masturbation and mental disorder is weak and inconstant and that therefore, if masturbation is a causal factor, it is probably not a very important one.”—[Patriarchs and Prophets](#), 19. So although this authority minimizes the possibility that masturbation and insanity might be linked, he does not dismiss it altogether. Even more significantly, he has discovered that there has been only one real attempt to test the hypothesis scientifically. [73]

Writing of masturbation in their *Adolescent Development and Adjustment* (McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965) Lester C. and Alice Crow conclude: “The effects of this form of sex perversion are not yet fully known.”

Ellen White in her *Appeal to Mothers* uses the term “I have been shown” (page 18). See full 32 page pamphlet as Appendix C.

In the case of masturbation, we believe that it could well be that in time her statement will be supported. Who knows what the investigations of another decade or two may yield? But even if it were not, those who believe that Ellen White did not lie, when she said she “saw” will be content to maintain suspended judgment.

Twenty-five years ago science seemed to indicate that Ellen White’s teachings regarding a “cancer germ” were the fruit of her imagination and had no basis in fact. In 1956 the breakthrough came in the discovery of cancer producing viruses, and since then there has been ever-mounting evidence in support of this thesis.

Twenty years ago many scientists would have questioned Ellen White’s statement that tobacco is a “slow, insidious, but most malignant poison.” But not today. Scientific studies overwhelmingly agree that tobacco is exactly what more than one hundred years ago Ellen White declared it to be. The Ellen G. White statements linking a large percentage of birth defects with the excessive use of alcohol (1890) or the use of drugs (1865) would have seemed unscientific even twenty years ago. But increasing knowledge concerning DNA since 1958 has shown that many drugs, among them alcohol, are responsible for tragic birth defects. The thalidomide tragedy of the early 1960’s bears strong evidence of this. Prenatal influence, stressed by Ellen White from 1865 on, was until 1954 held to be but a myth. Not so now. Is it possible that scientists in the future could reverse their pronouncements on masturbation, as they have done in so many other areas during recent decades? With the paucity of research in this field, is it not too early to declare Ellen White’s statements unreliable?

### **Vital Force**

*Prophetess of Health* on pages 154-6 introduces the doctrine of vitalism as a basis for Ellen White’s philosophy of life and longevity setting it forth in this way:

“Ellen White’s sexual attitudes,” it is asserted, “rested squarely on the popular vitalistic physiology of Broussais that Sylvester Graham had been preaching since the early 1830s. Puzzled by the

organic processes that sustained life, the vitalists had invented a mysterious ‘vital force’ (or energy) that supposedly interacted with inanimate matter to produce the vital functions of the body...

“To illustrate the concept of vital force, nineteenth-century authors frequently compared it to capital in a bank account, gradually depleted over the years by repeated withdrawals. Again Mrs. White was no exception. As she saw it, God had made the original deposit by granting each individual, according to sex, ‘a certain amount of vital force.’ (For some inscrutable reason he had been more generous with men than women.) Those who carefully budgeted their resources lived a normal lifetime, but those who by their intemperate acts used ‘borrowed capital,’ prematurely exhausted their account and met an early death.”—p. 154.

A few of Mrs. White’s statements related to this subject are quoted, but not enough to give a full picture of her teaching.

A survey of her use of the term “vital force” in the *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* is most illuminating and helpful.

Such a survey shows that she used interchangeably a wide range of terminology. She speaks of “vital force” (*Appeal to Mothers*, pp. 26, 27, 28; [The Ministry of Healing, 234](#)), but also uses the term “vital forces” (*Appeal to Mothers* p. 28; 4SG 131, [Selected Messages 2:414](#), [Counsels on Diet and Foods, 426](#)). In the quotation from *Appeal to Mothers* which *Prophetess of Health* cites, two more terms appear: “vital capital” and “vital energies.” Elsewhere in her writings we find: “vital energy” ([Temperance, 74](#), [Testimonies for the Church 4:97](#)), “constitutional force” ([Selected Messages 2:414](#), [Counsels on Diet and Foods, 426](#)), “life force” ([The Ministry of Healing, 235](#)), “life forces” ([My Life Today, 151](#)), “life and vitality” ([Counsels on Diet and Foods, 131](#)), “life-giving power” ([My Life Today, 151](#)), and “vitality” (21 117).

A study of these passages reveals that all these terms refer to just about the same thing. It is especially significant to note that the term “vital powers” is used as a synonym for “vitality” in [Testimonies for the Church 2:364](#) and that “vitality” according to Ellen White, can be increased as well as depleted. “Vitality increases under the influence of the Spirit’s action,” she writes ([Medical Ministry, 12](#)). “Walking is preferable to riding. The muscles and veins are enabled

better to perform their work. There will be increased vitality, which is so necessary to health” ([Testimonies for the Church 2:529](#)). She also speaks of air giving “energy and vitality” ([Testimonies for the Church 2:533](#)).

What is it that makes the difference between life and death? Why did Adam live so much longer than people today live? Why does the human body age and die? *Prophetess of Health* belittles the concept of “vital force,” saying “Puzzled by the organic processes that sustained life, the vitalists had invented a mysterious ‘vital force’ (or energy) that supposedly interacted with inanimate matter to produce the vital functions of the body” (p. 154). Note that *Prophetess of Health* identifies the “processes that sustained life” as organic. Ellen White would disagree: “Many teach that matter possesses vital power—that certain properties are imparted to matter, and it is then left to act through its own inherent energy; and that the operations of nature are conducted in harmony with fixed laws, with which God Himself cannot interfere. This is false science, and is not sustained by the word of God...

Nature testifies of an intelligence, a presence, an active energy, that works in and through her laws” ([Patriarchs and Prophets, 114](#)).

[74] Here the presuppositions of *Prophetess of Health*, which exclude supernaturalism, come face to face with the presuppositions of Ellen White, which affirm that God, not “organic processes,” is the sustainer of life.

Ellen White saw each individual as endowed with vitality—the vital energies, forces, or powers which sustained life. These forces could be taxed, sapped, worn away, squandered, expended, lessened, or exhausted—to use the verbs she used. But they could also be increased through “the influence of the Spirit’s” action and by healthful endeavors such as walking.

While Ellen White, as in other cases already referred to, couched certain important points somewhat in the language of the times, it is our studied conclusion that coercive evidence is lacking which would provide an explanation or her use of these terms through a rigid interpretation of vitalism.

On the point of women having less vital force, as Ellen White uses the term broadly and rather loosely, should not the dressing and living habits of females of that time be considered as a factor in

interpreting the statement? A sentence employing the word “vitality” written in 1867 would seem to support the point:

I saw the beneficial influence of outdoor labor upon those of feeble vitality and depressed circulation, especially upon women who have induced these conditions by too much confinement indoors.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:562](#).

We do not begin to understand just what life is—how it is sustained or why it is inevitably lost. But we are not inclined to dismiss Ellen White’s concept of a “vital force” as ludicrous. We have no doubt that she was right in designating various factors which tend to weaken vitality and shorten life, factors such as drugs, overeating, hurtful food and drinks, tobacco, excessive sexual activity, doubt, excessive grief, and perplexity, and factors through which life might be enriched or extended.

*Prophetess of Health* pages 155, 156 speaks of Ellen White’s reliance on L. B. Coles and Horace Mann for her concepts of “vital force,” sympathy existing between the mind and the body, and “the electric currents in the nervous system.” For a treatment of paralleling passages, see pages 29-31; 53-55, and Chapter Seven, pages 76 and 77.

### Graham’s and Fowler’s Teaching on Sex

On pages 157, 158 of *Prophetess of Health*, Ellen White is portrayed as basing her position on Sylvester Graham and O. S. Fowler, who favored sexual intercourse in marriage only once a month. On this point see page 15 of this Critique. Ellen White established no rigid rules. In fact when Graham’s and Fowler’s statements are carefully examined it can be seen that they, instead of rigidly establishing a maximum of “once a month” (p. 158) were considerably more liberal. Here are Graham’s words:

It is, therefore, impossible to lay down a precise rule, which will be equally adapted to all men, in regard to the frequency of their connubial commerce. But as a general rule, it may be said, to the healthy and robust; it were better for you, not to exceed in the frequency of your indulgences, the number of months in the year; and you cannot exceed the number of weeks in the year, without impairing your constitutional powers, shortening your lives, and

increasing your liability to disease and suffering.—Graham, *Lectures to Young Men* [on Chastity], p. 37.

Fowler held the theory of “as often as the moon quarters” for a certain type of individual whom he described as “light-built, fine-skinned, fine-haired, spare-built, sharp-featured, light-eyed persons.” (O. S. Fowler, quoted in [A Solemn Appeal](#), 200). He did not elaborate on what he thought would be good for the rest of the human family. Where does this leave *Prophetess of Health*?

## Chapter 7—Whatever Ye Eat Or Drink

In this chapter the often misunderstood and frequently abused subject of food is discussed. This is a subject on which many people are inclined to go to extremes.<sup>1</sup> Ellen White emerges in *Prophetess of Health* as one who proscribes articles of diet most people enjoy. The last glimpse we get of her in the closing paragraph of the chapter is of an aged woman “happily subsisting on a simple twice-a-day diet of vermicelli-tomato soup or thistle greens ‘seasoned with sterilized cream and lemon juice.’” Only by taking isolated statements and giving them the most extreme interpretation can such an image be created. It is a distorted image.

### One Statement and Its Historical Setting

The key statement employed to introduce the chapter which opens on page 160 is typical:

We bear positive testimony against tobacco, spirituous liquors, snuff, tea, coffee, flesh meats, butter, spices, rich cakes, mince pies, a large amount of salt, and all exciting substances used as articles of food.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:21](#).

What is the background for this statement:<sup>2</sup> James and Ellen White had attended the campmeetings in the Midwestern states in the summer of 1870. They found that the extreme positions taught by Dr. A. T. Trall in his articles in the *Health Reformer* calling for the discarding of milk, sugar, and salt, and seconded (in word, not in practice) by William C. Gage, the resident Battle Creek editor, created discouragement among the believers who were “conscientiously seeking to be in harmony with the body of Sabbathkeeping Adventists” ([Testimonies for the Church 3:20](#)). The problem of these extreme teachings, not countenanced by James and Ellen White, were accentuated in those states where there was little fruit. Ellen

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix E.

<sup>2</sup> See [The Story of Our Health Message, 196-202](#) for a review of the circumstances

White asks, “If we take positions that conscientious Christians, who are indeed reformers, cannot adopt, how can we expect to benefit that class whom we can reach only from a health standpoint?” ([Testimonies for the Church 3:20](#)).

Referring to those teaching extreme views at Battle Creek who “advocate the entire disuse of milk, butter, and sugar, should,” she wrote, “have their own tables free from these things.” ([Testimonies for the Church 3:19, 20](#)). Then in a classic statement she declared, “In reforms we would better come one step short of the mark than to go one step beyond it. And if there is error at all, let it be on the side next to the people” (31 21).

After stating that the burden she and her husband carried in their presentation of dietetic advice as they traveled among the churches was not “salt, sugar, and milk” she set forth what their burden in their public presentations really was. She wrote:

We bear positive testimony against tobacco, spirituous liquors, snuff, tea, coffee, flesh meats, butter, spices, rich cakes, mince pies, a large amount of salt, and all exciting substances used as articles of food.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:21](#).

In other words as they stood side by side in teaching health reform, this is what they were dealing with. It is altogether possible that the word “testimony” in this statement may be taken by the reader in a stronger sense than is justified by the circumstances of the biographical recital of what they as a team were doing in the field. In other words, by “testimony” she meant that they spoke out on these things.

An accurate portrayal of Ellen White as a *Prophetess of Health* should include the presentation of balanced counsels such as:

Let us never bear testimony against health reform by failing to use wholesome, palatable food in place of the harmful articles of diet that we have discarded.... A diet lacking in the proper elements of nutrition brings reproach upon the cause of health reform.—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 92](#).

To care for the body by providing for it food which is relishable and strengthening, is one of the first duties of the householder.—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 93](#).

God has furnished man with abundant means for the gratification of an unperverted appetite. He has spread before him the products



of the earth,—a bountiful variety of food that is palatable to the taste and nutritious to the system. Of these our benevolent heavenly Father says we may freely eat. Fruits, grains, and vegetables, prepared in a simple way, free from spice and grease of all kinds, make, with milk or cream, the most healthful diet. They impart nourishment to the body, and give a power of endurance and a vigor of intellect that are not produced by a stimulating diet.—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 92](#).

Cornell University's long time professor of nutrition, Dr. Clive McCay, a non-Adventist, near the close of his active life declared:

When one reads such works by Mrs. White as *Ministry of Healing* or *Counsels on Diet and Foods* he is impressed by the correctness of her teachings in the light of modern nutritional science. One can only speculate how much better health the average American might enjoy even though he knew almost nothing of modern science, if he but followed the teachings of Mrs. White.—[The Review and Herald, February 12, 1959](#), 136:24.

And he added:

In spite of the fact that the works of Mrs. White were written long before the advent of modern scientific nutrition, no better overall guide is available today.—[The Review and Herald, February 26, 1959](#), 136:10, quoted in *Medical Science and the Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 30.

Prophetess of Health on p. 160 states:

To the typical Seventh-day Adventist in the 1860's, health reform meant essentially a twice-a-day diet of fruits, vegetables, grains, and nuts. Since Ellen White's vision on June 5, 1863, meat, eggs, butter, and cheese had joined alcohol, tobacco, tea, and coffee on her index of proscribed items. The discontinuance of these articles was as much a religious as a physiological duty.

Concerning Ellen White and dairy products, see later observations in this chapter.

### The Two-Meal System

As to the two-meal-a-day system it should be noted that Ellen White was never rigid on the question. The two statements in her basic 1864 article on health read: "Be satisfied with plain, simple

food, eaten twice, or at most, three times a day” (4SG 129). “A second meal should never be eaten until the stomach has had time to rest from the labor of digesting the preceding meal. If a third meal be eaten at all, it should be light, and several hours before going to bed” (4SG 130).

In 1890 Ellen White wrote: Most people enjoy better health while eating two meals a day than three; others, under their existing circumstances, may require something to eat at suppertime; but this meal should be very light. Let no one think himself a criterion for all,—that every one must do exactly as he does. [Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 58.—Counsels on Diet and Foods, 176.](#)

Her 1905 *Ministry of Healing* statement reads:

“Most persons who give the plan a trial will find two meals a day are better than three.”—p. 304.

See *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, Section “Number of Meals,” pp. 173-178 for a representative presentation.

Although clearly advocated as a procedure which could be followed by many with benefit, certainly in the E. G. White writings on health the two-meals-a-day plan did not receive “equal billing” with the vegetarian diet. To the contrary, from the very first she allowed for differences on this question.

[76] The book on page 160 states that the reason the Whites adopted the two meal a day system is unclear. However, there is no mystery here. Both of the statements quoted above were based on the June 6, 1863, vision. This was the source of her instruction on the advantage of two meals a day. In August 1864, in writing of their experience in adopting health reform, Ellen White declared:

Since the Lord presented before me in June, 1863, the subject of meat eating in relation to health, I have left the use of meat.... I have lived for eight months upon two meals a day.... My health has never been better than for the past six months.... I have more strength than I have realized for years.—4SG 153, 154.

This places the adoption of two meals a day in December, 1863. Unquestionably it was initiated by the health reform vision of June 1863.

## Diet and Sex Drive

On pages 161 and 162 the book speaks of the “supposed” relationship between diet and sexuality.

It may be difficult to demonstrate the effects of meat eating on the passions. Ellen White was repeatedly shown that there was such a relationship. From her very first writings on health to the last she maintained the two basic points concerning the use of flesh foods:

1. The danger to health.
2. Their tendency to cultivate the lower passions.

Medical science has demonstrated that a high protein diet accelerates sexual development.

The book on page 161 declares that “the supposed relationship between diet and sexuality had been noted earlier by Sylvester Graham and others, but Ellen White seems to have learned it primarily from L. B. Coles’ *Philosophy of Health*, with which she was well acquainted.”

But Ellen White in her address at the General Conference session of 1909 repeated the point made again and again down through the years concerning the source of her information on the harmful effects of meat eating. She declares: “*I have been instructed* that flesh food has a tendency to animalize the nature” ([Testimonies for the Church 9:159](#). Emphasis supplied). She had come out clearly on the point in her very first writings on health, *Appeal to Mothers*, (pp. 19, 20) published in April 1864 which she testified she had written before reading “any works upon health” ([The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#)). Graham and Coles may have said somewhat the same thing, but Ellen White ever maintained her source to be the visions God gave to her. Granted, some parallels of phrasing as noted on p. 162 can be found between Coles and Ellen G. White. These occur in a testimony published in 1868, several years *after* she had searched the various works on hygiene and was surprised to find them so nearly in harmony with what the Lord had revealed to her ([The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#)).

### Did Mrs. White Copy <sup>3</sup>

In this setting, *Prophetess of Health* on pages 162-167 reverts to the question of Mrs. White's borrowing's from other health reformers. In order to understand the significance of the parallels which the book draws between certain passages in Ellen White's writings and the writings of those of other health reformers, it is necessary to consider carefully the dates of all the exhibits presented and the claims she made for her writings on the subject of health, especially her initial writings on the topic.

*Prophetess of Health* says that Ellen White made "free" and "unacknowledged use" of Coles (page 161). Did Mrs. White really make "free use" of Coles' writings? No, she did not.

What appears in two paragraphs of [Testimonies for the Church 2:63, 64](#), parallels seven pages of Coles' text. Notice that ellipses are used seven times in order to place Coles' passage beside Ellen White's (pages 162, 163). Is this "free" use? A close study of the two passages will also reveal that the sequence of the various thoughts is frequently shifted in Mrs. White's version.

Furthermore, Ellen White rewords those scattered portions of Coles' text which she does use. Given the standards of popular literature of her time, such "use" was not at all uncommon. Indeed, even today it is at times done, although most scholars would make a footnote reference. *Prophetess of Health* points out that the practice of borrowing was quite common among the health reformers (See Chapter Three). Ellen White's failure to acknowledge her "debt" was certainly not unusual. See pp. 29-31 of this critique. For a comprehensive discussion of the use Ellen White made of the writings of others see "Mrs. White's Literary Borrowings: The Charge of Plagiarism" in *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, pages 403-428, 459-467.

*Prophetess of Health* charges further that Ellen White followed Coles in associating tea and coffee with alcoholic beverages. Coles' influence is supposed to be "unmistakable" "throughout her writings" (page 165). Then follows a list of parallel columns in which Ellen White's statements published in *Christian Temperance and Bible*

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<sup>3</sup>Quite a full discussion of this topic is found in this critique in dealing with Chapter Four, "Dansville Days."

*Hygiene* in 1890 (page 34) are compared with Coles' statement penned in 1853. It should be remembered that Ellen White was given a vision relating to tea, coffee, and tobacco in 1848.

As to the literary dependence between the two passages, it should be noted that very few words are the same, but such words as "stimulant," "machinery," "vivacity" and "languor and debility" do occur in both places. However, even if Ellen White did have Coles' passage before her, when she wrote, she made the language her own. She did not slavishly follow Coles.

And yet, the fact of the matter is that the ideas expressed in this passage are found clear back in Ellen White's very first major exposition of health principles, the article "Health" which appeared in *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 4, published in 1864, before she read Coles. There she said: "Tea and coffee are stimulating." She went on to compare the effects of tea to those of tobacco, but later said, "The whole system under the influence of these stimulants often becomes intoxicated. And to just that degree that the nervous system is excited by false stimulants, will be the prostration which will follow after the influence of the exciting cause has abated" (4SGa 128, 129). Here we find the central ideas of the two "parallel" passages under study stated clearly and forcefully, but in language which shows no parallelism at all to Coles.

[77]

*Prophetess of Health* claims too much when it attributes Ellen White's ideas published in 1890 to Coles, because they can be shown to have appeared in her 1864 writings, in her own words entirely before she had even read Coles.

We have pointed out on pages 53-55 that the idea of tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol all producing similar effects was so much the common property of those interested in health at the time that it would be virtually impossible to fix any direct line of descent for the idea.

In conclusion we can safely say that Mrs. White did borrow phraseology from Horace Mann and L. B. Coles, both of whom she would include among those health reformers whose views were "so nearly in harmony with what the Lord had revealed" to her, but these borrowings began to appear in her writings *only after* the time she freely admitted to having read these writers. She used their language

on a few occasions to express in her own way what she had been shown in vision.

### Domestic Wine

On page 167 it is said that Ellen White approved of “a little domestic wine.”

Domestic wine occasionally referred to by Ellen White and in the *Review and Herald*, we would understand to be the juice of the grape pressed out and at first free from fermentation. It must be remembered that in 1867, 1868 and 1869 there was no sure and effective method of preserving grape juice unfermented. This meant that even utilizing the best means available for preserving grape juice, it would eventually gain an alcoholic content. Concerning the use of this kind of wine in the ordinances, James White counseled in 1867: “Know what you use. Let the deacons obtain the cultivated grape, see the wine made, and secure from the air to keep it from fermenting as much as possible” ([The Review and Herald, April 16, 1867, 29:222](#)).

Two years later, when Ellen White wrote her testimony, there was still no known means of preserving grape juice from fermentation. This is indicated by an item in the [The Health Reformer, July, 1869](#). Speaking of grapes and apples, a questioner asked, “Is there any way of keeping the juices of them from changing to alcohol after being pressed out?” The answer given by Dr. R. T. Trall was, “No way, except by means of ice.”

The Ellen White 1869 testimony allowing “a little domestic wine” pertained to a pregnant woman in Wisconsin whose extremist husband was depriving her of proper food. In this connection Ellen White declared:

When she needed ... extra food, and that of a simple yet nutritious quality, it was not allowed her. Her system craved material to convert into blood, but he would not provide it. A moderate amount of milk and sugar, a little salt, white bread raised with yeast for a change, Graham flour prepared in a variety of ways by other hands than her own, plain cake with raisins, rice pudding with raisins, prunes, and figs, occasionally, and many other dishes I might mention would

have answered the demand of appetite.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:383, 384](#).

Then she added:

If he could not obtain some of these things, a little domestic wine would have done her no injury; it would have been better for her to have it than to do without it. In some cases, even a small amount of least hurtful meat would do less injury than to suffer strong cravings for it—[Testimonies for the Church 2:384](#).

The situation was desperate. Grape juice preserved in the best manner known at the time would supply elements which were needed by this woman. It is known to be rich in minerals, vitamins and food elements which are easily and quickly assimilated by the body. In the absence of other foods which would have provided what she needed, the “domestic wine,” even though it contained a little alcohol, would have proved more beneficial than harmful to her, supplying certain elements which her body needed. Were she living today, with our present knowledge of methods for preserving grape juice, Ellen White would certainly have counseled the use of “unfermented wine” as she did to Dr. Kress in 1901. See CDF 204.

The footnote (#28) on page 249 states that “James White himself used domestic wine for medicinal purposes.” Most likely he did, but if he did he used only a very little. So did Ellen White in a few extreme situations. James White refers to this in [The Review and Herald, March 17, 1868](#), in answering a question:

During the past year, Mrs. W. has, at three or four times, had feelings of great debility and faintness in the morning. One was at Eld. Sanborn’s, at the time of the Convocation Assembly at Johns town. Wis. To prevent distressing fainting at these times, she, immediately after rising, had taken an egg in a little pure, domestic, grape wine, perhaps a spoonful at a time, and never thought that this had to do with drugs, as she uses the term in her writings, more than with the man in the moon. During the past year, she may have used one pint of wine. It is only in extreme cases that the use of wine is justifiable, and then let it be a “little wine,” to gently stimulate those in a sinking condition.

Certainly no rational person would use this information to counter the abundant counsel concerning using fermented wine as a beverage. How pleased the church was when methods of preserving

grape juice in an unfermented state became known. [The Review and Herald, October 10, 1882](#), carried an article giving instructions on preserving grape juice for the communion service, and urged each church to appoint someone to make it. Had *Prophetess of Health* placed the domestic wine situation in its proper historical setting, the reader would have been in a position to make a more fair judgment.

### A Little Tea

On page 171 *Prophetess of Health* states that “charges that she also imbibed a little tea were stoutly denied.” Any reader of *Counsels on Diet and Foods* is fully informed on the point by Ellen White herself in a letter she penned in 1888:

[78] I have not bought a penny’s worth of tea for years. Knowing its influence, I would not dare to use it, except in cases of severe vomiting when I take it as a medicine, but not as a beverage.

I am not guilty of drinking any tea except red-clover-top tea, and if I liked wine, tea, and coffee, I would not use these health-destroying narcotics, for I prize health and I prize a healthful example in all these things. I want to be a pattern of temperance and of good works to others.—[Letter 19, 1888](#) (CDF 490).

### Was Kellogg a Threat to E. G. White

Page 169—*Prophetess of Health* states that “From the time of his appointment in 1876 as superintendent of the Western Health Reform Institute, he [J. H. Kellogg] had begun slowly to eclipse the prophetess as the church’s health authority” (page 169). Yet on page 170 he says that “without Mrs. White’s support, his [Kellogg’s] efforts were doomed to failure.” The first is a rather meaningless assertion. To try to picture a conflict is to introduce factors which did not exist.

These statements seem to be contradictory. The facts are that for over a quarter of a century, Mrs. White constantly encouraged the church members to support Dr. Kellogg in his work.

On July 29, 1876, at a private meeting with a few friends near Philadelphia, Mrs. White “sought to make Dr. Kellogg feel it is his duty to go into the Institute, and take hold with Willie Fairfield,



Brother Sprague and with zeal and interest bring up the Institute” ([Letter 35, 1876](#)). After he accepted the responsibility she did all she could to help him succeed. She warned the managers of the Review and Herald not to be “sharp with the doctor” (Ms 1, 1879). She urged the students at the Sanitarium to “be willing to work under Dr. Kellogg, heed his suggestions, follow his advice, go as far as possible in thought, training and intelligent enterprise” (Ms 4a, 1885). She declared of his first nine years as director of the Institute: “There are but few who carry the load that Dr. Kellogg has carried,—not one who has from the very commencement borne the heavy burden of care that he has borne” (Ms 4a, 1885). Kellogg knew and appreciated the fact that Mrs. White repeatedly expressed confidence in him.

In 1888 Mrs. White wrote concerning Kellogg: “I believe he has confidence in me, and in the work God has given me to do. He has treated me with all the courtesy that he would show toward his mother” ([Letter 21, 1888](#)). For many years there was a strong bond of cooperation and friendship between Mrs. White and Dr. Kellogg. He was no challenge to her.

The doctor became world famous, but he did not eclipse the prophetess as the church’s guiding light on health reform. No one has done that. That position has always been—and still is—held by Ellen G. White.

### **Did Ellen White Backslide on Health Reform**

On pages 169-171 a rather bizarre picture is presented and Ellen White is termed “the most prominent backslider of all,” with reference to meat eating.

In Ellen White’s vision of June 6, 1863, she was shown something of the dangers of meat eating. “There are but a few animals that are free from disease,” she wrote. Further on she says, “Many [people] die of disease caused wholly by meat eating” (4SG 146, 147). It was not long before she joined the ranks of the vegetarians.

In August, 1864, Ellen White reported that she had lived nearly one year without meat (4SG 153, see CDF 482). On March 6, 1869, she declared: “I have not changed my course a particle since I adopted the health reform.... I broke away from everything at once,

flesh meat and butter and from three meals.” ([Testimonies for the Church 2:371, 372](#); CDF 43).

But circumstances of the early 1870’s such as traveling led her to use some meat occasionally. Her philosophy in regard to diet was that we should use the best food available, prepared in the best and simplest way. The food program in the home could be quite easily coped with, but in traveling in certain areas there were times when she was face to face with difficult dietary situations.

We must remember that a hundred years ago knowledge concerning the preservation of fruits (except by drying) was very limited. We must remember that frozen foods were unknown and that adequate refrigeration was rare. We must remember that many of the canned foods we have today were also unknown, and there were no meat substitutes as we now know them, for it was in 1896 they began to make their appearance in Battle Creek.

Our records indicate that in 1873 as James and Ellen White were spending a working vacation in the Rocky Mountains, and particularly when they were camping near Grand Lake, they had to do some hunting and some fishing to have food to sustain life. In her diary for October 5, 1873, she wrote:

Our provisions have been very low for some days. Many of our supplies have gone.... We expected supplies three days ago certainly, but none have come. Willie went to the lake for water. We heard his gun and found he had shot two ducks. This is really a blessing, for we need something to live upon.—Ms 12, 1873.

In January 1884 Ellen White spent some time at the Rural Health Retreat, later known as the St. Helena Sanitarium and Hospital. Of her experience there she wrote: “Often while there I was compelled to eat meat because there was nothing else that I could eat. At times I would be so faint and dizzy for the want of good wholesome food that I fairly reeled through weakness” ([Letter 4, 1884](#)). And then she added that the cook had “not made it her study to prepare wholesome dishes in order that flesh meat as a food may become less and less necessary” (*Ibid.*)

Ellen White’s diaries and letters written from Europe indicate that while traveling there from September, 1885, to July, 1887, she often found it necessary to use some meat. She was a guest in a number of countries in another continent, often visiting in the homes

of believers and unbelievers, many of whom had not been instructed in regard to health reform and in areas where a variety of foods were not readily available, so while there she found it more or less necessary to eat meat. [79]

In a statement published in 1890 she declared: “When I could not obtain the food I needed, I have sometimes eaten a little meat; but I am becoming more and more afraid of it” ([Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene](#), 118).

Two years later she described her situation in Australia in a letter written in January 1892 a few weeks after her arrival:

I am suffering more now for want of some one who is experienced in the cooking line, to prepare things I can eat. The cooking here in this country is in every way deficient. Take out the meat, which we seldom use,—and I dare not use it here at all,—and sit at their tables, and if you can sustain your strength, you have an excellent constitution. Food is prepared in such a way that it is not appetizing, but is having the tendency to dry up the desire for food. I would pay a higher price for a cook than for any other part of my work.—[Letter 19c, 1892](#).

We must also recognize that because of the pleas of some members of her family, Ellen White would at times allow meat on the table when she herself seldom partook of it. And there were times when after passing through these circumstances she herself grew a bit lax. She was human. So were all the prophets. She reminds us that “the failings and infirmities of the prophets and apostles are all laid bare by the Holy Ghost, who lifts the veil from the human heart.... If they had been without foible they would have been more than human, and our sinful natures would despair of ever reaching such a point of excellence” ([Testimonies for the Church 4:12](#)).

But we must not overlook the fact that all through these experiences in which she at times used flesh as food Ellen White repeatedly pointed out the dangers of its use and urged a dietary program, both personal and in our sanitariums, which did not include it. She was not, as pictured in the book (pp. 172-3), in and out of the “vegetarian fold.” There was the ideal which could be met in many places, but could not always be met in all places, conditions being what they were at the time. Only a few selected exhibits have been introduced covering twenty or thirty years of experience.

Regardless of how others might judge her, it is quite certain that Ellen White when faced with the using of a little meat on rather rare occasions, did not consider herself as departing from the health reform principles.

On page 172 *Prophetess of Health* cites an illustration of Ellen White's liberalized counsel in which H. C. Miller in 1891 is advised to eat "a little meat two or three times a week." No information is given as to the circumstances. It may be well to look at some of the missing exhibits which present a more accurate picture of Ellen White's consistent counsels through the difficult years we are discussing.

A few weeks after the duck eating experience in the Rockies in October 1873, Elder and Mrs. White were in California and she on February 15, 1874, reported that since they had been in that state they had dropped meat entirely, "having bought meat once for May Walling while she was sick, but not a penny have we expended for meat since" ([Letter 12, 1874](#)).

On July 18, 1874, she addressed responsible men at the Health Institute pointing out that many who come for treatment "eat too much and live on flesh of dead animals" ([Letter 45, 1874](#)). "It is the duty of the doctors," she wrote, "To prescribe for these individuals an abstemious diet" (*Ibid.*).

At the same time she was deeply concerned for her son Edson and his wife, Emma. She urged faithfulness to the many principles of health reform. She wrote to them:

For your own personal enjoyment in this world I entreat of you both to be health reformers. Emma, educate your appetite. Banish butter, cheese, flesh meats, and every article that is not the most simple and the best calculated to make a healthy quality of blood.—[Letter 47a, 1874](#).

In the files for 1874 she describes a vision in which "her angel instructor" seemed to be addressing a group on temperance. Here is what she saw and heard: "You need to be converted," said he "Your works are not pleasing to God."

Then one of the most solemn addresses was given upon temperance. The subject was taken up from the table. "Here," said the speaker, "is the appetite created for love of strong liquor. Appetite and passion are the ruling sins of the age. Appetite, the way it is

indulged, influences the stomach and excites the animal propensities. The moral powers are depressed and become the slave to appetite. The use of flesh meats stimulates and inflames; the flesh of dead animals produces disease of almost every type and the afflicted think and talk as though God's providence had something to do with it when the cause of their sufferings was what they placed upon their own tables in butter, in spices, in cheese, in flesh meats and a variety of dishes that are not liquor, which tempt constantly to eat too much."—Ms 7, 1874.

It is not easy for people to change habits of living. At no time have all Seventh-day Adventists accepted all the tenets of health reform. Progress is made and then there is some backsliding. It was so in the 1870's. Note this diary entry for June 14, 1879. The Whites were on the Wisconsin campground:

We took breakfast in the tent adjoining ours and were made sorry to see butter and cheese upon the table. Both are injurious to health. I understood our people had discarded these things, but they are again using them. Health reform is not carried out among our people as it once was. Some are departing from the health reform. I am sad... It seems so hard for some, even for their conscience' sake, to deny themselves the things that do not tend to health. We felt drawn out to speak to some on this subject. I shall not be clear unless I speak decidedly, for the spirit of self-indulgence will increase unless we take a decided stand. I have had grace given me to present decidedly the subject of health reform. Butter, cheese, flesh meats of dead animals, rich cake and poor cookery create disease and will certainly corrupt the blood, bring disease and suffering, and pervert the discernment. I beseech our people, to consider that health reform is essential and that which we place in our stomachs should be the simple nourishment of good, plainly prepared bread and fruits and grains.

I shall have a much sharper testimony to bear on this subject. [80]  
We must deny perverted appetite. I urge upon our people to learn the art of simplicity in eating. When will our people heed the word of the Lord given to caution them?—Ms 5, 1879.

Reference is made in *Prophetess of Health*, p. 171, to Ellen White's stand in 1881. She was writing on the proper use of the testimonies on health reform. She dealt with the question of extreme

teachings and delineated what should and what should not be made a test:

The question whether we shall eat butter, meat, or cheese, is not to be presented to any one as a test, but we are to educate and to show the evils of the things that are objectionable. Those who gather up these things and drive them upon others, do not know what work they are doing. The Word of God has given tests to His people. The keeping of God's holy law, the Sabbath, is a test, a sign between God and His people throughout their generations forever. Forever this is the burden of the third angel's message—the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol we must present as sinful indulgences. We cannot place on the same ground, meat, eggs, butter, cheese and such articles placed upon the table. These are not to be borne in front, as the burden of our work. The former—tea, coffee, tobacco, beer, wine, and all spirituous liquors—are not to be taken moderately, but discarded. The poisonous narcotics are not to be treated in the same way as the subjects of eggs, butter, and cheese. In the beginning animal food was not designed to be the diet of man. We have every evidence that the flesh of dead animals is dangerous because of disease that is fast becoming universal, because of the curse resting more heavily in consequence of the habits and crimes of man. We are to present the truth. We are to be guarded how to use reason and select those articles of food that will make the very best blood and keep the blood in an unfevered condition.—Ms 5, 1881 ([The Review and Herald, June 25, 1959](#)).

In [The Review and Herald, May 8, 1883](#), Ellen White in presenting “Practical Thoughts for the Camp Meetings” stressed the importance of an adequate and proper diet on the camp ground. She wrote:

The food should be abundant in quantity, and of a good quality. We should not be compelled to live on a meat diet because nothing else is provided to supply its place. The money that is expended in buying meat, would purchase a good variety of fruits, vegetables, and grains. Meat is not essential for health or strength, else the Lord made a mistake when He provided food for Adam and Eve before their fall.—[The Review and Herald, May 8, 1883](#), 60:289.

In 1884 she wrote concerning the cook at the Health Institute at St. Helena, California:

J has cultivated an appetite for a flesh meat diet, and thinks it is impossible for her to live without this kind of food. And she reasons the same way in regard to others also. J loves meat, and her habits are educating all who connect with the Retreat.

We have made efforts to secure the Health Retreat in order that we might use it to promulgate the principles of health reform; but by her cooking, J\_\_\_\_\_ shows that she is not a health reformer.—[Letter 4, 1884](#).

To the cook she wrote:

I have been calling to mind the light God has given me, and through me to you, on health reform. Have you carefully and prayerfully sought to understand the will of God in these matters? The excuse has been, that the outsiders would have a meat diet, but even if they had some meat, I know, that with care and skill, dishes could be prepared to take the place of meat in a large degree and in a short time they be educated to let the flesh of dead animals alone. But if one performs the cooking whose main dependence is meat, she can and will encourage meat-eating, and the depraved appetite will frame every excuse for this kind of diet. When I saw how matters were going, that if had not meat to cook, she knew not what to provide as a substitute, and that meat was the principal article of diet, I felt that there must be a change at once.—[Letter 2, 1884](#).

In this same letter she refers to her own experience:

Now as to my own experience: Meat seldom appears on my table: for weeks at a time I would not taste it, and after my appetite had been trained, I grew stronger, and could do better work. When I came to the Retreat, I determined not to taste meat, but I could get scarcely anything else to eat, and therefore ate a little meat.

Not a morsel of meat or butter has been on my table since I returned. We have milk, fruit, grains, and vegetables. For a time I lost all desire for food. Like the children of Israel, I hankered after flesh meats. But I firmly refused to have meat bought or cooked. I was weak and trembling, as every one who subsists on meat will be when deprived of the stimulus. But now my appetite has returned, I enjoy bread and fruit, my head is generally clear, and my strength

firmer. I have none of the goneness so common with meat eaters. I have had my lesson, and, I hope, learned it well.

If we would allow reason to take the place of impulse and love of selfish indulgence, we should not taste of the flesh of dead animals.—*Ibid.*

Then in 1887 writing concerning the dietary program in our sanitariums she declared:

The common use of the flesh of dead animals has had a deteriorating influence upon the morals, as well as the physical constitution. Ill health in a variety of forms, if effect could be traced to the cause, would reveal the sure result of flesh eating. The disuse of meats, with healthful dishes nicely prepared to take the place of flesh meats, would place a large number of the sick and suffering ones in a fair way of recovering their health, without the use of drugs.—Ms 22, 1887 ([Medical Ministry, 222-3](#)).<sup>4</sup>

And she continued to write letters of counsel of this character in 1888 and 1890.

[81] This is the picture of a woman, who despite occasional difficulties, never departed from the vegetarian fold, but gave a clear and consistent testimony against meat eating all down through the years.

The situation between 1874 and 1894, with extensive travel, was, on the part of Ellen White, one of contrast between the ideal and the practical, and this she recognized.

In 1894 when she took her stand positively to turn away entirely from meat, it was becoming easier to find foods that would provide the body with adequate nutrition, and there was developing Adventist knowledge in nutritional lines which aided much in this. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg was quite largely responsible for this. He and his associates at Battle Creek through study and experimentation developed wholesome foods from vegetable sources which, with dairy products, would furnish an adequate diet.

Of her experience, her son W. C. White wrote in 1935: We were many years vegetarians before the conviction settled upon us that we should be teetotalers. Therefore, from time to time in her journeys from place to place our lunch basket contained some chicken or

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<sup>4</sup>Note: It should be noted that the meat table at the Battle Creek Sanitarium was banished in 1898. The change took place at the St. Helena Sanitarium in 1903. See [Counsels on Diet and Foods, 405](#).



turkey or tinned tongue. Our well educated cooks of today will say that this is quite unnecessary, but we must never forget that it was some time after this before we had any large number of well educated scientific vegetarian cooks. It was in 1894 that Sister White decided to be a teetotaler, and shortly after that my wife and I decided to join her in this. We have been very faithful and true to our resolutions and have enjoyed very much our experience as teetotalers.—W. C. White (as quoted by A. L. White in a letter to Miss Anna Frazier, Dec. 18, 1935).

It may be truthfully said that Ellen White was a vegetarian, but for many years was not a “teetotaler.” We must recognize the very unusual way she was called upon to travel and live and work over long periods of time under circumstances that few people are called upon to travel and work under today.

Ellen White, speaking at the General Conference Session of 1909, declared:

It is reported by some that I have not followed the principles of health reform as I have advocated them with my pen; but I can say that I have been a faithful health reformer. Those who have been members of my family know that this is true.—[Testimonies for the Church 9:159](#).

### **The Anti-Meat Pledge**

On page 173 A. G. Daniells is said to have “balked” at circulating a proposed anti-meat pledge, after which Ellen White “discouraged any attempt to make the use of flesh food a ‘test of fellowship.’”

It is true that Elder A. G. Daniells was not enthusiastic about Ellen White’s proposal of an anti-meat pledge, but he did not make a unilateral decision to turn a deaf ear to her request. According to his own testimony, not knowing just how to implement her proposal, he immediately sought her counsel and subsequently took the course he did only because he had received her approval.

That Ellen White and leading brethren should counsel together as to how best to reach the people with the instruction given was not new or unique. Writing of this she reported: “In the early days of the cause, if some of the leading brethren were present when messages from the Lord were given, we would consult with them as to the

best manner of bringing the instruction before the people” ([Selected Messages 1:51](#)).

Mrs. White’s letter to Daniells calling for the pledge to be signed by Seventh-day Adventists workers in Washington, D.C. was mailed to him in May, 1908. In response, Daniells wrote to W. C. White and expressed his conviction that a program of education should precede the circulating of a pledge. He then added: “As I am hoping to see you soon I ask the privilege of talking with you about this question before taking steps to circulate a pledge. When we have done this and counseled with your mother then I shall take the matter up just as she says the Lord directs that we should do.”—A. G. Daniells letter to W. C. White, July 17, 1908.

Later, in recalling the subsequent conference with Mrs. White, Daniells reported:

This interview was granted me on my first visit to Sister White’s home after making the request in my letter of July 17.

The conclusion reached by our study was that an extensive, well-balanced educational work should be carried on by physicians and ministers instead of entering precipitately upon an anti-meat pledge campaign. There was a clear understanding arrived at and Sister White thereafter treated me and the whole matter according to that understanding.—A. G. Daniells letter written April 11, 1928. White Estate Document File #509.

The records show that Daniells’ memory was correct. Mrs. White did not press the matter of a pledge, but she continued to write and speak in the strongest terms against the use of flesh food. In preparing her statement “Faithfulness in Health Reform” to be read at the General Conference Session in 1909, she included much of the appeal in her letter to Elder Daniells but omitted reference to a pledge. She declared: “God demands that the appetites be cleansed.... Flesh foods are injurious to the physical wellbeing, and we should learn to do without them” ([Testimonies for the Church 9:153](#)).

Later in the year she published these words, as a part of the full address in *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. IX (see [pages 153-165](#)). So it can be said correctly, that Daniells was able to persuade Mrs. White to follow a different approach in calling for a revival of faithfulness in health reform instead of the one which she had

suggested regarding the anti-meat pledge. Still, he promised to carry out her original suggestion if she insisted on it.

*Prophetess of Health* seems to insinuate that Daniells led Mrs. White to change her mind on making the use of flesh food a test of fellowship. Here a wrong impression has been given. This was no change in Ellen White's position. In her 1881 statement quoted above she took the position that "The question whether we shall eat butter, meat, or cheese is not to be presented to anyone as a test." (MS 5, 1881)

In her 1909 declaration she makes it clear that "we are not to make the use of flesh food a test of fellowship" ([Testimonies for the Church 9:159](#)). She never at any time even remotely suggested such an extreme stance. Instead, she recognized that a strict vegetarian diet was not always a practical possibility in all parts of the world ([Testimonies for the Church 9:159](#)).

[82]

### Did She Change Her Teachings?

*Prophetess of Health* claims on pages 172-174 that Ellen White originally condemned meat eating because of its animalizing tendencies, but in her later years she objected to the use of flesh foods because it was cruel to animals. This change in emphasis *Prophetess of Health* connects with the Catholic lady's visit in 1894.

It is true that the Catholic lady's plea in behalf of the animal kingdom led Mrs. White to make the comment, "I saw it in a new light." But it is not true that Ellen White at this time made a "change in emphasis" as to why flesh food should not be used. The facts show that in her very first article on health, Ellen White referred to the suffering of the animal kingdom. It was no new idea to her in 1894. She wrote in 1864:

God gave our first parents the food He designed that the race should eat. It was contrary to His plan to have the life of any creature taken.

Some animals are inhumanly treated while being brought to the slaughter. They are literally tortured, and after they have endured many hours of extreme suffering, are butchered.—4SG 120, 147, 148.

In 1890—a year before Mrs. White went to Australia—she asked if the people who were preparing to be introduced into the society of heavenly angels should “continue to take the life of God’s creatures, and enjoy their flesh as a luxury?” ([Counsels on Diet and Foods, 381](#)). She enlarged on this theme in 1905 when she published *Ministry of Healing*.

The intelligence displayed by many dumb animals approaches so closely to human intelligence that it is a mystery. The animals see and hear and love and fear and suffer. They form attachments for man which are not broken without great suffering to them. What man with a human heart, who has ever cared for domestic animals, could look into their eyes, so full of confidence and affection, and willingly give them over to the butcher’s knife? How could he devour their flesh as a sweet morsel?—[The Ministry of Healing, 315, 316](#).

In her 1909 General Conference Session statement she declared: “Flesh foods are injurious to the physical well being, and we should learn to do without them” ([Testimonies for the Church 9:156](#)).

What about the other argument, that meat eating tends to animalize our nature? As noted earlier, this was a constant factor in Ellen White’s mind from the 1860’s until she published the last volume of the *Testimonies*. In 1868 she wrote that flesh food strengthened the animal propensities ([Testimonies for the Church 2:60, 61](#)). She said the same thing in 1869 ([Testimonies for the Church 2:352](#)) in 1897 ([Counsels on Diet and Foods, 384](#)), and in 1902 ([Counsels on Diet and Foods, 382](#)). In a lengthy article in [The Review and Herald, May 27, 1902](#), she spoke of the animalizing tendency of meat but said not one word about the inhumane treatment of animals. On Sabbath, May 21, 1904, she preached a sermon at Berrien Springs, Michigan, in which she twice mentioned that meat animalizes human beings but she said nothing at all about the sympathy we should have for the unfortunate animals (Ms 50, 1904).

In the year 1909, at the last General Conference session which she attended, Mrs. White read her manuscript on “Faithfulness in Health Reform” (91 153-166), in which she appealed to the delegates to discontinue the use of flesh food. One argument against its use was that “flesh food has a tendency to animalize the nature, to rob men and women of that love and sympathy which they should feel for everyone, and to give the lower passions control over the higher

powers of the being” (91 159). She said not a single word about the inhumane aspect of meat-eating.

*Prophetess of Health* on page 175 is in error in maintaining that Ellen White changed her emphasis after the visit from the Catholic lady in Australia. Ellen White continued to teach, after that visit, precisely what she had been teaching from the very beginning of the health message.

*Prophetess of Health* claims that there was an evolution in Ellen White’s teachings on the use of dairy products over the years. Yet careful study of Mrs. White’s writings shows a consistency in this development in her teachings concerning the various dairy products. Her statements made in 1872, 1881, and 1902, all cited in *Prophetess of Health*, are not contradictory or “evolutionary.” In following through a progression a start should be made with 1864. The 1872 statement quoted here and in the chapter head as already mentioned is more of a biographical account than a carefully worded delineation of instruction. She lumped a rather incongruous assembly of unwhole some items together against which she and her husband spoke: “tobacco, spirituous liquors, snuff, tea, coffee, flesh-meats, butter, spices, rich cakes, mince pies, a large amount of salt, and all exciting substances” ([Testimonies for the Church 3:21](#)). Butter, the only dairy product in this list, was often so contaminated that it was unfit for food. There is a vast difference between “a large amount of salt” and spirituous liquors. The first could hardly be said to be a sinful indulgence. The latter clearly is.

In the definitive 1881 statement she made a careful separation. She declared that the use of tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol were to be considered “sinful.” Not so with meat, dairy products and other articles. This is in perfect harmony with her 1872 generalization. It is not a new teaching. In 1902 she made the distinctions even more clear. Even though meat was not a sinful indulgence, it still was less desirable as a food than the dairy products.

### **Butter.**

In 1864: “We use no lard, but in its place, milk, cream, and some butter.”—4SG. 154.

In 1872; Butter, but no other dairy product appeared in the list of things she and her husband spoke against in their public meetings ([Testimonies for the Church 3:21](#)).

In 1873: “In regard to our diet, we have not placed butter on our table for ourselves for years, until we came to the Rocky Mountains.

[83] We felt that a little butter, in the absence of vegetables and fruit was less detrimental to health than the use of much salt or sugar, sweet cake and knickknacks. We do not use it now, and have not for many weeks.”—[Letter 1, 1873](#).

In 1881: The use of butter is not a “sinful” indulgence.—[The Review and Herald, June 25, 1959](#), 130:23.

In 1901: “Butter should not be placed on the table; for if it is, some will use it too freely.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 350](#). This allows that others could handle it acceptably.

In 1902: “Milk, eggs, and butter should not be classed with flesh meat.”—[Testimonies for the Church 7:135](#).

In 1903: “I use no meat. As for myself, I have settled the butter question. I do not use it. This question should easily be settled in every place where the purest article cannot be obtained.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 351](#).

In 1904: “I do not eat butter, but there are members of my family who do. It is not placed on my table; but I make no disturbance because some members of my family choose to eat it occasionally. Many of our conscientious brethren have butter on their tables, and I feel under no obligation to force them to do otherwise.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 351, 352](#).

In 1905: “Butter is less harmful when eaten on cold bread than when used in cooking; but, as a rule, it is better to dispense with it altogether.”—[The Ministry of Healing, 302](#).

In 1909: “Warnings have been given regarding the dangers of disease through butter.”—[Testimonies for the Church 9:162](#).

Because of the increase of disease in animals and because of its unwholesomeness, Mrs. White considered butter to be a food that she could not recommend. It was definitely second-best as an article of diet, although acceptable at times in individual cases. This was her consistent position across the years. And today we know also about cholesterol which makes butter undesirable. Neither she nor the scientists of her day knew that in the churning of butter from

cream the cholesterol present is concentrated in the butter while the phospholids (Lecithin, etc.) which have a cholesterol lowering effect, are left in the buttermilk.

It should be noted that she did not call for a fat free diet. She advocated the use of cream after sterilization, and it was in regular use on her table.

## Milk

In 1870: “We think a moderate amount of milk from a healthy cow not objectionable.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 357](#).

In 1870: “Large quantities of milk and sugar eaten together are injurious.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 330](#).

In 1873: “We have always used a little milk and some sugar. This we have never denounced, either in our writings or in our preachings.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 356](#).

In 1890: “Fruit, grains, and vegetables, prepared in a simple way, free from spice and grease of all kinds, make, with milk or cream, the most healthful diet.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 92](#).

In 1899: “The light given me is that it will not be very long before we shall have to give up any animal food. Even milk will have to be discarded. Disease is accumulating rapidly. The curse of God is upon the earth.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 357](#).

In 1901: “Do not remove milk from the table or forbid its being used in the cooking of food. The milk used should be procured from healthy cows, and should be sterilized.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 203](#).

In 1909: “Vegetables should be made palatable with a little milk or cream, or something equivalent.”—[Testimonies for the Church 9:162](#).

In 1909: “The time will come when we may have to discard some of the articles of diet we now use, such as milk and cream and eggs; but it is not necessary to bring upon ourselves perplexity by premature and extreme restrictions. Wait until the circumstances demand it and the Lord prepares the way for it.”—[Testimonies for the Church 9:162](#).

Again, we find a consistency in her teachings about the use of milk.

## Eggs

In 1869: Children who have strong animal passions and engage in self-abuse should not have eggs placed before them for their meals.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:361, 362](#).

In 1881: Eggs are not a “sinful” indulgence.—[The Review and Herald, June 25, 1959](#), 130:23.

In 1902: “In some cases the use of eggs is beneficial.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 351](#).

In 1905: In families where the animal passions are strong and where children “are given to sensual habits, eggs should not be used.”—[The Ministry of Healing, 320](#).

In 1909: While warnings have been given against the use of eggs by small children, “we should not consider it a violation of principle to use eggs from hens that are well cared for and suitably fed. Eggs contain properties that are remedial agencies in counteracting certain poisons.”—[Testimonies for the Church 9:162](#).

Here again it will be seen that there is no change in Ellen White’s teaching on the use of eggs. Her later writings and her earlier writings are in harmony.

## Cheese

In 1868: “Cheese should never be introduced into the stomach.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 368](#).

In 1881: Cheese is not a “sinful” indulgence.—[The Review and Herald, June 25, 1959](#), 130:23.

In 1905: “Cheese... is wholly unfit for food.”—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 368](#).

Her earliest and latest teachings are the same. There is no “evolution” here.

[84] In 1906: Her counsel that cheese which is old and full of poison should not be eaten as given in response to a question from Europe may indicate that as with butter contamination could be one factor. (W. C. White letter to L. R. Conradi, March 27, 1906.)

Her writings consistently present one viewpoint, and that is, it is not sinful to eat these dairy products, but eggs and milk from safe



sources should be used with moderation and we would be better without butter and cheese. They are not the best food.

To speak of Mrs. White's "intellectual development" with respect to her views on dairy products is to speak without reference to the facts. There was no such thing as an "evolution" in her instruction along these lines.

### Dr. Kellogg's Help

*Prophetess of Health* claims on p. 176 that much of the so-called improvement in Ellen White's dietary views was due to her contacts with Dr. Kellogg. He is supposed to have supplied her steadily with pertinent information which led her to take more and more mature positions on health reform.

There is no reliable evidence to support this contention. In the records of the White Estate, which includes the rather heavy correspondence between Dr. Kellogg and Ellen G. White, we have found nothing that sustains this charge. It is based solely on the reminiscences of one octogenarian who is quoting what another octogenarian told him forty years before. There is not one letter from Dr. Kellogg to Ellen White in which his influence on her health teachings can be demonstrated. The evidence all points in the other direction. Anyone who reads Dr. Kellogg's introduction to *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* will discover that Kellogg gave Mrs. White the credit—through "the guidance of infinite wisdom"—for the health principles she enunciated. His statement made in 1892 on the question of her not being influenced, especially by him, is to the point.

### Ellen White in Her Last Years

*Prophetess of Health* in closing its chapter "Whatsoever Ye Eat or Drink" on p. 177 pictures Ellen White in her last years as a health reformer "happily subsisting on a simple twice-a-day diet of vermicelli-tomato soup or thistle greens seasoned with sterilized cream and lemon juice." This is a distorted description of the situation.

The demonstrable facts are found in the appendix to *Counsels on Diet and Foods* entitled "Personal Experience of Ellen G. White

as a Health Reformer.” The easily obtained missing exhibits show that the dietary regime in Mrs. White’s Elmshaven home in her later years was liberal, nourishing and appetizing:

Our fare is simple and wholesome. We have on our table no butter, no meat, no cheese, no greasy mixtures of food. For some months a young man who was an unbeliever, and who had eaten meat all his life, boarded with us. We made no change in our diet on his account; and while he stayed with us he gained about twenty pounds.

The food which we provided for him was far better for him than that to which he had been accustomed. All who sit at my table express themselves as being well satisfied with the food provided.—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 491.](#)

I use no meat. As for myself, I have settled the butter question. I do not use it... We have two good milk cows, a Jersey and a Holstein. We use cream, and all are satisfied with this.—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 490.](#)

I eat the most simple food, prepared in the most simple way. For months my principle diet has been vermicelli and canned tomatoes, cooked together. This I eat with zweiback. Then I have also stewed fruit of some kind and sometimes lemon pie. Dried corn, cooked with milk or a little cream, is another dish that I sometimes use. Butter is never placed on my table, but if the members of my family choose to use a little butter away from the table, they are at liberty to do so. Our table is set twice a day, but if there are those who desire something to eat in the evening, there is no rule that forbids them from getting it. No one complains or goes from our table dissatisfied. A variety of food that is simple, wholesome, and palatable, is always provided.—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 491.](#)

We do not have an impoverished diet. We have an abundance of dried and canned fruit. If our own fruit crop is short, we buy some in the market. Sister Gray sends me the seedless grapes, and these stewed make a very appetizing dish. We raise our own loganberries, and use them freely. Strawberries do not grow well in this locality, but from our neighbors we purchase blackberries, raspberries, apples, and pears. We have also an abundance of tomatoes. We also raise a fine variety of sweet corn, and dry a large amount for use during the

winter months. Near by us is a food factory, where we can supply ourselves with grain preparations...

For more than forty years I have eaten but two meals a day. And If I have a specially important work to do, I limit the quantity of food that I take. I regard it as my duty to refuse to place in my stomach any food that I have reason to believe will create disorder. My mind must be sanctified to God, and I must guard carefully against any habits that would tend to lessen my powers of intellect.

I am now in my eighty-first year, and I can bear testimony that we do not, as a family, hunger for the fleshpots of Egypt. I have known something of the benefits to be received by living up to the principles of health reform. I consider it a privilege as well as a duty to be a health reformer.

Yet I am sorry that there are many of our people who do not strictly follow the light on health reform. Those who in their habit transgress the principles of health, and do not heed the light that the Lord has given them, will surely suffer the consequences.

I write you these details, that you may know how to answer any who may question my manner of eating....—[Counsels on Diet and Foods, 492, 493.](#)

## Chapter 8—Fighting The Good Fight

This closing chapter of *Prophetess of Health* presents a strange mixture of materials.

### Slandorous Charges Against Ellen White

The first introduced is mention of a couple of sensational slanders leveled against Ellen White which were refuted in the *Defense of Elder James White and Wife. Vindication of their Moral and Christian Character*. This booklet of 112 pages published in 1870, dealt primarily with James White, explaining and defending his financial transactions in behalf of the church and with individual Adventists. Numerous testimonials confirmed James White's integrity and generosity.

Only 12 of the 112 pages of the book discussed the slanders directed at Ellen White. The ridiculous reports that she had given birth to an illegitimate child and that she had proposed a trade of marriage partners were circulated by some hostile non-Adventist ministers. In both cases they were traced to their source and found to have contained not a grain of truth. This having been demonstrated a hundred years ago, the question may be asked as to why reference is made to it in *Prophetess of Health*.

As we pointed out above, only a small portion of the booklet was devoted to the charges leveled against Ellen White, and that section would have been even smaller, no doubt, had not the [The Review and Herald, December 7, 1869](#), p. 34, issued "an urgent request that all persons who know any evil of Sr. W., or who have, as they think, good authority from others for believing evil of her, to write a definite statement of such things to this Office."

### Value of Public Relation Agent

On page 179 of *Prophetess of Health* the activities of Mary Clough as publicity agent are discussed and it is stated that James

White valued this exposure as worth over \$10,000. The implication is that the publicity was worth \$10,000 to Mrs. White herself.

Two sources are juxtaposed here in such a way that much of James White's meaning is lost. White, in placing a value of \$10,000 on the publicity was not referring to the publicity which Mrs. White personally received. He specifically mentioned information about SDA "history, movement, and doctrine," as well as SDA institutions. It was the church as a whole which he felt received \$10,000 worth of publicity ([The Review and Herald, October 19, 1876](#), 48:124), not Mrs. White.

### The Menopause and the Open Visions

On pages 180, 181 the relationship of the open visions to menopause is discussed. *Prophetess of Health* does not actually say that the two were linked, but strongly implies this, and many readers would probably conclude that there was a strong possibility of a causal relationship.

But the mere fact that the open visions ceased at some point after menopause means nothing. They also ceased after a whole lot of other events in Mrs. White's life. The date of the menopause she fixes as 1869.

When did her last open vision occur? Two dates have been suggested: 1879 and 1884. The basis for the 1879 date is a letter by Merritt G. Kellogg to his brother John Harvey Kellogg dated June 3, 1906, from which we quote:

When in Australia in 1894 I boarded in Mrs. White's family, and while with her there I asked her how long since she had a vision. She then told me that she did not know if she had had one since her husband died [in 1881]. She said she might have had one in the night at one time when in Portland, Oregon, but she thought it was a dream. She said Sister Ings was with her in Portland at the time.

I [saw] Sister Ings a few days ago and asked her about it. She knew nothing of Mrs. W. having a vision in Portland; never saw her in vision in Portland; never saw her in vision. I asked W. C. when his mother had the last vision he knew anything of. He said it was in 1879, before his father died. I was down in Oakland a few days ago and I had an hour's visit with Sister L. M. Hall. I asked her many

questions about her travels and association with Mrs. W., also about Mrs. W.'s visions, and when she had the last one of which Mrs. Hall had any knowledge. She said that the last one was in 1879 before Brother White's death.

The basis for the 1884 date is a statement made to the 1893 General Conference Session by Elder J. N. Loughborough. This statement was made 13 years nearer the event than that of Kellogg:

I have seen Sister White in vision about fifty times. The first time was about forty years ago, when Brother Oswald Stowell was very sick.

Her last open vision was in 1884, on the campground at Portland, Oregon.—[The General Conference Bulletin, 1893, 19, 20.](#)

Which account should be accepted? J. N. Loughborough was present at the Portland, Oregon, campmeeting in 1884. [See [The Signs of the Times, June 5, 1884](#), p. 10; and [The Signs of the Times, July 17, 1884](#), p. 10]. On the other hand, Kellogg reports the testimony of three important witnesses—Ellen White, Mrs. Ings, and W. C. White—which tend to support the earlier date. But even if the 1879 date is accepted, it still falls 10 years after the time we know Ellen White was experiencing menopause.

*Prophetess of Health* also states that after menopause “her public visions apparently grew less and less frequent” (page 181). There is no evidence for this. To establish such a thesis would require a statistical analysis of the frequency of the visions before and after menopause. No such statistical study has ever been attempted, and it is doubtful that any accurate statistics could be gleaned from the sources since Mrs. White's references do not always specify what vision she is talking about or when that vision occurred.

In Ellen White's experience, as with the Bible prophets, visions were given during the day accompanied by physical phenomena and during the hours of the night while the prophet slept. See [Numbers 12:6](#), [Daniel 7:1, 2](#), [Joel 2:28](#). The latter were spoken of as “visions of the night” or “dreams.”

In her early experience the public visions were quite frequent and there were night visions. There was a gradual shift to the visions of the night and after 1884 she received her instruction entirely in night visions. These became less comprehensive and more frequent as time advanced.

## Ellen White's Grief

On page 182 it is stated that after James White's death his "grief-stricken widow sank into a year-long depression." The mere reading of the *Life Sketches* account of James White's death and its aftermath should be sufficient to correct this statement. While her grief was for a reasonable time, her depression was short-lived and given the state of her own health at the time of her husband's death, she seems to have recovered from the trauma of the experience in a relatively short time. The chapter in *Life Sketches* titled "Fortitude Under Affliction" indicates how quickly she was back at work, attending campmeetings and speaking in churches. She was not during this time slowly rediscovering the meaning of life. The truth is, she never lost her grasp of its meaning.

## Ellen C. White Praying for the Sick

On page 184 *Prophetess of Health* claims that Mrs. White had grown reluctant to pray for the sick because of her fear that those for whom she prayed might be healed and yet turn out unworthy. This is drawn from [Letter 17, 1892](#) to Dr. J. H. Kellogg written March 11, 1892, in which she answers questions on this subject. Actually, she does not say here that she had grown reluctant to pray for the sick, but that she had come to feel it was "not my duty to engage with others in praying for the sick" because she was reluctant to "quench the faith" of those others who prayed with "intense earnestness," virtually demanding that the sick be healed. No, Mrs. White had learned a different approach to prayer for the sick. Early in her experience, she too had taken this demanding attitude:

My prayer was very urgent, for it seemed to me that my petition must be answered, and they were raised up to health. Now a number of these cases have resulted in something very different than could be desired; for the course of several has proved that it would have been better had they died. One, after having grown to years, became a notorious thief, another became licentious, and another, though grown to manhood, has no love for God or His truth.—[Letter 17, 1892](#).

Because of these experiences, she had adopted a more submissive form of prayer for the sick. Her prayer was; “Lord, we cannot read the heart of this sick one; but thou knowest whether it is for the good of his soul, and for the glory of thy name to raise him to health” (*Ibid.*).

Mrs. White doubtless continued to pray for the sick until the end of her life, but her prayer was that God’s will be done rather than that her own judgment be followed. Thus she was reluctant to join in prayer groups for the sick where her own approach might chill the faith of those who manifested such an “intense earnestness.”

### **Counsel Regarding Employing X-ray**

In *Prophetess of Health*, on page 187, Mrs. White’s attitude toward X-ray is distorted. She is represented as advising avoidance of “such new-fangled (and expensive) electrical devices as the X-ray machine.” Had *Prophetess of Health* quoted the second sentence of Ellen G. White’s statement on the X-ray, the picture would be quite different. The full statement as published at Loma Linda in *Medical Evangelistic Library* # 5, pp. 18-19.

When we were at the [Paradise Valley] Sanitarium we were conducted through the new treatment rooms. One room was elaborately fitted up with electrical appliances for giving the patients treatment. That night I was instructed that some connected with the institution were introducing things for the treatment of the sick that were not safe. The application of these electrical treatments would involve the patient in serious difficulties imperiling life.... I have been instructed that the X-ray is not the great blessing that some suppose it to be. If used unwisely it may do much harm. The results of some of the electrical treatments are similar to the results of using stimulants. There is a weakness that follows.

Ellen White did not oppose the use of appropriate electrical treatment equipment or the use of the X-ray. She did not call on Adventist medical institutions to avoid its use. Nor did she discount the blessing which the X-ray may be, but she did sound a warning. “If used unwisely it may do much harm.” How true this is! The peril widely recognized today of an overuse of X-ray is so clear in the minds of everyone that no supporting evidence is called for. The



truth of the matter is that the accuracy of her statement, taking into account the time it was written, is truly remarkable. The long-range damaging effects of excessive use of X-ray were not comprehended at the time, nor were they for some years after.

To show that Ellen White was not opposed to the proper use of X-rays, we point out that there is documented evidence that five years after this statement was written, she underwent treatment with X-ray at Loma Linda for what was diagnosed as Skin cancer. She wrote: “For several weeks I took treatment with the X-ray for the black spot that was on my forehead. In all I took twenty-three treatments, and these succeeded in entirely removing the marks. For this I am very grateful” ([Selected Messages 2:303](#)).

It was not only in the recognition of the value of X-ray that Ellen White shows that she kept pace with sound developments in medical science. It is interesting to observe that as early as 1901 she recommended a blood transfusion, even though in those days it was little used and fraught with risks.

To a physician who was dying of pernicious anemia, she wrote: “There is one thing that has saved life,—an infusion of blood from one person to another; but this would be difficult and perhaps impossible for you to do. I merely suggest it” ([Selected Messages 2:303](#)).

[87]

### A Narrow Sectarian Spirit

Page 188 of *Prophetess of Health* insinuates that J. H. Kellogg accused Ellen White of having a “narrow sectarian spirit” which he abhorred. The truth of the matter is that Kellogg said the exact opposite concerning Ellen White’s attitude toward non-Seventh-day Adventists. On March 21, 1893, the doctor wrote Mrs. White as follows:

I gave eight talks at the tabernacle on the subject of medical missionary work, the chief part of which was the presentation of quotations from your writings on this subject. I have been surprised in looking over your writings to find such an amount of matter which inculcates a *broader and more liberal Christian spirit*. I have found *nothing whatever which justifies the narrow sectarian spirit which*

seems to have actuated our people almost wholly during recent years, but constant exhortations to the contrary.

During the last year I have found great difficulty in getting people who really seemed to be consecrated individuals, interested in medical missionary work, although they seem to be persons in many respects forward in the work. The idea seems to be that work for the needy and suffering unless done with a direct proselyting motive was of no account and that it was not in the interests of the cause, and that works were of no account any way, and that if saved at all we must be saved by faith (which of course is true), and hence it is of no use at all to be troubled about works (which is not true).

I have been perplexed to understand some of the teachings of Elder Jones, Prof. Prescott, and Dr. Waggoner, as they seem to give the people a basis for such ideas. (Emphasis supplied.)

Rather than attributing Ellen White with a “narrow sectarian spirit,” according to this letter, Kellogg credits Mrs. White with a “liberal Christian spirit,” but laments the fact that others, notably Jones, Prescott, and Waggoner, had a “narrow, sectarian spirit.” The latter he found to be out of harmony with his ideals, but the concord between himself and Mrs. White was so complete that the “chief part” of his eight talks on medical missionary work was comprised of quotations from her pen.

### **Health Foods and Corn Flakes**

*Prophetess of Health* claims that Dr. Kellogg offered to turn over the production rights of Granose Flakes to the church when the commercial value of the product became apparent and that Mrs. White ignored the offer (page 189). The footnote documentation includes reference to a letter from J. H. Kellogg to Ellen G. White dated June 10, 1894. In addition it is claimed that she later vetoed a chance to obtain the rights to Corn Flakes and that this later decision cost the church a fortune.

From this the reader would suppose that the June 10 letter would be a formal offer couched in clear business terms. On examination, what is said to be Kellogg’s “offer” to turn over production rights for Granose Flakes does not mention that product and turns out to be no offer at all. The communication cited is a seven page, single-

spaced, newsy letter reporting to her in Australia, as was his custom, various and sundry happenings in Battle Creek and those particularly relating to his work and experiences. Near the close, after telling of the orphans he and Mrs. Kellogg had taken into their home, he expressed the hope that they might sometime have the privilege of entertaining Mrs. White in their home. The closing paragraph reads:

I must close this letter as I have nearly twenty operations to do this afternoon and it is already after three o'clock. Again thanking you for your constant remembrance of me and my work, and of your counsel and encouragement which has sustained and helped me all these years.

Now let us examine what is said to be the offer which Ellen White is reported to have ignored.

In his opening paragraph he speaks of W. K. Kellogg and the development of the health food business which was just getting well under way. We quote:

My brother Will, who has rendered me such efficient assistance for the last seventeen years, has just gone for a vacation of two or three months. He had an opportunity to visit Europe at a very small expense, and will endeavor to make arrangements to introduce our foods over there. I have a number of new foods, and shall try to make some arrangements to have them manufactured abroad. Our people might just as well take up this food business, and make enough money out of it to support the entire denominational work, if they would only appreciate it. But they do not, and I am so busy that I can do but very little in the way of pushing it. I now and then get at it, and give the matter a little push, and the result is thousands of dollars profit. We are now shipping to New York City alone nearly a carload a month of our foods. Our manufacturing capacity is taxed to the utmost, and there is a good profit.

The doctor then turns to other items of news.

In the first place, at the time he wrote this letter Dr. Kellogg was a loyal, trusted, Seventh-day Adventist leader. The Sanitarium where the foods were manufactured was a Seventh-day Adventist institution. In a passing remark he suggests that this newly developed health food business had a money making potential that could serve the church.

He makes no offer to Ellen White who, in any event, could in no way have accepted it in behalf of the church. She was not an officer of the church. He merely observes what he thinks might be done if there were men of vision who could grasp it. This is an excellent illustration of the distortion which occurs in *Prophetess of Health*, on which the average reader is at a disadvantage to detect, because he has no way of checking the context.

[88] The corn flakes case is even clearer. It was in 1906 that the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Company was incorporated and Dr. Kellogg sold to it the right to manufacture and sell Corn Flakes in the United States for \$170,000. He was to receive \$22,440 cash and \$147,560 in stock for this. Meanwhile, the managers of the Sanitarium Health Food Company at St. Helena, California, had been steadily improving the sales of that denominational enterprise. They had raised the standards of their products, and had placed a large force of traveling salesmen, house-to-house solicitors, demonstrators, and samplers in the field until they had the largest force of health food salesmen in the field of anytime since the food business was begun in California. (H. H. Haynes Letter to A. G. Daniells, Sept. 23, 1906.)

Doubtless seeing the advantage of recruiting men with such wide contacts and experience, Dr. Kellogg and his brother Will offered to sell the rights to manufacture corn flakes in the nine Pacific Coast states for \$45,000 and a royalty.

But this was on the specific and firm condition that it would not be a denominational enterprise or in any way connected with the denomination. E. G. Fulton and H. H. Haynes had gone to Battle Creek and suggested that the manufacturing of corn flakes for the Pacific Coast states be taken over by the Sanitarium Health Food Company. "During this conference," W. C. White relates, "they were fully satisfied that it is the intention of Doctor and W. K. [Kellogg] to establish a factory on this coast and to separate their work from our denominational food business. They refused to consider any plan by which the corn flakes should be manufactured by the St. Helena Sanitarium Food Company. Their principal reason was their utter lack of confidence in any business enterprise connected with the denomination." (W. C. White Letter to A. G. Daniells, Sept. 20, 1906.)

So, regardless of how it appears from reading Ellen White's letters alone, her decision or recommendation could not possibly have "cost the church a fortune." The "church" was never offered the rights to Corn Flakes. Even if it had been, there is no way of knowing that the church might have made the fortune from Corn Flakes which W. K. Kellogg made.

### The Chicago Buildings

*Prophetess of Health* on pp. 192, 193 states that Ellen White cited an article in the *New York Observer* to prove that her information about a "large building" in Chicago was correct. What *Prophetess of Health* fails to point out is that she did not cite this article in that context. W. C. White gives the background for the mention of the *Observer* article. He states that Mrs. White found the article on February 24, 1900, and immediately goes on to say:

For many months previous to the finding of this article, Mother had been writing cautions and reproofs regarding the Medical Missionary work, including the special work in Chicago. But her communications did not seem to be understood.

When the vision was given Mother which was finally written out in the letter of February 27, she was greatly depressed, and seemed especially burdened because the facts as presented to her were not recognized by those to whom she wrote.

When she found the Sherin article in the "Observer" she said to me "Here is the evidence that they have been planning great things. I will call their attention to this article."—W. C. White Letter to C. E. Stewart, April 10, 1906.

What Mrs. White actually wrote to Kellogg on February 27 is as follows:

Three mornings ago I laid my hand upon several papers, exchanges from America, sent me about two years since. In the *New York Observer* of August 6, 1896, I saw your name, and the heading, "Dr. Kellogg's Work, The Workingman's Home, and Medical Missionary Work in Chicago." There followed an account of the work then going forward, and the large amount of means required to sustain it. Since that time the work has greatly extended, and of course a much larger amount is required for its support. As I

read the article, and thought of these things, I could understand the light given me by the Lord as to what the principles of truth and righteousness would lead the Sanitarium supporters and workers to do; that they should make it their first business to aid the work in this country [Australia], where the Lord had sent experienced workers fitted to carry forward His work.—[Letter 33, 1900](#). (Feb. 27, 1900, to Dr. J. H. Kellogg.)

The article, of which the White Estate has copies, makes no mention of large buildings, nor does Ellen White claim that it does, nor does she cite it as proof that Kellogg was planning a large building.

The allegation that Mrs. White, on returning to America, asked to be shown the buildings during a visit to Chicago is apparently based only on Stewart's assertion that this took place. By way of evidence that this charge of Stewart's is not well founded, we need only mention that Mrs. White did not concede at this or any other time that "perhaps a slight mistake has been made." She did explain that she indeed thought buildings had been erected, but this was not until 1903. (See EGW [Letter 135, 1903](#) to S. N. Haskell March 6, 1903). Even then, in 1903, she said; "I understand that someone said that the testimony that I bore in regard to this was not true,—that no such building was erected in Chicago. But the testimony was true. The Lord showed me what men were planning to do" ([Letter 135, 1903](#)).

It must be kept in mind that the Lord did not always reveal to her whether certain events had taken place or not.

### **The Testimony Not Sent**

Concerning the testimony about the rebuilding of the Battle Creek Sanitarium mentioned in *Prophetess of Health*, page 193, it does appear that poor judgment was used in publishing the Testimony in 1905 (Stewart says 1904), when the testimony had not been previously given to Dr. Kellogg. The compilation of materials for these special testimonies was not a project in which Mrs. White controlled every detail. She would give general instructions about the subject matter she had prepared that she wanted to have included and leave her assistants to gather from her writings relevant material.

In this case either they or she overlooked the fact that the February 20, 1902, diary entry had not been sent to Kellogg at that time. [89]

Still, Kellogg was not by any means in the dark as to Mrs. White's position on the size and location of the Sanitarium. She had written him as early as 1890 saying:

In our conversation I spoke to you of the light given me that we were centering too many weighty responsibilities at Battle Creek, and I am of the same opinion now. I have been looking over some of my past writings, and I find that warnings were given to me years ago upon this very point, and we were instructed not to accumulate special interests in Battle Creek. There is danger that it will become as Jerusalem of old, a concentrated, powerful center. The evils that ruined Jerusalem will come upon us if we do not heed these precautions. It is perilous to so largely center in Battle Creek for while you are expending means in this one center, you are neglecting cities that will be come more and more difficult to work as time goes on.—[Letter 18, 1890](#). (To K. H. Kellogg Oct. 18, 1890.)

An even more pointed statement was sent him in 1900:

If the mammoth sanitarium at Battle Creek was divided and subdivided, and its strength put in different parts of the vineyard, where there is nothing to represent the truth, the Lord would be much better pleased.—[Letter 177, 1900](#). (To J. H. Kellogg Jan. 21, 1900.)

Mrs. White explained to the General Conference of 1903 why she had sent nothing out:

When the Sanitarium there [Battle Creek] was burned, our people should have studied the messages of reproof and warning sent them in former years, and taken heed.... I had many things written out, but I thought, I will not say a word to condemn any one. I will keep quiet. When the planning for the new building was taken up, I think there were no questions or propositions sent to me about it, from those in charge.—[The General Conference Bulletin, 1903, 86](#).

### **Miss Fanny Bolton**

On page 195 and 196 Miss Fanny Bolton is mentioned and her statements, as given by Merritt Kellogg, are cited at length. Miss Bolton was one of Mrs. White's literary assistants during the early

1890's. Her charge that Ellen White's handwritten materials came to her "illogically written, full of illiteracies, awkward writing, and often wrong chronology" is cited in the text of *Prophetess of Health* (page 195). This is followed by Merritt Kellogg's recollections of Fanny Bolton's complaints made at the time she was working for Ellen White. In this report Miss Bolton claimed that she was virtually the author of Mrs. White's writings (*Ibid.*).

Merritt Kellogg, at the time he recalled Fanny Bolton's charges, was himself siding with his brother John H., upon whom he was dependent for financial support and who was making attacks on the church and Ellen White. So here the reader of *Prophetess of Health* is treated to recollections of an unfavorable witness who reports a hostile critic's charges and the only hint of the possible unreliability of the whole account is an admission in the footnote that Fanny Bolton was a "troubled" young woman who later spent time in a mental hospital. Nothing is said about Merritt Kellogg's possible motives or biases in his report of Miss Bolton's words. Nor is the reader alerted to the fact that Fanny Bolton three times made similar charges and three times voluntarily recanted them. All through these episodes, Mrs. White continued to employ her because Miss Bolton confessed yielding to the temptation of self-exaltation and pleaded that she not be separated from Mrs. White's work. In 1901, Miss Bolton even wrote and signed a confession denying the truth of her accusations. In this she declared:

I have for years disseminated an influence against the work of God through His prophet. God only knows how widespread is the evil influence of my uttered doubts and questionings. God has at last found me in a place where He could open the true principles upon which His work stands vindicated and infallible, and which eliminates all my objections, and clears up my difficulties.—Confession Concerning the Testimony of Jesus Christ. (1901) White Estate document File #445.

Then addressing herself to what her work had been while in Mrs. White's employ, she wrote:

The editors in no wise change Sister White's expression if it is grammatically correct, and is an evident expression of the evident thought. Many times her manuscript does not need any editing, often but slight editing, and again a great deal of literary work; but article



or chapter, whatever has been done upon it, is passed back into her hands by the editor, and the Spirit of Prophecy then appropriates the matter, and it becomes, when approved, the chosen expression of the Spirit of God.—*Ibid.*

A number of individuals assisted Mrs. White in preparing her materials for print. For some reason the quality of Mrs. White's writings is unchanged regardless of her literary assistants. For Ellen White's statement about their work see [Selected Messages 1:50](#).

### Physician's Questions Unanswered

On pages 191 and onward there is portrayed the matter of Ellen White in 1906 offering to answer the questions certain Battle Creek physicians had about her work and her later refusal to do so.

It is too simple to state that Mrs. White refused to answer the charges and allegations of Stewart, Sadler, and others. A. T. Jones had earlier made a number of these same charges, and in May, 1906, the General Conference had issued a reply to him which covered many of the items raised in Stewart's letter published in what is known as "The Blue Book." (*A Statement Refuting Charges Made by A. T. Jones*, Washington, D.C., May, 1906.)

F. D. Nichol in *Ellen C. White and Her Critics* devotes a chapter to the matter to which the reader is directed. See "Did Mrs. White Break a Promise?" pp. 345-349.

Ellen White answered many of the letters. W. C. White answered some of the points raised. When the Stewart letter came it consisted largely of questions that impugned her integrity. Of this W. C. White wrote on June 9, 1907:

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That portion of the document addressed to her, which takes the form of an attack upon her integrity and her work, she will refer to the brethren to answer because for many years she has been instructed that it is not any part of her legitimate work to answer the numerous and violent attacks which have been made upon her by her critics and the enemies of the work.

Consequently, as noted in *Prophetess of Health*, page 197, "Willie White saw to it that a copy of Stewart's confidential communication reach his friend A. G. Daniells."

It should be pointed out, however, that Daniells had a good idea of what was in the document long before he received a copy. Drs. Knapp and Colver, from Battle Creek, attending a medical convention in Washington, D.C., in June of 1907, plied Daniells with questions raised in the document at a time when he had not yet seen a copy of it. On the basis of Daniells' responses to questions raised at the convention, he was charged with having made wide-ranging public attacks on the doctors in Battle Creek. (See A. G. Daniells letter to W. C. White, June 24, 1907.)

The Testimonies made a test.—On page 198, *Prophetess of Health* states: “as a result of the clash between the forces of Daniells and Kellogg, acceptance of Mrs. White’s testimonies for the first time became an accepted ‘test of fellowship,’ a development unthinkable in the early days of the church.”

James White stated in the [The Review and Herald, June 13, 1871](#):

They [the Seventh-day Adventists] do not, however, make a belief in this work [Ellen White’s prophetic work] a test of Christian fellowship. But, after men and women have evidence that the work is of God, and then join hands with those who fight against it, our people claim the right to separate from such, that they may enjoy their sentiments in peace and quiet.—RH 37; 205, June 13,

This statement applies very directly to the Kellogg case. Kellogg was disfellowshipped because he joined hands with “those who fight against” the prophetic gift. He denied this, but there seems to be ample evidence that it was so. But even if it were not so, he was disfellowshipped under a condition which James White had laid down which was not different from the stand taken in the Conference address published in [The Review and Herald, December 4, 1855](#).

This was no “new test” or “innovation.” James White’s own statement bears this out. Nor was it the test that created widespread internal dissension. Application of this test served to relieve the church of those elements which were active in creating wide spread internal dissension.

### **The Closing Paragraphs**

Pages 200 and 201 of *Prophetess of Health* speak commendably of Ellen White in a survey of positive accomplishments. The expansion of these points, as noted in the outset of our critique, is the story which could well have been given more space in the pages of this book if Ellen White is to stand before the world in her true image of *Prophetess of Health*.

[91] **Postscript—A Word On Behalf Of Ellen White As A  
Person**

W. P. Bradley, President Ellen G. White Estate

When one undertakes to set forth the life, work, and character of an individual, and especially a leader, it is highly important that the narration be balanced and presented faithfully. In viewing the life and record of Ellen G. White one person may see her as a mostly sickly individual, emotion driven, despondent and fearful of her spiritual future, and given to episodes of *hysteria* (*Prophetess of Health*, page 19), while another may see her as a warmhearted, outgoing mother, a neighbor and friend dedicated unselfishly to noble causes she supported with indefatigable effort. It is the former that it appears to me is largely portrayed in *Prophetess of Health*.

Her integrity is questioned and she emerges as a person who played upon the credulity of the honesthearted in the name of religion and manipulated the record in order to gain her own ends.

With respect to her health, Ellen White was, especially in her early years, admittedly delicate, but this should not obscure the fact that in spite of intermittent ill health she possessed the stamina to accomplish a life work of lasting value. The first decade of her labors is marked by grinding poverty which must have resulted in the lack of the ordinary amenities of life of the people of her time, and was accompanied by malnutrition in her own home, exposure to disease, and ignorance of many of the basic health tenets.

Her family life after her marriage to James White in 1846 followed the usual course of wifely experience, giving birth to four sons; two of whom grew to adulthood.

Aside from the family duties, her burdens included writing out of testimonies that came to her in visions and prophetic dreams, as well as volumes of spiritual instruction, biblical enlightenment, and guiding material for carrying on the activities of an emerging church. In all, by the time of her death in 1915 she had produced

more than a score of volumes, at least 4,000 periodical articles, and her manuscript files contain 60,000 typewritten pages. She had conducted year after year a program of heavy correspondence. This literary output in itself, from a purely physical viewpoint, does not square with the image of the weakly, inadequate person sometimes suggested in *Prophetess of Health*.

Ellen G. White's life work reached out into various broad lines of public service, including preaching from the pulpit and witnessing to private individuals and to groups large and small. Her lectures and sermons were heard by large congregations in churches, barns, groves of woods, at campmeetings to audiences up to 20,000 people, and that without the benefit of electronic amplification.

Though not large physically, in action in public Ellen White was forceful, and she did not appear as a weakling.

"The Lord's messenger," as Ellen White described herself, was constantly called upon to travel. These journeys were made by wagon, sleigh, stagecoach, train and by ship. By these means she visited the greater part of North America. She spent two years in Europe and nine in Australia and New Zealand. She took the rough sea voyages in her stride as well as the land travel in all seasons of the year, and always, wherever she was among the people, she was a witnessing Christian and a helper in time of need. She bore constantly on her heart the spiritual, and material, and health burdens of the people around her.

In her later active years, after James White's death, she managed a large staff of assistants and helpers, in bringing out her literary productions, and in the running of the household and the farm.

With respect to the experience of the visions of Ellen White there is not an area of religious thought that would call forth sharper contrary opinions than in the operation of the supernatural. One thing is clear: There were no secrets or mysteries about what was taking place. Again and again she was in visions openly, not only in small private circles, but quite frequently in open public meetings, with many kinds of people around her including not only those who believed in her visions, but also her critics. Yet there is no eye witness record that has come to us (except in the case of M. G. Kellogg who in late life changed his testimony) that disputes the accounts of what took place, a vivid other worldly experience open for all to

see. The nature of the experience and the content she recorded were such as to engender confidence in the people, to transform skeptics into believers, to turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. Leading, intelligent, discerning people were persuaded that she had truly been selected to be God's messenger.

The *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* identifies Ellen's husband James Springer White as the founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Ellen G. White as cofounder. The two carried a consistent never to be relinquished burden of counseling and leadership, especially in the early years. For 35 years they labored together, until his death in 1881 at the age of 60. James was strong-minded, a sound planner, and not easily diverted from a course he believed to be right. Ellen in the meantime developed her role in her assigned work, one into which her husband could not enter in the fullest sense, though he gave her valuable technical assistance in preparing and publishing her written material.

[92] She continued to be a strong person in her own way, in her own right, not simply led along by a forceful companion.

When in 1865 a crisis came to the work of the Whites, when James suffered a stroke, halting his leadership role, threatening the danger of his ending up a useless cripple, it was the supposedly weak Ellen who took the mantle of leadership in the home and saw clearly what her husband most needed—a change of occupation and rest. Thus, by dint of her own efforts and God's blessing she moved him away from the Battle Creek problems out to a Michigan farm where he would be separated from the crushing mental and spiritual load. Then, through exercise of his physical powers, she perseveringly encouraged him to cooperate in the restoration of his mental and physical vigor for further labors. Here is the dramatic story as she told it to a group of workers engaged in health oriented activities in 1902:

Many years ago [1865], while my husband was bearing heavy responsibilities in Battle Creek, the strain began to tell on him. His health failed rapidly. Finally he broke down in mind and body, and was unable to do anything. My friends said to me, "Mrs. White, your husband cannot live." I determined to remove him to a place more favorable for his recovery. His mother said, "Ellen, you must remain and take care of your family."

“Mother,” I replied, “I will never allow that masterly brain to fail entirely. I will work with God, and God will work with me, to save my husband’s brain.”

In order to obtain means for our journey, I pulled up my rag carpets and sold them.... With the money secured by the sale of the carpets, I bought a covered wagon, and prepared for the journey, placing in the wagon a mattress for Father to lie on. Accompanied by Willie, a mere lad eleven years of age, we started for Wright, Michigan. While on the journey, Willie tried to put the bits into the mouth of one of the horses, but found that he could not. I said to my husband, “Put your hand on my shoulder, and come and put the bits in.”

He said that he did not see how he could. “Yes, you can,” I replied. “Get right up and come.” He did so, and succeeded in putting the bits in. Then he knew that he would have to do it the next time, too.

Constantly I kept my husband working at such little things. I would not allow him to remain quiet, but tried to keep him active. This is the plan that physicians and helpers in our sanitariums should pursue. Lead the patients along step by step, step by step, keeping their minds so busily occupied that they have no time to brood over their own condition.

Often brethren came to us for counsel. My husband wanted to see no one. He much preferred to go into another room when company came. But usually before he could realize that anyone had come, I brought the visitor before him, and would say, “Husband, here is a brother who has come to ask a question, and as you can answer it much better than I can, I have brought him to you.” Of course he could not help himself then. He had to remain in the room and answer the question. In this way, and in many other ways, I made him exercise his mind. If he had not been made to use his mind, in a little while it would have completely failed. Daily my husband went out for a walk. In the winter a terrible snowstorm came, and Father thought he could not go out in the storm and snow. I went to Brother Root and said, “Brother Root, have you a spare pair of boots?”

“Yes,” he answered.

“I should be glad to borrow them this morning,” I said. Putting on the boots and starting out, I tracked a quarter of a mile in the deep snow. On my return, I asked my husband to take a walk. He said he could not go out in such weather. “Oh, yes, you can,” I replied. “Surely you can step in my tracks.” He was a man who had great respect for women; and when he saw my tracks, he thought that if a woman could walk in that snow, he could. That morning he took his usual walk.

In the spring there were fruit trees to be set out and garden to be made. “Willie,” I said, “please buy three hoes and three rakes. Be sure to buy three of each.” When he brought them to me, I told him to take one of the hoes, and Father another. Father objected, but took one. Taking one myself, we began work; and although I blistered my hands, I led them in the hoeing. Father could not do much, but he went through the motions. It was by such methods as these, that I tried to cooperate with God in restoring my husband to health. And oh, how the Lord blessed us!

I always took my husband with me when I went out driving; And I took him with me when I went to preach at any place. I had a regular circuit of meetings. I could not persuade him to go into the desk while I preached. Finally, after many, many months, I said to him, “Now, my husband, you are going into the desk today.” He did not want to go, but I would not yield. I took him up into the desk with me. That day he spoke to the people. Although the meeting house was filled with unbelievers, for half an hour I could not refrain from weeping. My heart was overflowing with joy and gratitude. I knew that the victory had been gained.

After eighteen months of constant cooperation with God in the effort to restore my husband to health, I took him home again. Presenting him to his parents, I said, “Father, Mother, here is your son.”

“Ellen,” said his mother, “you have no one but God and yourself to thank for this wonderful restoration. Your energies have accomplished it.”

After his recovery, my husband lived for a number of years, during which time he did the best work of his life. Did not those added years of usefulness repay me manyfold for the eighteen months of painstaking care?—[Selected Messages 2:306-308](#).



This experience in itself leaves an indelible impression of the character of Ellen White. It is evident that she was no weakling, but rather a woman of great resources of strength, faith, and vision.

Very frequently in the founding years of the church James and Ellen White were called upon to face bitter opposition from fanatics and misguided religionists. The burden fell heavily on her as well as James as she was frequently called upon to unveil the deceptive teachings and inconsistent practices of many who claimed great piety. To rebuke those who had enlisted sympathizers and who were not inclined to receive correction called for strict obedience to the heavenly messages entrusted to her and a fearless declaration of truth and righteousness.

[93]

James White's death brought great anguish of spirit and a deep sense of loneliness, leaving Ellen without his strength to lean upon. Yet she rose above the disappointment of her bereavement and, only two weeks after his death, she addressed the congregation in Battle Creek for nearly an hour, witnessing to her faith and courage in the message and exhorting the members to show the closest unity in the church family ([Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 255](#)). A few weeks later she was at the campmeeting at Sacramento, speaking nearly every day and presenting a temperance address to an audience numbering upwards of five thousand ([Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 259](#)). Out of that campmeeting came the plans for a college on the west coast. During the remaining thirty-four years of her life, Ellen White continued to fulfill the career to which God had called her, making some of her most significant literary contributions, giving inspiring leadership in promoting a sense of mission in the church, in developing a blueprint of educational philosophy, and in completing some of her choicest books.

The number who believed and accepted her God-given calling included the whole of the substantial leadership of the church who, as years passed, were involved in the church enterprises in which she gave counsel. Compared to the handful of disaffected and malcontents who were critical or disbelieved her visions, the record of those who stood with her is a very long one. They had confidence in her as a sincere, believable Christian and in the validity of her appointment as messenger and spokesman for God. The list of those who stood with her includes such discerning and strong minded

persons as Joseph Bates, John Byington, George I Butler, O. A. Olson, Uriah Smith, S. N. Haskell, J. N. Loughborough, W. A. Spicer, J. N. Andrews, A. G. Daniells and the representatives of overseas sections of the church. One clear evidence of the church's confidence in her work is that, recognizing her ordination by God and not man she was given ministerial credentials by the General Conference, the highest authority in the church.

Did those of her contemporaries who knew her best have confidence in her work and her visions?—Take James White, for instance, who was himself a well-balanced, discerning individual. Also her sons, her grandchildren, and those who were her co-workers and helpers.

Questions recently raised in discussing the calling of Ellen White and her influence as a health leader among Seventh-day Adventists, are not new. They were raised during her lifetime, and those close around her, who knew her best rose in her defense. A quarter of a century ago the distinguished Adventist editor, Francis D. Nichol, came to her defense in a 700-page spirited volume in which he reviewed the entire collection of charges then currently leveled against her.

“The charges against her,” wrote Nichol, “run the gamut from an accusation that she was a designing woman who foisted upon her followers the plagiarized thoughts of others, to the condescendingly pitying contention that she was a self-deluded hysteric who sincerely thought she had *visions*.”—*Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, p. 15.

Nichol's well documented book, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, clears her of the accusations made against her in the minds of most fair-minded people.

Ellen G. White occupies a special place in the hearts and affections of Seventh-day Adventists. They have faith in her as an individual and in her mission as God's messenger. They have her books in their homes and they derive great benefit from reading them and following the instruction contained in them. There is a spirit revealed in these writings that they do not find in ordinary secular literature. These writings bind them together in unity of interest and belief. And is it not unique that sixty years after her death these books—57 of them—continue to have a very wide distribution and

reading? Most of these books have annual sales which exceeds the total life of the average book published in North America.

We Seventh-day Adventists accept the whole Bible as inspired and authoritative in spite of secular attacks upon its validity, and we refuse in these latter times when Satan has come down with great wrath upon the remnant church to give place to these attacks upon God's Word, and upon the work of His last-day messenger, Ellen G. White.

And may I add that in dealing with the subject of Ellen G. White and her place in the history of the church we are not on shaky ground. Her life was not lived in a corner, her methods were not conceived in the darkness, her spiritual flame was not concealed under a bushel, her role was not contrived by her and James White. We know how it began, we know how she struggled personally to discharge the burden God placed upon her and which she carried from the first vision to the end in 1915. All of her history is one of the most open and best known aspects of the work and development of Seventh-day Adventists. This late-hour attack upon the validity of her messages does not stand the test of history nor the judgment through the years of the church's trusted spiritual leaders.

This in briefest form is but a suggestion of what should be said about the life and character of Ellen G. White. To challenge the validity of her calling as God's messenger tends to impugn her motives, attack her truthfulness, and pass her off as a charlatan. But such a course does not explain the positive accomplishments or spiritual aspects of her life, the widespread blessing brought to millions who have heard her voice, seen her at work, or have read her writings. The Seventh-day Adventist Church exists, it grows, it witnesses, it is in a sense a monument to the power of Bible truth and the mission among the members of Ellen G. White.

[94] **Appendix A—Ellen G. White Answers Questions on  
the Health Reform Vision *The Review and Herald*,  
October 8, 1867**

**Questions and Answers.**

Bro. Smith: I have received from the hands of the Wisconsin and Illinois Conference Committee the following questions. I append a reply to each of them, that both question and reply may appear in the same number of the Review for the benefit of the brethren and sisters of the Wis. and Ill. Conference, and all others who wish to learn the facts in the case.

*Question Number One*

*Did you receive your views upon health reform before visiting the health institute at Dansville, N.Y., or before you had read works on the subject?*

*Answer*

It was at the house of Bro. A. Hilliard, at Otsego, Mich., June 6, 1863, that the great subject of Health Reform was opened before me in vision. I did not visit Dansville till August, 1864, fourteen months after I had the view. I did not read any works upon health until I had written *Spiritual Gifts*, Vols. iii and iv, *Appeal to Mothers*, and had sketched out most of my six articles in the six numbers of "How to Live." I did not know that such a paper existed as the *Laws of Life*, published at Dansville, N.Y. I had not heard of the several works upon health, written by Dr. J. C. Jackson, and other publications at Dansville, at the time I had the view named above. I did not know that such works existed until September, 1868, when in Boston, Mass., my husband saw them advertised in a periodical called the *Voice of the Prophets*, published by Eld. J. V. Himes. My husband ordered the works from Dansville and received them at

Topsham Maine. His business gave him no time to peruse them, and as I determined not to read them until I had written out my views, the books remained in their wrappers. As I introduced the subject of health to friends where I labored in Michigan, New England, and in the State of New York, and spoke against drugs and flesh meats, and in favor of water, pure air, and a proper diet, the reply was often made, “You speak very nearly the opinions taught in the Laws of Life, and other publications, by Drs. Trall, Jackson, and others. Have you read that paper and those works?” My reply was that I had not, neither should I read them till I had fully written out my views, lest it should be said that I had received my light upon the subject of health from physicians, and not from the Lord. And after I had written my six articles for *How to Live*, I then searched the various works on hygiene and was surprised to find them so nearly in harmony with what the Lord had revealed to me. And to show this harmony, and to set before my brethren and sisters the subject as brought out by able writers, I determined to publish “*How to Live*,” in which I largely extracted from the works referred to.

### *Question Number Two*

[95]

*Does not the practice of the sisters in wearing their dresses nine inches from the floor contradict Testimony No. 11, which says they should reach somewhat below the top of a lady’s gaiter boot? Does it not also contradict Testimony No. 10, which says they should clear the filth of the street an inch or two without being raised by the hand?*

### *Answer*

The proper distance from the bottom of the dress to the floor was not given to me in inches. Neither was I shown ladies’ gaiter boots; but three companies of females passed before me, with their dresses as follows with respect to length:

The first were of fashionable length, burdening the limbs, impeding the step, and sweeping the street and gathering its filth; the evil results of which I have fully stated. This class, who were slaves to fashion, appeared feeble and languid.

The dress of the second class which passed before me was in many respects as it should be. The limbs were well clad. They were free from the burdens which the tyrant, Fashion, had imposed upon the first class; but had gone to that extreme in the short dress as to disgust and prejudice good people, and destroy in a great measure their own influence. This is the style and influence of the "American Costume," taught and worn by many at "Our Home," Dansville N. Y. It does not reach to the knee. I need not say that this style of dress was shown me to be too short.

A third class passed before me with cheerful countenances, and free, elastic step. Their dress was the length I have described as proper, modest and healthful. It cleared the filth of the street and side-walk a few inches under all circumstances, such as ascending and descending steps, &c.

As I have before stated, the length was not given me in inches, and I was not shown a lady's boot. And here I would state that although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation. As I wrote upon the subject of dress the view of those three companies revived in my mind as plain as when I was viewing them in vision; but I was left to describe the length of the proper dress in my own language the best I could, which I have done by stating that the bottom of the dress should reach near the top of a lady's boot, which would be necessary in order to clear the filth of the streets under the circumstances before named.

[96] I put on the dress, in length as near as I had seen and described as I could judge. My sisters in Northern Michigan also adopted it. And when the subject of inches came up in order to secure uniformity as to length everywhere, a rule was brought and it was found that the length of our dresses ranged from eight to ten inches from the floor. Some of these were a little longer than the sample shown me, while others were a little shorter.

Numerous letters came to me from all parts of the field, inquiring the length of the dress shown me. Having seen the rule applied to the distance from the floor of several dresses, and having become fully satisfied that nine inches comes the nearest to the samples shown

Appendix A—Ellen G. White Answers Questions on the Health Reform Vision The  
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me, I have given this number of inches in No. 12, as the proper  
length in regard to which uniformity is very desirable. If it be said  
that a lady's boot is not nine inches high, I would say I wear a boot  
eight inches high, and when I have walked before my sisters with  
it uncovered as those properly dressed passed before me in vision,  
they could not see the top of my boot.

### *Question Number Three*

*In Testimony, No. 11, you say: "My apology for calling your attention again to the subject of dress is that not one in twenty of my sisters, who profess to believe the Testimony, have taken the first step in the dress reform." How long before writing No. 11, had you worn the reformed dress?*

### *Answer*

I put on the reformed dress September, 1865, when I visited Dansville with my sick husband. It was the same length I now wear, and I was distinctly given to understand that it was not the "American Costume." I have worn this style of dress ever since that time, excepting at meetings, in the crowded streets of villages and cities, and when visiting distant relatives. Since I commenced to write No. 11, in January, 1867, I have worn no other than the reformed dress. My reasons for pursuing the course I have are as follows:—

1. I put on the reformed dress for general use more than two years since, because I had seen that it was a convenient, modest, and healthful style, and would, in the providence of God, as Health Reform should lead the way, finally be adopted by our people.

2. It was my duty to avoid raising prejudice against the dress, which would cut off my testimony if I wore it, until I had fully set the matter before the people, and the time came, in the order of events, for it to be generally adopted.

3. The dress reform was among the minor things that were to make up the great reform in health, and never should have been urged as a testing truth necessary to salvation. It was the design of God that at the right time, on proper occasions, the proper persons

should set forth its benefits as a blessing, and recommend uniformity, and union of action.

4. The issue came too soon. The defense of the dress was forced upon us by those who opposed it, who at the same time professed full confidence in my testimonies. When the Health Institute was opened at Battle Creek, and the dress adopted by female patients, as directed by the physicians, then came the opposition, chiefly from brethren at Battle Creek. The physicians having full confidence in my testimonies, stated to them that the style of dress they recommended for their patients was the same as I had seen would be adopted by our people. Then came the general inquiry, and a strange spirit of blind and bitter opposition arose with some who professed to be among the firmest friends of the testimonies. The general inquiry spread everywhere, and in the autumn and winter of 1866, letters came in from all directions inquiring in regard to what I had seen, asking for immediate answers. I therefore determined to hasten out No. 11. We visited the church at Wright, Mich., Dec. 21, 1866, and labored with them six weeks. I there wrote most of Testimony, No. 11. The first two Sabbaths and first-days I spoke to the people in my long dress. But when I had fully set the matter before the people without raising their prejudice, I put on my present style of dress, which was immediately adopted by the numerous sisters of that church. I have worn it since that time. At Greenville, Orleans, Orange, Windsor, Bushnell, Greenbush, Monterey, and Ithaca, I have, in speaking upon the great subject of health, mentioned the dress reform as one of the items of least importance which make up the great whole. With the dear sisters of these churches I have had no unhappy conflicts. I have presented the claims of this new and unpopular style of dress to them, while I set them an example. They have received my testimony, and have followed my example from principle, and not as the result of being urged. Those who, by their blind opposition, brought the issue too soon, caused confusion and prejudice, especially in the church at Battle Creek, must settle the matter with God and their brethren. I am clear in this matter, having done the best I could in standing in defense of the truth, and in laboring to save our people from confusion upon the subject.



*Is there not danger of brethren and sisters taking extreme views of the Health Reform?*

*Answer*

This may be expected in all stirring reforms. The devotion to the subject manifested by our preachers and by the *Review*, and the unqualified, stirring appeals for large sums of money without giving proper cautions in the matter, has given the impression to many that Health Reform is that which demands their attention above all others, and some who need to be taught the first principles of righteousness, have urged it out of season, and have thus disgusted the people. It is God's plan that persons who are suited to the work should prudently and earnestly set forth the Health Reform, then leave the people to settle the matter with God and their own souls. It is the duty of those every way qualified to teach it to make people believe and obey, and all others should be silent and be taught.

*Question Number Five*

*Is there not danger of urging the health reform upon others before they are prepared to receive?*

*Answer*

There is. This is especially true in the matter of dress. When we first received the third message the Lord had many things to say to us, but we could not hear them all then. He has led us with a gentle hand and tender care, step by step, till we have reached the reform in health. When young disciples have learned what we had learned up to the time of the introduction of this reform, let this also be prudently set before them. [97]

*Question Number Six*

*Your last vision was given Dec., 1865. Many inquire, "If the visions are so important for the church, why so long before the subject of Health Reform was brought out?"*

*Answer*

I had, before I had the last vision Dec., 1865, spoken quite fully upon the subject of health. My last vision related mostly to individual cases. I have written thousands of pages since that time of personal testimonies which most of our people know nothing about. I have written hundreds of letters relative to the establishing of a Health Institute of which still more are ignorant. I have been pressed with cares, labors and grief by reason of sickness in my own family. Yet I have done much in further bringing out the subject under most unfavorable circumstances. It may be that I have done this, especially on the dress question, as fast as the Lord would have me. It has certainly been brought out faster than some who raise this question have been ready to receive it.

*Question Number Seven*

*Shall we understand by what you have said in your testimonies in favor of recreation, that you approbate such vain amusements as chess, checkers, charades, back-gammon, hunt-the-whistle, and blind-man's-buff?*

*It is generally reported in this conference that you have taken an interest in the amusements which have been practiced at the Health Institute at Battle Creek, that you play checkers, and carry a checker-board with you as you visit the brethren from place to place.*

*Isaac Sanborn,*

*H. C. Blanchard*

*R. F. Andrews*

*Answer*

Since I professed to be a follower of Christ at the age of twelve years, I have never engaged in any such simple plays and amusements as named above. Neither have I at any time given my influence in their favor. I do not know how to play at checkers, chess, back-gammon, fox-and-geese, or anything of the kind. I have spoken in favor of recreation, but have ever stood in great doubt of the amusements introduced at the Institute at Battle Creek, and have stated my objections to the physicians and directors, and others, in conversation with them, and by numerous letters.

—On pages 24-26 of Testimony No. 12, I have spoken of “Recreation for Christians,” as follows:

“I was shown that Sabbath-keepers as a people labor too hard without allowing themselves change, or periods of rest. Recreation is needful to those who are engaged in physical labor, yet still more essential for those whose labors are principally mental.

“I was shown that it is not essential to our salvation, nor for the glory of God, for us to keep the mind laboring, even upon religious themes, constantly and excessively. There are amusements which we cannot approve, because Heaven condemns them,—such as dancing, card-playing, chess, checkers, &c. These amusements open the door for great evil. Their tendencies are not beneficial, but their influence upon the mind is to excite and produce in some minds a passion for those plays which lead to gambling, and dissolute lives. All such plays should be condemned by Christians. Something should be substituted in the place of these amusements. Something can be invented, perfectly harmless.

“I saw that our holidays should not be spent in patterning after the world, yet they should not be passed by unnoticed, for this will bring dissatisfaction to our children. On these days when there is danger of our children partaking of evil influences, and becoming corrupted by the pleasures and excitement of the world, let the parents study to get up something to take the place of more dangerous amusements. Give your children to understand you have their happiness and best good in view.

“Let families unite together and leave their occupations which have taxed them physically and mentally, and make an excursion out of the cities and villages a few miles into the country, by the side of a fine lake, or in a nice grove, where the scenery of nature is beautiful. They should provide themselves with plain, hygienic food, and spread their table under the shade of a tree, or under the canopy of heaven provided with the very best of fruits and grains. The ride, the exercise, and the scenery, will quicken the appetite, and they can come around a repast which kings might envy.

“Parents and children on such occasions should feel as free as air from care, labors or perplexities. Parents should become children with their children, making it as happy as possible for them. Let the whole day be given to recreation. Exercise of the muscles in the

open air, for those whose employment has been within doors and sedentary, will be beneficial to health. All who can, should feel it a duty resting upon them to pursue this course. Nothing will be lost, but much gained. They can return to their occupations with new life, and new courage to engage in their labor with new zeal. And such have gained much, for they are better prepared to resist disease.”

I will here give extracts from Testimony No. 12, pages 77-79, in regard to vain amusements:

“Those connected with the Health Institute now located at Battle Creek, should feel that they are engaged in an important and solemn work; and in no way should they pattern after the physicians at the institution at Dansville in matters of religion and amusements. Yet, I saw that there would be danger of imitating them in many things, and losing sight of the exalted character of this great work. And should those connected with this enterprise descend from the exalted principles of present truth, to imitate in theory and practice those at the head of institutions where the sick are treated only for the recovery of health, and should they cease to look at their work from a high religious stand-point, the especial blessing of God would not rest upon our institution any more than upon those where corrupt theories are taught and practiced.”

[98] “I was shown that the position of Dr. Jackson in regard to amusements was wrong, and that his views of physical exercise were not all correct. The very amusements he recommends hinder the recovery of health in many cases, where one is helped by them. And physical labor for the sick, is to a great degree condemned by Dr. Jackson, which proves in many cases the greatest injury, while such mental exercise as playing at cards, chess, and checkers, excites and wearies the brain, and hinders recovery. Light and pleasant physical labor will occupy the time, improve the circulation, relieve and restore the brain, and prove a decided benefit to the health. But take from the invalid all such employment, and he becomes restless, and, with a diseased imagination, views his case as much worse than it really is, which tends to imbecility.

“For years past I have been shown from time to time that the sick should be taught that it was wrong to suspend all physical labor in order to regain health. In thus doing the will becomes dormant, the blood circulates through the system sluggishly, and grows more

~~impure. Where there is danger of the patient's imagining his case~~  
worse than it really is, indolence will be sure to produce the most  
unhappy results. Well-regulated labor gives the invalid the idea that  
he is not totally useless in the world, that he is, at least, of some  
benefit. This will afford him satisfaction, give him courage, and  
impart to him vigor, which vain, mental amusements can never do.”

I have answered these questions as fully and as well as circum-  
stances would admit. If other brethren have similar questions to  
propose I shall be glad to answer them also, as I can find time. Ellen  
G. White.

## Appendix B—Writing Out The Light On Health Reform

Ellen G. White

Diseased minds have a diseased, sickly experience while a healthy, pure, sound mind, with the intellectual faculties unclouded, will have a sound experience which will be of inestimable worth. The happiness attending a life of well-doing will be a daily reward and will of itself be health and joy.

I was astonished at the things shown me in vision. Many things came directly across my own ideas. The matter was upon my mind continually. I talked it to all with whom I had opportunity to converse. My first writing of the vision was the substance of the matter contained in [*Spiritual Gifts*] Volume IV and in [my six articles in] *How to Live*, headed, “Disease and Its Causes.”

We were unexpectedly called to visit Allegan to attend a funeral, and then soon left for our eastern journey [1863], intending to finish my book upon the journey. As we visited the churches, things which had been shown to me in relation to existing wrongs required nearly all my time out of meeting in writing out the matter for them. Before I returned home from the East I had written out about five hundred pages for individuals and for churches.

After we returned from the East I commenced to write [*Spiritual Gifts*] Volume III, expecting to have a book of a size to bind in with the testimonies which [now] help compose [*Spiritual Gifts*] Volume IV. As I wrote, the matter opened before me and I saw it was impossible to get all I had to write in as few pages as I at first designed. The matter opened and Volume III was full. Then I commenced on Volume IV, but before I had my work finished, while preparing the health matter for the printers, I was called to go to Monterey.

We went, and could not finish the work there as soon as we expected. I was obliged to return to finish the matter for the printers, and we left an appointment for the next week.

These two journeys in hot weather were too much for my strength. I had written almost constantly for above one year. I generally commenced writing at seven in the morning and continued until seven at night, and then left writing to read proof sheets. My mind had been too severely taxed, and for three weeks I had not been able to sleep more than two hours in the night. My head ached constantly. I therefore crowded into Volume IV the most essential points in the vision in regard to health, intending to get out another testimony in which I could more freely speak upon the happiness and miseries of married life. With this consideration, I closed up Volume IV that it might be scattered among the people. I reserved some important matter in regard to health, which I had not strength or time to prepare for that Volume, and get it out in season for our [1864] eastern journey.

That which I have written in regard to health was not taken from books or papers. As I related to others the things which I had been shown, the question was asked, “Have you seen the paper, *The Laws of Life* or the *Water Cure Journal*?” I told them no, I had not seen either of the papers. Said they, “What you have seen agrees very much with much of their teachings.” I talked freely with Dr. Lay and many others upon the things which had been shown me in reference to health. I had never seen a paper treating upon health.

After the vision was given me my husband was aroused upon the health questions. He obtained books, upon our eastern journey, but I would not read them. My view was clear, and I did not want to read anything until I had fully completed my books. My views were written independent of books or of the opinions of others.

Manuscript 7, 1867

## **Appendix C—An Appeal To Mothers: The Great Cause Of The Physical, Mental, And Moral Ruin Of Many Of The Children Of Our Time**

By Ellen G. White

Steam Press of The Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association  
Battle Creek, Mich. 1864

### **Introductory Remarks**

The matter contained in the following pages having been left at our disposal, we feel impelled by a strong sense of Christian duty and love of humanity, to bring it before the public in its present form. We believe that too much importance cannot be attached to this subject, and that no false delicacy should prevent thorough inquiry and investigation upon a question in which the present and future welfare of multitudes is involved. As a people, who profess to be looking for the coming of the Lord, and preparing for translation into his holy presence, perhaps we have too long kept silent on this great source of physical, mental and moral pollution, and a high duty and responsibility remains to be discharged in this matter.

We would therefore earnestly appeal to parents and guardians to give this Work a thorough and judicious circulation. The flood-gates of corruption are being opened upon the world; and in no way, perhaps, is Satan more speedily accomplishing the utter ruin of a fallen and fast degenerating race than through the channel of unchastity and licentiousness. In the following pages the evil is fully pointed out; and to many, we doubt not, they will also appear as a friendly hand pointing out the remedy and the way of escape. Again we say, therefore, let the work be faithfully circulated. It would perhaps be well for every member of the family to possess a copy for his and her own personal possession. And remember that it will not be enough to merely place this work in the hands of the young.



*Appendix C—An Appeal To Mothers: The Great Cause Of The Physical, Mental,  
And Moral Ruin Of Many Of The Children Of Our Time* cclxi  
Cease not till you have good evidence that the moral sense of the  
individuals is so aroused, that they will study and faithfully heed the  
instruction herein contained.

And to the young we would say, As you value health, happiness and life, a sound mind, an approving conscience, and a high moral sensibility, pass not over this subject lightly, nor forget the warning herein given you. To you there may seem to be no danger, but the danger is all the greater because so insidious; and being instructed yourselves, you may be able to raise the warning voice to others who are ignorantly sacrificing themselves upon the altar of this Moloch of passion.

But if considerations which connect themselves with this present life are not sufficient, to move you, look beyond this state of being, cast your eye over into eternity, ponder its effects upon your eternal destiny, and as you value eternal life, shun a vice which will forever debar you from the presence of Him who has said, “Be ye holy for I am holy.”

—Trustees

Of the S.D. A. Publishing Association.

### **Appeal to Mothers**

[101]

Relative to the Great Cause of the Physical, Mental and Moral Ruin of Many of the Children of Our Time.

My Sisters, my apology for addressing you on this subject is, I am a mother, and feel alarmed for those children and youth who by solitary vice are ruining themselves for this world, and for that which is to come. Let us closely inquire into this subject from the physical, mental and moral points of view.

Mothers, let us first view the results of this vice upon the physical strength. Have you not marked the lack of healthful beauty, of strength, and power of endurance in your dear children? Have you not felt saddened as you have watched the progress of disease upon them which has baffled your skill, and that of physicians? You listen to numerous complaints of headache, catarrh, dizziness, nervousness, pain in the shoulders and side, loss of appetite, pain in the back and limbs, wakeful, feverish nights, of tired feelings in the morning, and great exhaustion after exercising? As you have

seen the beauty of health disappearing, and have marked the sallow countenance, or the unnaturally flushed face have you been aroused sufficiently to look beneath the surface, to inquire into the cause of this physical decay? Have you observed the astonishing mortality among the youth?

And have you not noticed that there was a deficiency in the mental health of your children? That their course seemed to be marked with extremes? That they were absent-minded? That they started nervously when spoken to? And were easily irritated? Have you not noticed when occupied upon a piece of work they would look dreamingly, as though the mind was elsewhere? When they came to their senses, they were unwilling to own the work as coming from their hands, it was so full of mistakes, and showed such marks of inattention? Have you not been astonished at their wonderful forgetfulness? The most simple and oft-repeated directions would be soon forgotten. They might be quick to learn, but it would be of no special benefit to them. The mind would not retain it. What they might learn through hard study, when they would use their knowledge, is missing, lost through their sieve-like memory. Have you not noticed their reluctance to engage in active labor? And their unwillingness to perseveringly accomplish that which they have undertaken, which taxes the mental as well as the physical strength? The tendency of many is to live in indolence.

Have you not witnessed the gloomy sadness upon the countenance, and frequent exhibitions of a morose temper in those who used to be cheerful, kind and affectionate? They are easily excited to jealousy, disposed to look upon the dark side, and when you are laboring for their good, imagine that you are their enemy, that you needlessly reprove and restrain them?

And have you not enquired where will all this end, as you have looked upon your children from a moral point of view? Have you not noticed the increase of disobedience in children, and their manifestations of ingratitude, and impatience under restraint? Have you not been alarmed at their disregard of parental authority, which has bowed down the hearts of their parents with grief and prematurely sprinkled their heads with grey hairs? Have you not witnessed the lack of that noble frankness in your children which they once possessed, and which you admired in them? Some children even express

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in their countenances a hardened look of depravity. Have you not

felt distressed and anxious as you have seen the strong desire in your children to be with the opposite sex, and the overpowering disposition they possessed to form attachments when quite young? With your daughters, the boys have been the theme of conversation, and with your sons it has been the girls. They manifest preference for particular ones, and your advice and warnings produce but little change. Blind passion destroys sensible considerations. And although you may check the outward manifestations, and you credit the promises of amendment yet to your sorrow you find there is no change, only to conceal the matter from you. There are still secret attachments, and stolen interviews. They follow their willful course, and are controlled by their passions, until you are startled by perhaps a premature marriage, or are brought to shame by those who should by their noble course of conduct, bring to you respect and honor. The cases of premature marriage multiply. Boys and girls enter upon the marriage relation with unripe love, immature judgment, without noble, elevated feelings, and take upon themselves the marriage vows, wholly led by their boyish, girlish, passions. They choose for themselves often without the knowledge of the mother who has watched over them, and cared for them, from their earliest infancy.

Attachments formed in childhood have often resulted in a very wretched union or in a disgraceful separation. Early connections, if formed without the consent of parents, have seldom proved happy. The young affections should be restrained until the period arrives when sufficient age and experience will make it honorable, and safe to unfetter them. Those who will not be restrained will be in danger of dragging out an unhappy existence. A youth not out of his teens, is a poor judge of the fitness of a person, as young as himself, to be his companion for life. After their judgment becomes more matured, they view themselves bound for life to each other, perhaps not at all calculated to make each other happy. Then instead of making the best of their lot, recriminations take place, the breach widens, until there is settled indifference and neglect. To them there is nothing sacred in the word home. The very atmosphere is poisoned by unloving words, and bitter reproaches. The offspring of such are placed in a much more unfavorable condition than were their parents. With such surroundings, such examples, what could be expected of them

if time should continue? Mothers, the great cause of these physical, mental and moral evils is secret vice which inflames the passions, fevers the imagination, and leads to licentiousness. This vice is laying waste the constitution, and preparing the young for disease of almost every description. And shall we permit our children to pursue a course of self-destruction?

Mothers, view your children from a religious stand point. It gives you pain to see your children feeble in body and mind; but does it not cause you still greater grief to see them almost dead to spiritual things, so that they have but little desire for goodness, beauty of character, and holy purposes? Secret vice is the destroyer of high resolve, earnest endeavor, and strength of will to form a good religious character. All who have any true sense of what is embraced in being a Christian, know that the followers of Christ are under obligation as his disciples, to bring all their passions, their physical powers and mental faculties, into perfect subordination to his will. Those who are controlled by their passions cannot be followers of Christ. They are too much devoted to the service of their master, the originator of every evil, to leave their corrupt habits, and choose the service of Christ.

Godly mothers will inquire, with the deepest concern, Will our children continue to practice habits which will unfit them for any responsible position in this life? Will they sacrifice comeliness, health, intellect, and all hope of Heaven, everything worth possessing, here and hereafter, to the demon passion? May God grant that it may be otherwise, and that our children who are so dear to us, may listen to the voice of warning, and choose the path of purity and holiness.

How important that we teach our children self-control from their very infancy, and learn them the lesson of submitting their wills to us. If they should be so unfortunate as to learn wrong habits, not knowing all the evil results, they can be reformed by appealing to their reason, and convincing them that such habits ruin the constitution, and affect the mind. We should show them that whatever persuasions corrupt persons may use to quiet their awakened fears, and lead them to still indulge this pernicious habit, whatever may be their pretense, they are their enemies and the Devil's agents. Virtue and purity are of great value. These precious traits are of heavenly origin. They make God our friend, and unite us firmly to his throne.

—Satan is controlling the minds of the young, and we must work resolutely, and faithfully to save them. Very young children practice this vice, and it grows upon them and strengthens with their years, until every noble faculty of body and soul is being degraded. Many might have been saved if they had been carefully instructed in regard to the influence of this practice upon their health. They were ignorant of the fact that they were bringing much suffering upon themselves. Children who are experienced in this vice, seem to be bewitched by the Devil until they can impart their vile knowledge to others, even teaching very young children this practice.

Mothers, you cannot be too careful in preventing your children from learning low habits. It is easier to learn evil, than to eradicate it after it is learned. Neighbors may permit their children to come to your house, to spend the evening and the night with your children. Here is a trial, and a choice for you, to run the risk of offending your neighbors by sending their children to their own home, or gratify them, and let them lodge with your children, and thus expose them to be instructed in that knowledge which would be a life-long curse to them.

To save my children from being corrupted I have not allowed them to sleep in the same bed, or in the same room, with other boys, and have, as occasion has required when traveling, made a scanty bed upon the floor for them, rather than have them lodge with others. I have tried to keep them from associating with rough, rude boys, and have presented inducements before them to make their employment at home cheerful and happy. By keeping their minds and hands occupied, they have had but little time, or disposition, to play in the street with other boys, and obtain a street education.

My misfortune, which occurred when I was about nine years old, ruined my health. I looked upon this as a great calamity, and murmured because of it. In a few years I viewed the matter differently. I then looked upon it in the light of a blessing. I regard it thus now. Because of sickness I was kept from society which preserved me in blissful ignorance of the secret vices of the young. After I was a mother, by the private deathbed confessions of some females, who had completed the work of ruin, I first learned that such vices existed. But I had no just conception of the extent of this vice, and the injury the health sustained by it, until a still later period.

The young indulge to quite an extent in this vice before the age of puberty without experiencing to any very great degree the evil results upon the constitution. But at this critical period, while merging into manhood and womanhood, nature makes them feel the violation of her laws.

[103] As the mother sees her daughter languid and dispirited, with but little vigor, easily irritated, start suddenly and nervously when spoken to, she feels alarmed, and has fears that her daughter will not be able to reach womanhood with a good constitution. She relieves her, if possible, from active labor, and anxiously consults a physician, who prescribes for her without making searching inquiries, and suggesting to the unsuspecting mother the probable cause of her daughter's illness. Secret indulgence is in many cases the only real cause of the numerous complaints of the young. This vice is laying waste the vital forces, and debilitating the system, and until the habit, which produced the result, is broken off, there can be no permanent cure. To relieve the young from healthful labor is the worst possible course a parent can pursue. Their life is then aimless, the mind and hands unoccupied, the imagination active, and left free to indulge in thoughts that are not pure and healthful. This gives them opportunity for a more free indulgence in that vice which is the foundation of all their complaints.

It is a crime for mothers to allow themselves to remain in ignorance in regard to the habits of their children. If they are pure, keep them so. Fortify their young minds, and prepare them to detest this health and soul-destroying vice. Shield them, as faithful mothers should, from becoming contaminated by associating with every young companion. Keep them, as precious jewels, from the corrupting influence of this age. If you are situated so that their intercourse with young associates cannot always be overruled, as you would wish to have it, then let them visit your children in your presence, and in no case allow these associates to lodge in the same bed, or even in the same room. It will be far easier to prevent an evil than to cure it afterward.

If your children practice this vice, they may be in danger of resorting to falsehood to deceive you. But, mothers, you must not be easily quieted, and cease your investigations. You should not let the matter rest until you are fully satisfied. The health and

greatest importance. Determined watchfulness, and close inquiry, notwithstanding the attempts to evade and conceal, will generally reveal the true state of the case. Then should the mother faithfully present this subject to them in its true light, showing its degrading, downward tendency. Try to convince them that indulgence in this sin will destroy self-respect, and nobleness of character; will ruin health and morals, and its foul stain will blot from the soul true love for God, and the beauty of holiness. The mother should pursue this matter until she has sufficient evidence that the practice is at an end.

The course which most mothers pursue, in training their children in this dangerous age, is injurious to their children. It prepares the way to make their ruin more certain. Some mothers, with their own hands, open the door and virtually invite the Devil in, by permitting their daughters to remain in idleness, or what is but little better, spend their time in knitting edging, crocheting, or embroidering, and employ a hired girl to do those things their children should do. They let them visit other young friends, form their own acquaintances, and even go from their parental watchcare some distance from home, where they are allowed to do very much as they please. Satan improves all such opportunities, and takes charge of the minds of these children whom mothers ignorantly expose to his artful snares.

Because this course was pursued thirty years ago with comparative safety, it is no evidence that it can be now. The present cannot be judged by the past.

Mothers should take their daughters with them into the kitchen, and give them a thorough education in the cooking department. They should also instruct them in the art of substantial sewing. They should teach them how to cut garments economically, and put them together neatly. Some mothers, rather than to take this trouble, to patiently instruct their inexperienced daughters, prefer to do all themselves. But in so doing they leave the essential branches of education neglected, and commit a great wrong against their children; for in after life they feel embarrassment, because of their lack of knowledge in these things.

Mothers should educate their daughters in regard to the laws of life. They should understand their own frame, and the relation their eating, drinking, and every-day habits, have to health, and a

sound constitution, without which the sciences would be of but little benefit.

The help of the daughters will often make so much difference with the mother's work, that kitchen help can be dispensed with, which will prove not only a saving of expense, but a continual benefit to the children, by making room for them to labor, and bringing them into the society, and under the direct influence of, their mother, whose duty it is to patiently instruct the dear ones committed to her care. Also a door will be closed against much evil, which a hired girl may bring into a family. In a few days she may exert a strong influence over the children of the family, and initiate your daughters into the practice of deception and vice.

Children should be instructed from their early years to be helpful, and share the burdens of their parents. By thus doing they can be a great blessing in lightening the cares of the weary mother. While children are engaged in active labor, time will not hang heavily upon their hands, and they will have less opportunity to associate with vain, talkative, unsuitable companions, whose evil communications might blight the whole life of an innocent girl, by corrupting her good manners.

Active employment will give but little time to invite Satan's temptations. They may be often weary, but this will not injure them. Nature will restore their vigor and strength in their sleeping hours, if her laws are not violated. And the thoroughly tired person has less inclination for secret indulgence.

[104] Mothers allow themselves to be deceived in regard to their daughters. If they labor, and then appear languid and indisposed, the indulgent mother fears that she has overtaxed her daughter, and resolves henceforward to lighten her task. The mother bears the extra amount of labor which should have been performed by the daughter. If the true facts in the case of many were known, it would be seen that it was not the labor which was the cause of the difficulty, but wrong habits which were prostrating the vital energies, and bringing upon them a sense of weakness and great debility. In such cases, when mothers relieve their daughters from active labor, they, by so-doing, virtually give them up to idleness, to reserve their energies to consume upon the altar of lust. They remove the obstacles, giving the



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mind more freedom to run in a wrong channel, where they will more  
surely carry on the work of self-ruin.

The state of our world was presented before me, and my attention was especially called to the youth of our time. Everywhere I looked, I saw imbecility, dwarfed forms, crippled limbs, misshapen heads, and deformity of every description. Sins and crimes, and the violation of nature's laws, were shown me as the causes of this accumulation of human woe and suffering. I saw such degradation and vile practices, such defiance of God, and I heard such words of blasphemy, that my soul sickened. From what was shown me, a large share of the youth now living are worthless. Corrupt habits are wasting their energies, and bringing upon them loathsome and complicated diseases. Unsuspecting parents will try the skill of one physician after another, who prescribe drugs, when they generally know the real cause of the failing health, but for fear of offending and losing their fees, they keep silent, when as faithful physicians they should expose the real cause. Their drugs only add a second great burden for abused nature to struggle against, which often breaks down in her efforts and the victim dies. And the friends look upon the death as a mysterious dispensation of providence, when the most mysterious part of the matter is, that nature bore up as long as she did against her violated laws. Health, reason, and life, were sacrificed to depraved lusts.

I have been shown that children who practice self-indulgence previous to puberty, or the period of merging into manhood and womanhood, must pay the penalty of nature's violated laws at that critical period.

Many sink into an early grave, while others have sufficient force of constitution to pass this ordeal. If the practice is continued from the ages of fifteen and upward, nature will protest against the abuse she has suffered, and continues to suffer, and will make them pay the penalty for the transgression of her laws, especially from the ages of thirty to forty-five, by numerous pains in the system, and various diseases, such as affection of the liver and lungs, neuralgia, rheumatism, affection of the spine, diseased kidneys, and cancerous humors. Some of nature's fine machinery gives way, leaving a heavier task for the remaining to perform, which disorders nature's

fine arrangement, and there is often a sudden breaking down of the constitution, and death is the result.

Mothers, give your children enough to do. If they get weary, it will not injure health. There is quite a difference between weariness and exhaustion. Indolence will not be favorable to physical, mental, or moral, health. It throws open the door, and invites Satan in, which opportunity he improves, and draws the young into his snares. By indolence, not only the moral strength is weakened, and the impulse of passion increased, but Satan's angels take possession of the whole citadel of the mind, and compel conscience to surrender to vile passion. We should teach our children habits of patient industry. We should beware of indulging them too much. When they meet with difficulty in their labor, we must help them through it, instead of carrying them over it. It might be easier for us at the time to do the latter, but we fail to teach a useful and valuable lesson to our children of self-reliance, and are preparing the way to greatly increase our cares in the end. We should wake up in our children generous, noble principles, and urge them to active exertions, which will shield them from a multitude of temptations, and make their lives happier.

My sisters, as mothers we are responsible in a great degree for the physical, mental, and moral health of our children. We can do much by teaching them correct habits of living. We can show them, by our example, that we make a great account of health, and that they should not violate its laws. We should not make it a practice to place upon our tables food which would injure the health of our children. Our food should be prepared free from spices. Mince pies, cakes, preserves, and highly-seasoned meats, with gravies, create a feverish condition in the system, and inflame the animal passions. We should teach our children to practice habits of self-denial, that the great battle of life is with self, to restrain the passions, and bring them into subjection to the mental and moral faculties.

My sisters, be entreated to spend less time over the cook-stove, wearing out the strength given you of God to be used for a better purpose, in preparing food to tempt the appetite. A plain, nourishing diet will not require so great an amount of labor. We should devote more time to humble, earnest prayer to God, for wisdom to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The health of the mind is dependent upon the health of the body. As Christian

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parents we are bound to train our children in reference to the laws of

life. We should instruct them, by precept and example, that we do not live to eat, but that we eat to live. We should encourage in our children a love for nobleness of mind, and a pure, virtuous character. In order to strengthen in them the moral perceptions, the love of spiritual things, we must regulate the manner of our living, dispense with animal food, and use grains, vegetables, and fruits, as articles of food.

Mothers, is there not a work for you to do in your families? You may inquire, how can we remedy the evils which already exist? How shall we begin the work? If you lack wisdom, go to God, he has promised to give liberally. Pray much, and fervently, for divine aid. One rule can not be followed in every case. The exercise of sanctified judgment is now needful. Be not hasty and agitated, and approach your children with censure. Such a course would only cause rebellion in them. You should feel deeply over any wrong course you have taken, which may have opened a door for Satan to lead your children by his temptations. If you have not instructed them in regard to the violation of the laws of health, blame rests upon you. You have neglected an important duty, which result may be seen in the wrong practices of your children. Before you engage in the work of teaching your children the lesson of self-control, you should learn it yourself. If you are easily agitated, and become impatient, how can you appear reasonable to your children, while instructing them to control their passions? With self-possession, and feelings of the deepest sympathy and pity, you should approach your erring children, and faithfully present to them the sure work of ruin upon their constitutions, if they continue the course they have begun. That as they debilitate the physical, and mental, so also the moral must feel the decay, and they are sinning, not only against themselves, but against God.

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You should make them feel, if possible, that it is God, the pure and holy God, that they have been sinning against; that the great Searcher of hearts is displeased with their course; that nothing is concealed from him. If you can so impress your children, that they will exercise that repentance which is acceptable to God, that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of, the work will be thorough, the reform certain. They will not

feel sorrow merely because their sins are known; but they will view their sinful practices in their aggravated character, and will be led to confess them to God, without reserve, and will forsake them. They will feel to sorrow for their wrong course, because they have displeased God, and sinned against him, and dishonored their bodies before Him who created them, and has required them to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto him, which is their reasonable service.

“What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

You should present encouragements before your children that a merciful God will accept true heart repentance, and will bless their endeavors to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. As Satan sees that he is losing control over the minds of your children, he will strongly tempt them, and seek to bind them to continue to practice this bewitching vice. But with a firm purpose they must resist Satan’s temptations to indulge the animal passions, because it is sin against God. They should not venture on forbidden ground, where Satan can claim control over them. If they in humility entreat God for purity of thought, and a refined and sanctified imagination, he will hear them, and grant their petitions. God has not left them to perish in their sins, but will help the weak and helpless, if they cast themselves in faith upon him. Those who have been in the practice of secret indulgence until they have prostrated the physical and mental strength, may never fully recover the result of the violation of nature’s laws; but their only salvation in this world, and that which is to come, depends upon an entire reform. Every deviation is making recovery more hopeless. None should be discouraged if they perceive no decided improvement in their health after the habit has been broken off for quite a length of time. If nature’s laws have not been too long abused, she will carry on her restoring process, although it may not be immediately realized. But some have so long abused nature that she cannot recover entirely. Such must feel as long as they live, to a greater or less degree, the result of the violation of nature’s laws.

—We do not include all the youth who are feeble as guilty of wrong habits. There are those who are pure-minded and conscientious, who are sufferers from different causes over which they have no control.

The only sure safety for our children against every vicious practice, is to seek to be admitted into the fold of Christ, and to be taken under the watchcare of the faithful and true Shepherd. He will save them from every evil, shield them from all dangers, if they will heed his voice. He says, “My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me.” In Christ they will find pasture, obtain strength and hope, and will not be troubled with restless longings for something to divert the mind, and satisfy the heart. They have found the pearl of great price, and the mind is at peaceful rest. Their pleasures are of a pure, peaceful, elevated, heavenly character. They leave no painful reflections, no remorse. Such pleasures do not impair health, or prostrate the mind, but are of a healthful nature.

Communion with, and love for, God, the practice of holiness, the destruction of sin, are all pleasant. The reading of God’s word will not fascinate the imagination, and inflame the passions, like a fictitious story-book, but softens, soothes, elevates, and sanctifies, the heart. When in trouble, when assailed by fierce temptations, they have the privilege of prayer. What an exalted privilege! Finite beings, of dust and ashes, admitted through the mediation of Christ, into the audience-chamber of the Most High. In such exercises the soul is brought into a sacred nearness with God, and is renewed in knowledge, and true holiness, and fortified against the assaults of the enemy.

A Mr.—professed to be a devoted follower of Christ. He was in very feeble health. Our feelings of sympathy were called out in his behalf. He could not hold his head steady. His eyes had a glassy appearance, his hands trembled, and when he walked, his knees shook; he staggered like a drunken man, and often seemed ready to fall. He was obliged to fix his eyes upon an object in the distance before him, and then make for that object. He would thus gain force

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enough to reach the place he desired. His case was shown me in vision. I saw that he was deceived in regard to himself, that he was not in favor with God. He had practiced self-abuse until he was a mere wreck of humanity. This vice was shown me as an abomination in the sight of God. No

matter how high a person's profession, those who are willing to be employed in gratifying the lust of the flesh, cannot be Christians. As servants of Christ, their employment, and meditations, and pleasure, should consist in things more excellent.

Many are ignorant of the sinfulness of these habits, and their certain results. Such need to be enlightened. Some who profess to be followers of Christ, know that they are sinning against God, and ruining their health, yet they are slaves to their own corrupt passions. They feel a guilty conscience, and have less and less inclination to approach God in secret prayer. They may keep up the form of religion, yet be destitute of the grace of God in the heart. They have no devotedness to his service, no trust in him, no living to his glory, no pleasure in his ordinances, and no delight in him. The first commandment requires every living being to love and serve God with their whole mind and strength. Especially should professed Christians understand the principles of acceptable obedience.

Can any expect that God will accept a profession, a form, merely, while the heart is withheld, and they refuse to obey his commandments? They sacrifice physical strength and reason upon the altar of lust, and can they think that God will accept their distracted, imbecile service, while they continue their wrong course? Such are just as surely self-murderers as though they pointed a pistol to their own breast, and destroyed their life instantly. In the first case they linger longer, are more debilitated, and destroy gradually the vital force of their constitution, and the mental faculties; yet the work of decay is sure. While they live, they curse the earth with their imbecile influence, are a stumbling-block to sinners, and cause their friends living sorrow, and an immeasurable weight of anxiety and care as they mark the signs of their decay, and have daily evidence of their impaired intellect.

To take one's life instantly is no greater sin in the sight of Heaven, than to destroy it gradually, but surely. Persons who bring upon themselves sure decay, by wrong-doing, will suffer the penalty here, and without a thorough repentance, will not be admitted into Heaven hereafter any sooner than the one who destroys life instantly. The will of God establishes the connection between cause and its effects. Fearful consequences are attached to the least violation of God's law. All will seek to avoid the result, but will not labor to avoid the cause

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which produced the effect. The cause is wrong, the effect right, to  
restrain the transgressor.

The inhabitants of Heaven are perfect, because the will of God is their joy, and supreme delight. Many here destroy their own comfort injure their health, and violate a good conscience, because they will not cease to do wrong. The injunctions to mortify the deeds of the body, with its affections and lusts, has no effect upon them. They profess Christ, but are not his followers, and never can be, until they cease their wrong-doing, and work the work of righteousness.

Females possess less vital force than the other sex, and are deprived very much of the bracing, invigorating air, by their indoors life. The results of self-abuse in them is seen in various diseases, such as catarrh, dropsy, headache, loss of memory and sight, great weakness in the back and loins, affections of the spine, the head often decays inwardly. Cancerous humor, which would lay dormant in the system their lifetime, is inflamed, and commences its eating, destructive work. The mind is often utterly ruined, and insanity takes place.

I was referred to [Romans 1, 18-32](#), as a true description of the world previous to the second appearing of Christ. The only hope for those who practice vile habits is to forever leave them if they place any value upon health here, and salvation hereafter. When these habits have been indulged in for quite a length of time, it requires a determined effort to resist temptation, and refuse the corrupt indulgence. The Mr.—, mentioned, had practiced these habits so long he seemed to have lost the control of himself. He was naturally a smart man, possessing more than common abilities.

But how were all his powers of body and mind brought into subjection by Satan, and consumed upon his altar! This man had gone so far he seemed to be left of God. He would go into the woods and spend days and nights in fasting and prayer that he might overcome this great sin, and then would return to his old habits. God did not hear his prayers. He asked God to do for him what had been in his power to do for himself. He had vowed to God, time and again, and had as often broken his vows, and given himself up to his own corrupt lust, until God had left him to work his own ruin. He has since died. He was a self-murderer. The purity of heaven will never be marred with his society. Those who destroy themselves by

their own acts will never have eternal life. They that will continue to abuse the health and life given them of God in this world, would not make a right use of health and immortal life were it granted them in God's everlasting kingdom.

The practice of secret habits surely destroys the vital forces of the system. All unnecessary vital action will be followed by corresponding depression. Among the young, the vital capital, the brain, is so severely taxed at an early age, that there is a deficiency, and great exhaustion, which leaves the system exposed to disease of various kinds. But the most common of these is consumption. None can live when their vital energies are used up. They must die. God hates everything impure, and his frown is upon all who give themselves up to gradual and sure decay.

[107] "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Those who corrupt their own bodies cannot enjoy the favor of God, until they sincerely repent, make an entire reform, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. None can be Christians and indulge in habits which debilitate the system, and bring on a state of prostration of the vital forces, which end in making a complete wreck of beings formed in the image of God. This moral pollution will certainly bring its reward. The cause must bring the results. Those who profess to be disciples of Christ should be elevated in all their thoughts and acts, and should ever realize that they are fitting for immortality, and that if saved, they must be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Their Christian character must be without a blemish, or they will be pronounced unfit to be taken to a holy heaven, to dwell with pure, sinless beings in God's everlasting kingdom.

It is the special work of Satan in these last days to take possession of the minds of youth, to corrupt their thoughts, and inflame their passions, knowing that by thus doing he can lead them to moral pollution, and then all the noble faculties of the mind will become debased, and he can control them to suit his own purposes. All are free moral agents. And as such they must bring their thoughts to run in the right channel. Their meditations should be of that nature which will elevate their minds, and make Jesus and heaven



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the subjects of their thoughts. Here is a wide field in which the

mind can safely range. If Satan seeks to divert the mind from this to low and sensual things, bring it back again, and place it on eternal things; and when the Lord sees the determined effort made to retain only pure thoughts, he will attract the mind, like the magnet, and purify the thoughts, and enable them to cleanse themselves from every secret sin. “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” The first work for those who would reform, is to purify the imagination. If the mind is led out in a vicious direction, it must be restrained to dwell only upon pure and elevated subjects. When tempted to yield to a corrupt imagination, then flee to the throne of grace and pray for strength from Heaven. In the strength of God the imagination can be restricted to dwell upon things which are pure and heavenly.

Some young persons who have knowledge in the vile practices of the world, seek to awaken the curiosity of other inquisitive minds, and impart to them that secret knowledge which ignorance of would be bliss. They are not content with practicing themselves the vice they have learned. They are hurried on by the Devil, to whisper their evil communications to other minds, to corrupt their good manners. And unless the youth have fixed religious principles, they will be corrupted. A heavy penalty will rest upon those who suffered Satan to use them as mediums to lead astray, and corrupt the minds of others. A heavy curse rested upon the Serpent in Eden, because he was the medium Satan used to tempt our first parents to transgress. And whoever yields themselves to subvert others, a heavy curse from God will follow them. And although those who permit themselves to be led astray, and learn vile habits, will suffer for their sin, yet those guilty of instructing them, will also suffer for their own sins, and the sins they led others to commit. It were better for such if they had never been born.

Those who would have that wisdom which is from God, must become fools in the sinful knowledge of this age, in order to be wise. They should shut their eyes that they may see and learn no evil. They should close their ears lest they hear that which is evil, and obtain that knowledge which would stain their purity of thoughts and acts;

and guard their tongues lest they utter corrupt communications, and guile be found in their mouths.

All are accountable for their actions while in this world upon probation. All have power to control their actions, if they will. If they are weak in virtue and purity of thoughts, and acts, they can obtain help from the Friend of the helpless. Jesus is acquainted with all the weaknesses of human nature, and if entreated, will give strength to overcome the most powerful temptations. All can obtain this strength if they seek for it in humility. Jesus gives all a blessed invitation who are burdened, and laden with sin, to come to him, the sinner's friend. "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Here the most inquisitive may safely learn in the school of Christ that which will prove for their present and everlasting good. The uneasy and dissatisfied will here find rest. With their thoughts and affections centered in Christ, they will obtain true wisdom, which will be worth more to them than the richest earthly treasures.

Many professed Christians do not labor perseveringly. They make too little effort, and are not ready and willing to deny self. The prayer of the living Christian will be "to be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding, that they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness." "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

[108] Here is the true knowledge which should be desired, and possessed by every Christian. This knowledge will not lead to ungodliness. It will not break down the constitution, or bring a gloomy cloud over the mind; but will impart substantial joys, and true happiness. This wisdom is divine, and flows ceaselessly from a pure fountain which gives peace, joy and health.

Even many professed Christians seem to have no earnest desire for this heavenly knowledge, and remain in willing ignorance of this divine grace which it is their privilege to obtain. The only safety for the youth is to seek this precious wisdom which will

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assuredly destroy all desire for corrupt knowledge. And when they

have acquired a relish for the pure, calm, satisfying joys of faith and holiness, every feeling of their being will rise in abhorrence to corrupting pleasures. All can choose life if they will. They can resist sin, take pleasure in the ways of righteousness and true holiness, and be rewarded with eternal life in God's everlasting kingdom. If they choose to corrupt their ways before the Lord, defile their own bodies and commit self-murder, they can do so; but they should remember the judgment is to sit, and the books are to be opened, and they are to be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works. What a fearful, spotted record will be opened before them, of their secret thoughts, and vile acts. Sentence is pronounced upon them, and they are shut out from the city of God, with the ungodly, and miserably perish with the wicked.

Now is the time of preparation. None need to expect that God will do the work of preparing and fitting them up, without their efforts. It is for them to work the works of righteousness, and crowd all the right-doing they can into the little space of time allotted to them before probation closes, that they may have a clean record in Heaven.

Ellen G. White

**Further Testimony** We have thought proper to add to the foregoing the following testimonies from men of high standing and authority in the medical world, corroborative of the views presented in the preceding pages. And in justice to the writer of these pages, we would say that she had read nothing from the authors here quoted, and had read no other works on this subject, previous to putting into our hands what she has written. She is not, therefore, a copyist, although she has stated important truths to which men, who are entitled to our highest confidence, have born testimony.

Trustees

## Appendix D—The 1864 Visit to Dr. Jackson's Institution at Dansville

### A Letter to the Lockwoods

Dansville, N.Y., "Our Home"  
Sept. 1864

Dear Bro. and Sister Lockwood:

I have been trying to find time to write you for some days but there is so much to be done I cannot do half I wish to do.

Adelia and the children have been examined today. The doctor pronounces Adelia sick. We shall have their written prescriptions this week, then you can know more in regard to them. I think Dr. Jackson gave an accurate account of the disposition and organization of our children. He pronounces Willie's head to be one of the best that has ever come under his observation. He gave a good description of Edson's character and peculiarities. He enjoined upon him outdoor exercise and not much study. I think this examination will be worth everything to Edson.

They have all styles of dress here. Some are very becoming, if not so short. We shall get patterns from this place, and I think we can get out a style of dress more healthful than we now wear, and yet not be bloomer or the American costume. Our dresses according to my idea, should be from four to six inches shorter than now worn, and should in no case reach lower than the top of the heel of the shoe, and could be a little shorter even than this with all modesty. I am going to get up a style of dress on my own hook which will accord perfectly with that which has been shown me. Health demands it. Our feeble women must dispense with heavy skirts and tight waists if they value health.

Brother Lockwood, don't groan now. I am not going to extremes, but conscience and health requires a reform.

We shall never imitate Miss Dr. Austin or Mrs. Dr. York. They dress very much like men. We shall imitate or follow no fashion we

have ever yet seen. We shall institute a fashion which will be both economical and healthy.

You may ask what I think of this institution. Some things are excellent. Some things are not good. Their views and teachings in regard to health are, I think, correct. But Dr. Jackson mixes up his theology too much with the health question, which theology to us is certainly objectionable.

He deems it necessary for the health of his patients to let them have pleasurable excitement to keep their spirits up. They play cards for amusement, have a dance once a week and seem to mix these things up with religion. These things of course, we should not countenance, yet, when I view the matter from another standpoint, I am led to inquire, What better can be done for the feeble sick who have no hope of heaven, no consolation received by the Christian. Their source of enjoyment must be derived from a different source, while the Christian has the elevating influence of the power of grace, the sinner must draw from another source his enjoyments. If I ever prize Christ and the Christian hope, it is here, while looking upon poor invalids with but little prospect before them of ever recovering their health and have no hope for a better life.

Dr. Jackson carries out his principles in regard to diet to the letter. He places no butter or salt upon his table, no meat or any kind of grease. But he sets a liberal table. Waiters are constantly in attendance and if a dish is getting low, they remove it and replenish. The food I call liberal and good. All the difficulty is, there is danger of eating too much. All our food is eaten with a keen relish. If any one requires a little salt they have it supplied for the asking. A little bell sits by their plate which they use to call the waiter who provides them what they ask.

From 12 o'clock to quarter before two are resting hours. Everything is quiet. All undress and go to bed. But I forgot to state at half past ten comes the taking of baths. All patients who take treatment enter a large carpeted room with a stove in it. All around the room are hooks. Upon these hooks are the sheets of the patients. Each has his particular hook and their number over the hook.

Upon entering this room, the one who undresses first, wraps a sheet about her and signifies her readiness for a bath. By removing a tin from a hook painted on the back side with brown paint, they

hold that tin until the bath tending women ask, What does No. 1 want? She then tells them either sitz bath, half bath, or dry rubbing according to their prescription. They say, All ready. Then the patient turns this tin brown side out and goes to her bath. This saves all confusion for it is known when all are served.

[110] The bath women put on old duds reaching to the knees, are barefooted and bare-legged and look bad. Yet their manner of dress is according to their work.

I do think we should have an Institution in Mich. to which our Sabbath keeping invalids can resort. Dr. Lay is doing well. He is in the very best place he could be in to learn. He is studying all his leisure moments and is coming out a thorough convert. His wife is doing well. She is gaining, walks well for her. She is one hundred per cent better than when she came here. Dr. Lay is respected in this institution. He ranks among their physicians. I think they would be unwilling to have him leave them. Dr. Lay thinks some of going to N. York City to Dr. Trall's college and attend lectures, obtain a diploma and come out a regular M.D. I believe the Lord's hand is in our coming to this place. We shall learn all we can and try to make a right use of it.

Yesterday we attended the celebration of a wedding conducted in a style, worthy of imitation. Dr.'s only son James was married to Miss Katie Johnson. They were married in their father's cottage and then came to the hall where all the patients were congregated and all the members of the household, also sick patients confined to their rooms were brought out, laid upon sofas and placed in rocking chairs upon the large platform occupied by those who lecture. Some were cripples, some diseased in various ways. The hall was decorated in tasteful style, nothing superfluous or silly. After the bridegroom and bride walked in, then Mrs. Dr. York conducted us to them and gave all who desired an introduction to them. There was a long table arranged with food which was placed upon the plates and passed around to each one. The waiters were constantly passing around with a supply if any more was required. Grapes were passed around in abundance. Everything was liberal, yet plain. They did not even on this occasion depart from their principles of diet which made the thing consistent and admirable. They had extras, graham pudding with dates in it, gems mixed with raisins, custard, apple pie and

baked apples, a few other simple things, nothing like fine flour was seen, even upon this extra occasion.

I am afraid as a people we should not carry out our principles as well. After we had eaten Mr. Clark a great musician, sang and played upon an instrument of music, cabinet organ. His song was very amusing, but enough of this.

I don't know when you will get another letter. I meant to send the price of those shoes so if any wanted cheap shoes they could get them for their children. But there are so many hands and so many different prices and kinds of shoes that I think it would be impossible to tell you so that you could understand in regard [to] them. They had better remain until we return, I think.

We hope you will enjoy yourselves well in our absence. Be cheerful, above all things be happy. Look on the bright side and may the blessing of God rest upon you in rich abundance.

In love,

Ellen G. White

### The Adelia Patten Letter

[111]

“Our Home”

On the Side of the Mountain

September 15, 1864

Dear Sister Lockwood:

I don't think it would be serving you very pretty not to write you a letter as soon as opportunity presents itself. I wrote about half a letter to Anna, and now as I have got through with what I had to do on the *Instructor* I take time to tell you how I stand Cure life. I must say I am interested in hearing Dr. Jackson lecture, but he combines his theology, his medical instruction, his comical nonsense and his theatrical gestures all into his discourses. He flies about like a young man, and will come into the lecture hail with an old blue woolen cap on, which he takes off and puts under his arm and walks along and mounts the rostrum with all the firmness of an experienced lecturer.

We passed examination a day or two ago. As my turn came he set me [in] a chair, and said “My dear, you are sick ain't you.” Bro. White gave him a little sketch of our Graham life during the past

summer and of what my cares and labors had been. He said that I had evidently overworked, that I must make a decided change, and take a rest or it would tell seriously by and by. He gave advice &c. and said when I got thoroughly initiated to their style of living if I took proper exercise and rest I would enjoy better health than ever before. I have their system about one half of it practically learned.

We have the crackers, they don't furnish "gems" only in case of a wedding or some other extra occasion. They don't have salt. The pudding is thin and fresh squash and cabbage without salt or vinegar and oh such times. I had a little salt dish this noon and wanted to pocket the salt that was left and as none of our company had an envelope so had Bro. W[hite] tip it onto his passbook.

Yours in haste and love, Adelia P. Patten

Ellen G. White Estate General Correspondence File

### **Dr. Jackson's Report On The Examination Of Willie C. White**

Our Home, Dansville, N.Y.,

Sept. 14, 1864

#### Description of Character of Willie C. White

This boy is of the nervous-bilious constitution and gets his peculiarities almost entirely from his father or from his father's mother's side. He is of good stock and good blood—he is "thorough bred." He has got a woman's temperament, and will be kind, loving and courteous. He has an excellent head, and will make a kind, good, true man. He will always make friends wherever he goes. He has a fine physical build throughout, with the exception of his bowels which are too large. He is of scrofulous habit and decidedly predisposed to enlargement of the mesenteric glands, and is in danger, under bad habits of living, of having them so increase in size as to break down his nutritive capacity. He should live upon the simplest food, making fruit an essential or staple of his aliment. He should not be pushed in school, but be permitted to learn largely from out of door things or inductively, cultivating his special senses rather than his abstract capacity for learning until he is twelve or fifteen years of age. If he is cared for with proper heed and propriety, there is no reason why he may not live; but he is liable to diseases of the



glandular system, and bad habits of living (indicated by gross food and the use of stimulants and spices) would, in the long run, be very prejudicial to his health.

He has a very fine organization. His bone and brain, muscle and sinew and blood are all of fine quality. If he can be reared to manhood, he will take rank as a lover of whatever is good and true in any community where he may be. He naturally takes to the right and true. Of his own accord he would sustain loving relations to those of his own age or more advanced in years.

His education we could hardly speak of at present until he is older. That needs to be decided by what he will, in years to come, exhibit. He should eat but twice a day have his body kept clean, be brought up to industrious habits, and taught to regularity in their exhibition.

Ellen G. White Estate

Document File # 783

[112] **Appendix E—The Spirit of Prophecy and the Cause  
of Reform**

by James White [The Review and Herald, March 17, 1868](#)

Dear Brother: Yours of Feb. 23 I have, and think proper to reply through the Review. Probably there has not been an important movement or reform for the benefit of fallen man, which would, if properly conducted, result in his own spiritual advancement, that has been free from extremes. There are always many who move too slowly, and that testimony necessary to urge them to duty, is always sure to be taken advantage of by some who have more zeal than caution. While Satan tempts the many to be too slow, he always tempts these to be too fast. Mrs. W.'s labors are made very hard, and, sometimes perplexing, by reason of the course of extremists, who think the only safe position is to take the extreme view of every expression she has written or spoken upon points where different views may be taken.

These persons will often bang upon their interpretation of an expression, and push matters at all hazards, and utterly disregard what she has said of the danger of extremes. We suggest that these loosen their hold of some of her strong expressions designed to move the tardy, and for awhile suspend their whole weight upon some of the many cautions she has given for the benefit of extremists. In doing this, they will be more safe themselves, and will get out of her way, that she may speak freely to those who need urging to duty. Now they stand between her and the people, and paralyze her testimony, and are the cause of divisions. Satan uses two classes to keep the body of the people behind their duty. First, those who are too fast, and second, the rebellious. The latter are usually either those who have been reprov'd for their haste, or those who have been turned aside by these hasty persons. Let these get out of the way, and let the body be moved forward unitedly, by the testimony of the Lord....

Mrs. W. needs the help of all who can help in the cause of truth and reform. The people generally are slow to move, and hardly move at all. A few move cautiously and well, while others go too fast. The work of reform is not brought about in a single day. The people must be helped where they are. They can be helped better by one standing on the line of truth nearest them, than on the side the greatest distance from them. It is best for them to be taught on all points of truth and duty by persons of judgment and caution, and as fast as God in his providence unfolds them to his people. He who is but partly reformed himself, and teaches the people, will do some good. He who sees his duty of reform, and is full strict enough in any case, and allows of no exceptions, and drives matters, is sure to drive the reform into the ground, hurt his own soul, and injure others. Such do not help Mrs. W., but greatly burden her in her arduous work. We invite, yea, entreat, such to get out of the way, and let Mrs. W. come to the people. She works to this disadvantage, namely: she makes strong appeals to the people, which a few feel deeply, and take strong positions, and go to extremes. Then to save the cause from ruin in consequence of these extremes, she is obliged to come out with reproofs for extremists in a public manner. This is better than to have things go to pieces; but the influence of both the extremes and the reproofs are terrible on the cause and brings upon Mrs. W. a three-fold burden. Here is the difficulty: What she may say to urge the tardy; is taken by the prompt to urge them over the mark. And what she may say to caution the prompt, zealous, incautious ones, is taken by the tardy as an excuse to remain too far behind.

We say to those who wish to help Mrs. W. in her work, you will not find her far ahead of the people, with a few extremists. No, she is back with the people, tugging away at the wheel of reform, and has to lift all the harder because of your extreme advance. Come back, good, whole-hearted souls, and stand by her side, and lift where she lifts. What can you do there at such a distance from the people? Come back. You must meet the people where they are.

By this, dear brother, we do not mean that any are to come back to the wrong habits of the people. No, indeed. Their habits should be right. In this respect we say to them, Go on. But those who here run ahead of the work should come back from their heated zeal, and

want of Christian patience, and labor for their brethren in the cause of reform as they can bear it. In this way they can help Mrs. W., who is tugging along with a double burden of the work. There may be those, whom others cannot reach, that she can, if rashness on the part of other, does not place them out of her reach. If one cannot mend a vase, he need not break it into fragments. It is possible that another can mend it.

We protest against the plan practically taught by some, "Cure or Kill," and give a dose accordingly. Some sores need help in their cure, others will work their own cure best. It takes time to reform a poor, sinful, intemperate, blind, stubborn piece of humanity. It is a large job. And those who come a good way short of the faith of Abraham, and the patience of Job, had better lay out a little more time and toil on their own case, before going to work for others.

[113] He who deals with mind, engages in the nicest piece of business ever undertaken by mortal man. And the greater the reform, and the closer the work, the more difficult and responsible it is. Some persons can be converted in a day, others in a week, and still others in a month, while it takes from one to two years to convert and thoroughly reform some. Those who have a work laid upon them for others, will patiently set before the people plain principles, and clear facts, and then leave them to answer for the use they make of them. Those called to teach, are responsible for what they teach, and how they live their own teachings. And it should be a matter of great relief to them, that they are not responsible for the manner the people dispose of their teachings, providing they do their duty, both by precept, and example. Let him who teaches make haste to do his duty, then patiently wait the result. Don't drive. "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me."

God has called some to teach the truth, and has called all to live it, teachers, and all. Some leave off living out the sweet principles of the truth, and go to battling for it. Now if they cannot do both, they had better live out the truth, and leave the teaching of it to those who can both patiently live and preach the truth. In fact, those not especially called of God, and qualified for the work, will be safest for themselves and others in the position of learners

Satan stands ready to tempt unconsecrated persons, and prejudice them against the truth. And those who practice it, and especially

those who teach it should be exceeding careful not to give Satan good grounds to tempt people concerning their course. The day of the Lord is the great event before us. The keeping of the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus is the great duty of God's people. And that they may do this acceptably, they must reform in life, and cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Those who drop all other points, and run their own testimony all on the health, and dress reform, will disgust the people, and before they are aware of it, they will introduce a spirit of discussion, and contention into their meetings.

The health reform has not taken the place in any respect whatever, of the third angel's message. It is a work designed to follow in its wake. Yet it is a fact that from the course of some, people might labor under similar difficulties of that of the colored boy at Johnstown Convocation, who differed with Mrs. W., and was filled with prejudice against her, because he could not see that the Health Institute was the third angel's message. Mrs. W. explained the matter, patiently, and the poor boy appeared quite satisfied.

Let the work go on, saith my soul, in all its branches. Not a piece at a time, lest it go all to pieces; but let it move on as a complete whole. Not fluttering and trembling in the wind, but like an old seventy-four gunship, let all the friends of truth and reform get on board and work together. Yet let all the friends of Jesus, his coming, and the future glory of the kingdom, patiently, cheerfully, joyfully unite and stand together in the work of preparation.

Dear brother, your letter suggested a few thoughts, and as I have written, others have come. I would not give the impression that all I have said is directed to you alone. My acquaintance with you has amounted to a little more than meeting you in a crowded meeting a few times. I have been favorably impressed with your zeal for the truth, and hope it will be balanced with due caution, patience and tenderness toward the erring. What I have stated in these remarks to you, have been for the benefit of the readers of the Review. If anything I have said meets your ease, and that of brethren in Monroe, I am glad, and hope it will accomplish good. I wish you prosperity, and hope to hear from you and others of your church soon.

A servant of the church,  
James White

## Appendix F—Toward A Factual Concept of Inspiration

[114]

Arthur L. White

Inspiration is a point of vital importance to Seventh-day Adventists in this day when there seems to be a waning of certainty concerning what have been understood to be God's revelations to man. Ellen G. White's statements concerning the Bible and her work indicate that the concept of verbal inspiration is without support in either the Bible writers' or her own word. This position was also clearly set forth at the General Conference session of 1883:

We believe the light given by God to His servants is by the enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed.—*Review and Herald*, Nov. 27, 1883.

In spite of this, there are some among Seventh-day Adventists who still hold, perhaps subconsciously, the concept that the original autographs of the Bible writers must have been "infallible" and "inerrant."

On the other hand, there are some who take the position that the Bible, not being verbally inspired, and evidently not being infallible in all its details, has only relative or partial accuracy. The essential purpose of the Bible, they assert, is to make men "wise unto salvation," and this guarantees absolute reliability only thus far and no further. Consequently, Bible statements in such realms as history, chronology, geography, anthropology, geology, astronomy, botany, and so on, are beyond this realm and are considered quite inconsequential. It is suggested by those who hold such views that in these realms the Bible may disappoint or even mislead. This viewpoint leaves the Scriptures serving as a dependable guide only in the field of spiritual matters, and to go beyond this would be to impose tests on inspiration stronger than are warranted by the claims of the prophets. Obviously, not both can be right.

The position one takes on the inspiration of the Bible would most likely be the position he would hold toward the inspiration of the E. G. White writings. Indeed, we find that both views, in varying degrees, have been held through the years, and are held today, in regard to the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

When we approach the question of inspiration we step on holy ground, and this behooves caution. We may well consider the words of Ellen White commenting on a presentation made in the *Review and Herald* and at Battle Creek College:

In the college the subject of Inspiration has been taught, and finite men have taken it upon themselves to say that some things in the Scriptures were inspired and some were not. I was shown that the Lord did not inspire the articles on inspiration published in the *Review* [January 15, 1884], neither did He approve their endorsement before our youth in the college.

When men venture to criticize the Word of God, they venture on sacred, holy ground, and had better fear and tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness. God sets no man to pronounce judgment on His Word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired. The testimonies have been treated in the same way; but God is not in this.—[Letter 22, 1889](#) (quoted in [Selected Messages 1:23](#)).

These words should not preclude thoughtful, reverent study to understand how God communicates with man through His prophets, but they do alert us to the caution with which we should approach this topic. We believe that there is greater safety in arriving at conclusions based on facts than in depending on an approach largely theoretical and perhaps idealistic.

### **Adventists Uniquely Fortunate**

Seventh-day Adventists are uniquely fortunate in approaching the question of the inspiration of the prophets. We are not left to find our way, drawing all our conclusions from writings of two thousand years and more ago that have come down to us through varied transcriptions and translations. With us it is an almost contemporary matter, for we have had a prophet in our midst. It is generally granted by the careful student of her works that the experience of Ellen G.



White was not different from that of the prophets of old, and that the Spirit of God in His prophetic mission did not function differently in the experience of Ellen G. White from the way He functioned in the experience of the Bible prophets.

What is more, rather than having in our possession only relatively few chapters or a handful of letters, as is the case with the extant records of the Bible prophets, we have the full range of Ellen G. White writings penned through a period of seventy years, embodying her published books, her 4,600 periodical articles, her manuscripts, letters, diaries, and so on. We have also the testimony of her contemporaries, presenting the eyewitness accounts of those who lived and worked closely with her and were well able to judge her work. Both she and they discussed many points touching on the manner in which the light was imparted to her, and how she in turn conveyed the messages to those for whom they were intended—in other words, the operation of inspiration. Further, she wrote in the English language, so we are not confronted with problems of translation and only rarely with those of transcription.

Consequently, if we may accept Ellen White as an honest witness, then her observations concerning her work, her statements on inspiration, and her declaration as to the work of the prophets of old are particularly significant to us. These cumulative contemporary records, providing a report of the work of the prophet in action, can well form a basis for arriving at an accurate understanding of inspiration.

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An examination of these practical records indicates to the careful observer that neither the first nor the second proposition concerning inspiration set forth at the outset is correct. The truth, it would seem, lies somewhere between the two. It is my purpose to set forth appropriate exhibits, primarily from the writings and experience of Ellen G. White, and to draw conclusions there from that may be of service in reaching a factual conclusion. In so doing I shall traverse a good deal of familiar ground. This seems essential, for it is advantageous to have the facts well supported.

## God and the Prophets

First of all, we should note that the Lord, in His work of imparting light to the prophets, does not follow any precise procedure. “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” ([Hebrews 1:1, 2](#)). No one rule can be established or one uniform pattern delineated that will govern all the procedures in this matter of God’s giving His messages to man.

Second, the prophet is a normal human being with all the facilities possessed by an individual. The circumstances of his childhood days may have been different from those of another, and his educational background and occupational aptitude may vary, but he sees, hears, smells, meditates, reads, eats, sleeps, worships, speaks, travels, and so on, in the same manner as we all do. At the time of his call to the prophetic office he may be well informed in many lines of knowledge common to all men or he may not have been so well informed. All through his life subsequent to his call to the prophetic office, he may continue to gain information in matters common to all in the same manner in which we all obtain such information. Being called to the prophetic office does not blot from his mind information gained in past experiences, nor does it block his mental faculties from continuing to obtain information as he did before his call to the prophetic office.

Being called in a unique manner to the service of the Lord as a prophet, he is, through visions, given special information imparted to him by God. This may be in the fields of theology and religious experience, with man’s relation to God and the plan of salvation in its fullness made clear. It may be in the field of history, recounting the special guidance of God for His people or for individuals, or warning of the perils incident to Satan’s determination to destroy the work of God or the hope of souls. It may be in the realm of eschatology. It may be in the field of education or church administration. It may be in the opening up of hidden sins. The fields in which information may be imparted are without limit, for the work is in God’s hands. This experience is uniquely that of the prophet. Although the Spirit of God may speak to the heart of each consecrated person, not all are or can be prophets. God alone selects the prophet. “Holy men of

God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21). The prophet does not choose his work, and he has no control in the matter of the visions either as to timing or content.

### **Visions and Bearing Testimony**

The visions may have been given during the day accompanied by physical phenomenon or in the night season in a prophetic dream. The prophet did not write while in vision. He may have spoken a few words, indicating to any observers the nature of the revelation being received. While not in vision the prophet imparted to others what was intended for them, either orally, in interviews, or in writing.

Some of the information thus divinely received he may not have been at liberty to impart to others at once. Perhaps it had to be held until certain developments had taken place; or perhaps the light was given to fully orient the prophet, but he was not at liberty to disclose all that was revealed to him. Note this concerning Paul:

The great apostle had many visions. The Lord showed him many things that it is not lawful for a man to utter. Why could he not tell the believers what he had seen? Because they would have made a misapplication of the great truths presented. They would not have been able to comprehend these truths. And yet all that was shown to Paul moulded the messages that God gave him to bear to the churches.—[Letter 161, 1903](#).

On several occasions Ellen White stated that she was not at liberty to speak of what had been revealed to her until a certain time or until and unless there were certain developments. The vision might have been given just at the time certain information was needed, or the prophet may have been given many visions opening up to him what would take place, so that when the events occurred he would understand them and be prepared to deal with the situation. Note again a reference to the experience of the apostle Paul:

The Lord had shown him the difficulties and dangers which would arise in the churches, that when they should develop he might know just how to treat them.—[Testimonies for the Church 5:65](#).

The report of a church member led to the writing of instruction to the church at Corinth.

Now observe a paralleling E. G. White experience. She was in Australia, and certain matters were brought before here in a council meeting. Of them she wrote:

As my brethren read the selections from letters, I knew what to say to them; for this matter has been presented to me again and again.... I have not felt at liberty to write out the matter until now.

The light that the Lord has given me at different times ... etc.—  
[The Southern Work, 72](#) (1966 printing).

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### How the Light Came to the Prophet

The many different ways in which the light was imparted to the prophet is a study having a bearing on this presentation, but is too extended for this book, except for one later allusion. See *Messenger to the Remnant*, pages 9-11, for illustrations.

A summary of this chapter reveals that light came to Ellen White—

1. In visions in which she was seemingly present and participating in the events she was viewing.

2. In broad panoramic views such as when the events of history past and future passed before her.

3. Viewing events with the angel standing by her side explaining the significance of the scenes.

4. As seemingly she visited Institutions, meetings in session, and families in their homes, hearing all that was said and seeing all that was done.

5. As she was shown institutional buildings which had not yet been erected and then was given instruction covering the work to be done in these Institutions.

6. In symbolic representations, usually explained by the angel.

7. In contrasting views in which two situations were opened to her, neither of which had taken place, with an explanation of the results in each case.

So much for the vision—the process, first, by which the prophet received from God light through which his mind was enlightened.

The second process was the bearing of testimony of what had been revealed in vision. Having been received, the message must be imparted by the prophet in the best way and with the most accurate

language at the prophet's command in an attempt to create in the mind of the recipient the thought, the idea, the picture contained in the message.

The prophet at one time might use certain words and at another time employ other words in conveying the same message. He might have at ready command words that would convey the message satisfactorily, or he might find it necessary to study diligently to find words adequate to convey the message correctly and impressively. While writing *The Desire of Ages*, Mrs. White declared: "I tremble for fear lest I shall belittle the great plan of salvation by cheap words."—[Letter 40, 1892](#) (quoted in *Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 59). The transmission of the message might suffer some impairment because of the inadequacy of the prophet. Note this comment by Ellen G. White:

The Bible... was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all "given by Inspiration of God" ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)); yet they are expressed in the words of men.

The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language... Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by another. As presented through different individuals, the truth is brought out in its varied aspects. *One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of the subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another siezes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind—a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all. And the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life.—*[The Great Controversy, 5, 6.](#)

## Under the Guidance of the Holy Spirit

Attention should be given to the expression “Each, *under the guidance of the Holy Spirit*, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind.” Although the prophet must draw upon his facilities of expression in presenting his message, the work of the Holy Spirit must not be overlooked. This is a vital point. Ellen White put it this way: “Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.”—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#) (quoted in [Selected Messages 1:37](#)). In 1860, in answering certain questions, she also touched on this point:

Sometimes the things which I have seen are hid from me after I come out of vision, and I cannot call them to mind until I am brought before a company where that vision applies, then the things which I have seen come to my mind with force. *I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing a vision, as in having the vision.* It is impossible for me to call up things which have been shown me unless the Lord brings them before me at the time that He is pleased to have me relate or write *them*.—[Spiritual Gifts 2:292, 293](#) (quoted in [Selected Messages 1:36, 37](#)).

The thought is again emphasized:

Through the inspiration of His Spirit the Lord gave His apostles truth, to be expressed according to the development of their minds by the Holy Spirit. But the mind is not cramped, as if forced into a certain mold.—[Letter 53, 1900](#) (quoted in [Selected Messages 1:22](#)).

[117] The prophet, then, received his message through the visions while totally under the influence of the Spirit of God. He bore his *testimony* under the influence of the Spirit of God, but not to the point of mechanical control, or in a forced mold. Rather, he communicated the message in the best manner consistent with his background and facility of expression. On certain rare occasions the very words to be used were called to his mind by the Spirit of God. Note this from Ellen White. In a letter of admonition, after dealing with certain situations, she stated:

I am trying to catch the very words and expressions that were made in reference to this matter, and as my pen hesitates a moment, the appropriate words come to my *mind*.—[Letter 123, 1904](#).

Another statement reads:

While I am writing out important matter, He [the Holy Spirit] is beside me helping me... and when I am puzzled for a fit word with which to express my thoughts, He brings it clearly and distinctly to my *mind*.—[Letter 127, 1902](#).

### **The Revelation Infallible—Vehicles of Thought Finite and Imperfect**

Ellen White declares of the Bible:

The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will.

“Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof” ...—[The Great Controversy, vii](#).

She does not state that the wording of the Scriptures is infallible. But the Scriptures provide an infallible revelation. The revelation of God’s will is authoritative and infallible, but the language used in imparting it to mankind is not infallible. Declares Ellen White: “God and heaven alone are infallible.”—[Selected Messages 1:37](#). And again in speaking of her work she says: “In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible.”—*Ibid*. She further illuminates this point, saying:

The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may comprehend His words. Thus is shown God’s condescension. *He meets fallen human beings where they are*. The Bible, perfect as it is in its simplicity, does not answer to the great ideas of God; for *infinite ideas cannot be perfectly embodied in finite vehicles of thought*. Instead of the expressions of the Bible being exaggerated, as many people suppose, the strong expressions break down before the magnificence of the thought, though the penman selected the most expressive language through which to convey the truths of higher education.—[Selected Messages 1:22](#).

### **Sources of the Prophet's Information**

The fields of presentation of the inspired writers are broad and diverse. As already observed, the prophet is in possession of many lines of common knowledge, and his mind has been illuminated by the revelations received from God. To a large degree he carries the responsibility, under the impress of the Spirit of God, for the choice of the time and place and content of presentation. He exercises great care that his message shall not be influenced in its basic concepts by his own opinions or the thinking of his contemporaries, yet in its presentation he may use some items of information that are matters of common knowledge, such as the distance between places, the location of a given happening, or the time of a commonly known event.

It is at this point that an understanding of the manner in which information often was given to the prophet is vital. We pause to review. The description of the vision of Moses just before his death is very illuminating:

And now a panoramic view of the Land of Promise was presented to him. Every part of the country was spread out before him, not faint and uncertain in the dim distance, but standing out clear, distinct, and beautiful to his delighted vision. In this scene it was presented, not as it then appeared, but as it would become, with God's blessing upon it, in the possession of Israel. He seemed to be looking upon a second Eden. There were mountains clothed with cedars of Lebanon, hills gray with olives and fragrant with the odor of the vine, wide green plains bright with flowers and rich in fruitfulness, here the palm trees of the tropics, there waving fields of wheat and barley, sunny valleys musical with the ripple of brooks and the song of birds, goodly cities and fair gardens, lakes rich in "the abundance of the seas," grazing flocks upon the hillsides, and even amid the rocks the wild bee's hoarded treasures. Moses saw the chosen people established in Canaan, each of the tribes in its own possession. He had a view of their history after the settlement of the Promised Land; the long, sad story of their apostasy and its punishment was spread out before him. He saw them, because of their sins, dispersed among the heathen, the glory departed from Israel, her beautiful city in ruins, and her people captives in strange lands. He saw them restored to



the land of their fathers, and at last brought under the dominion of Rome.

He was permitted to look down the stream of time and behold the first advent of our Saviour. He saw Jesus as a babe in Bethlehem. He heard the voices of the angelic host break forth in the glad song of praise to God and peace on earth.... He beheld Christ's humble life in Nazareth, His ministry of love and sympathy and healing, His rejection by a proud, unbelieving nation. Amazed he listened to their boastful exaltation of the law of God, while they despised and rejected Him by whom the law was given. He saw Jesus upon Olivet as with weeping He bade farewell to the city of His love...

He followed the Saviour to Gethsemane, and beheld the agony in the garden, the betrayal, the mockery and scourging—the crucifixion.... He heard Christ's agonizing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He saw Him lying in Joseph's new tomb. The darkness of hopeless despair seemed to enshroud the world. But he looked again, and beheld Him coming forth a conqueror, and ascending to heaven escorted by adoring angels and leading a multitude of captives. He saw the shining gates open to receive Him, and the host of heaven with songs of triumph welcoming their Commander. And it was there revealed to him that he himself would be one who should attend the Saviour, and open to Him the everlasting gates.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 472-476.

The dramatic picture continues, but we need go no further. Enthralled, Moses watched the events take place, seeing, hearing, and participating, and in receiving the message even the sense of smell came into play. In this vivid manner the history of the future was opened up to the prophet. It is very unlikely that dates were revealed to him. It is not likely that all the cities he saw were named. Those were inconsequential details, not of primary importance to the unfolding theme.

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### Ellen White Views History

It was doubtless in just this manner that history past and future was presented to Ellen White, history on which was woven the tapestry of the great controversy theme. Thus she declares in her introduction to her book *The Great Controversy*:

Through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the scenes of the long-continued conflict between good and evil have been opened to the writer of these pages. From time to time I have been permitted to behold the working, in different ages, of the great controversy between Christ, the Prince of life, the Author of our salvation, and Satan, the prince of evil, the author of sin, the first transgressor of God's holy law.—Page x.

And again:

As the Spirit of God has opened to my mind the great truths of His word, and the scenes of the past and the future, I have been bidden to make known to others that which has thus been revealed—to trace the history of the controversy in past ages, and especially so to present it as to shed a light on the fast-approaching struggle of the future.—[The Great Controversy](#), xi.

But was she shown in each instance in minute detail all of the names of the places and the dates of the events which she beheld? The evidence is that she was not. She saw events occur. The significant events as a part of the controversy story were the important part, the *basic concept*. Minor details and incidental references not basic to the account were of much less importance. Some of this information could be ascertained from the sacred writings, some from common sources of knowledge, some from reliable historians. Apparently God in His providence did not consider it essential to impart these minutiae through vision. This leads us to the point of just how much we are justified in demanding of divine revelation.

### Regarding Details of Minor Consequence

Henry Alford, the highly appreciated British theologian, in his *New Testament for English Readers* in discussing “the inspiration of the evangelists and other New Testament writers” under point 11 suggests that the leading of the minds of the apostles by the Holy Spirit in their reconstruction of the gospel story “admits of much variety in points of minor consequence,”<sup>1</sup> and he points out:

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<sup>1</sup>Note: This statement, long known to the workers in Mrs. White's office at Elmshaven, was considered by them and their successors as summing up the subject factually in full harmony with what they had observed in their close association with Ellen

Two men may be equally led by the Holy Spirit to record the events of our Lord's life for our edification, though one may believe and record, that the visit to the Gadarenes took place before the calling of Matthew, while the other places it after that event; though one in narrating it speaks of two demoniacs,—the other, only of one.

In dealing with points of insignificance or minor consequence Alford continues:

14. And not only of the *arrangement* of the Evangelic history are these remarks to be understood. There are certain minor points of accuracy or inaccuracy, of which human research suffices to inform men, and on which, from want of that research, it is often the practice to speak vaguely and inexactly. Such are sometimes the conventionally received distances from place to place; such are the common accounts of phenomena in natural history, etc. Now in matters of this kind, the Evangelists and Apostles were not supernaturally informed, but left, in common with others, to the guidance of their natural faculties.

In describing the walk to Emmaus, Luke informs us, as presented in the K.J.V., that this town “was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs.” In [Testimonies for the Church 9:173](#), Ellen White describes Loma Linda as “*about* four miles from Redlands.” We may properly ask, Did the Holy Spirit impart this detailed information on “the conventionally received distances” between the cities named, or did the prophetic writers draw this incidental and unimportant but descriptive information from the common source of knowledge available to anyone?

In discussing the number of rooms in Paradise Valley Sanitarium and the fact that in a letter she had described the building as having 40 rooms when in reality it had only 38, she stated:

The information given concerning the number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium was given, not as a revelation from the Lord, but simply as a human opinion. There has never been revealed to me the exact number of rooms in any of our sanitariums; and the knowledge I have obtained of such things I have gained by inquiring of those who were supposed to know. In my words, when speaking

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G. White and her writings. See Appendix B of the book *The Writings of Ellen G. White* for Alford's full statement

upon these common subjects, there is nothing to lead minds to believe that I receive my knowledge in a vision from the Lord and am stating it as such...

When the Holy Spirit reveals anything regarding the institutions connected with the Lord's work, or concerning the work of God upon human hearts and minds, as He has revealed these things through me in the past, the message given is to be regarded as light given of God for those who need it. But for one to mix the sacred with the common is a great mistake. In a tendency to do this we may see the working of the enemy to destroy souls.—[Selected Messages 1:38](#).

The point is so clear that further comment is uncalled for.

To return to the Alford statement on the inspiration of the New Testament writers:

[119] 15. The same may be said of citations and dates from history. In the last apology of Stephen, in which he spoke being full of the Holy Ghost, and with divine influence beaming from his countenance, we have at least two demonstrable inaccuracies in points of minor detail. And the occurrence of similar ones in the gospels would not in any way affect the inspiration or the veracity of the Evangelists.

Stephen in his address in an incidental reference to the people who went down into Egypt, puts the number at “threescore and fifteen souls” ([Acts 7:14](#)). The Genesis record in presenting the history, a basic account in the historical setting, states, “All the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten” ([Genesis 46:27](#)). This record makes it clear that this number included “the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt.”

The Genesis record is the detailed historical account; the reference in Stephen's defense is but an incidental reference. Would we require that the Holy Spirit in this crisis presentation should supernaturally guide Stephen's mind on an inconsequential point of information that at least in its general features was a matter of common knowledge to all Jews? Would we use Stephen's statement to correct the basic historical record? In other words, would we make Stephen on this incidental point an “authority on history”? If we do not choose to do so, does this impair his reliability as an inspired witness?

## History and the Details of History

Elder W. C. White, addressing the General Conference Autumn Council on October 30, 1911, declared:

“Mother has never claimed to be authority on history.” Ellen G. White endorsed this statement. Her son was explaining the 1911 revision of *The Great Controversy* to the council in a statement that, when transcribed, filled six full single-spaced pages.

This sentence has become a classical exhibit in some discussions and in certain statements touching on the inspiration of the E. G. White writings. It is a factor that not infrequently leads some individuals to take the position that little reliance can be placed on the historical areas of the E. G. White writings. This is akin to Ellen White’s statement, “I did not claim to be a prophetess,” made in the Battle Creek Tabernacle on October 2, 1904 (see [Selected Messages 1:31-35](#)). These words, standing alone, can be quite misleading. They have frequently been quoted out of context. But taken in the setting of her life experience, her many allusions to her prophetic work, and her own explanation, the matter becomes clear. Two statements from Ellen White read:

During the discourse, I said that I did not claim to be a prophetess. Some were surprised at this statement, and as much is being said in regard to it, I will make an explanation. Others have called me a prophetess, but I have never assumed that title. I have not felt that it was my duty thus to designate myself. Those who boldly assume that they are prophets in this our day are often a reproach to the cause of Christ.—[Letter 55, 1905](#) (quoted in [Selected Messages 1:36](#)).

My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there. It embraces much more than the minds of those who have been sowing the seeds of unbelief can comprehend.—[Letter 244, 1906](#) (quoted in [Selected Messages 1:36](#)).

Likewise, the E. G. White-approved statement by W. C. White, “Mother has never claimed to be authority on history,” is rightly employed only in the light of the full W. C. White declaration of 1911, other statements made by him, and Ellen White’s own statements. The issues were: (1) Was it proper and right to revise *The Great Controversy*, an inspired book, even though the work

was done by Mrs. White herself, or under her eye? (2) Did the E. G. White's use of historical quotations as a part of her record impart inspiration or a seal of inerrancy to the statements quoted? (3) Inasmuch as *The Great Controversy* was an inspired book, would not the minute detail of historical account embodied therein settle in the minds of Seventh-day Adventists any differences that might occur in the records of various historians? In other words, would not Mrs. White's writings of history serve to correct history in all its minor details?

If we held to verbal inspiration, this should be so. The point made by W. C. White in saying, "Mother has never claimed to be authority on history," was his attempt to prevent an unwarranted use of the E. G. White writings as settling the minor points of difference between historians. With his knowledge of the manner in which the light came to his mother, he felt that the course followed by some was unjustified.

Ellen White described her procedure in moving toward the revision of *The Great Controversy* in a letter to the editor of the *Review and Herald* on July 25, 1911:

When I learned that *Great Controversy* must be reset, I determined that we would have everything closely examined, to see if the truths it contained were stated in the very best manner, to convince those not of our faith that the Lord had guided and sustained me in the writing of its pages.

As a result of the thorough examination by our most experienced workers, some changing in the world has been proposed. These changes I have carefully examined, and *approved*.—[Letter 56, 1911](#).

Perhaps an illustration will be in place.

### An Illustration

One of the points called to Ellen White's attention in response to her call for an examination of the book referred to in her letter just quoted involved her account of St. Bartholomew's massacre. The *Great Controversy*, 1888 edition, states on [page 272](#):

The great bell of the palace, tolling at the dead of night, was a signal for the slaughter.

She was now informed that historians differed on the point of which bell actually gave the signal, (1) the bell of the palace, (2) the bell of the Palace of Justice, or (3) the bell of the church of St. Germain. All three were within a radius of approximately a city block. The plan was that the bell of the palace would give the signal, and certain reliable historians state that it did. Others differed. Here is some of the documentation taken from our files having to do with the 1911 revision: Criticism:

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All the histories dealing with the French Revolution which I have been able to consult, state that it was the original plan to toll the bell of the palace as the signal, but owing to special circumstances, the signal was given by the ringing of the bell of the church of St. Germain.

*Wylie's Account:* It was now eleven o'clock of Saturday night, and the massacre was to begin at daybreak.... The signal for the massacre was to be the tolling of the great *bell of the Palace of Justice*. ... The Queen mother feeling the suspense unbearable, or else afraid, as Maimbourg suggests, that Charles, "greatly disturbed by the idea of the horrible butchery, would revoke the order he had given for it," anticipated the signal by sending one at two o'clock of the morning to ring the bell of St. Germain l'Auxerois, which was nearer than that of the Palace of Justice.

Scarcely had its first peal startled the silence of the night when a pistol-shot was heard. The king started to his feet, and summoning an attendant he bade him go and stop the massacre. It was too late; the bloody work had begun. The great bell of the Palace had now begun to toll; another moment and every steeple in Paris was sending forth its peal; a hundred tocsins sounded at *once*.—*History of Protestantism*, vol. 2, p. 600.

*Eyewitness Account:* As soon as they had caused *the bell of the palace clock* to ring, on every side arose the cry, "To arms! And the people ran, etc."—Account of the Massacre by "the statesman and fair-minded historian, De Thou (1553-1617), who as a young man witnessed the Massacre of St. Bartholomew."—Quoted in J. H. Robinson's *Readings of European History*, chap. 28, sec. 6 (No. 286), pp. 180-182.

*New International Encyclopedia*: From the tower of the royal palace the signal was given for a carnival of blood.—Art. “Bartholomew.”

Ellen White in vision saw and heard what took place. She heard the tolling of a bell, giving the signal, and she saw what followed. Did the angel give her minute information as to which bell tolled? Would not this point be what Henry Alford describes as “certain minor points of accuracy or inaccuracy, of which human research suffices to inform men”? She accepted the record of a reliable historian who indicated that it was the palace bell. When she learned that was uncertain, she reworded the statement to read:

“A bell, tolling at the dead of night, was a signal for the slaughter.”—[The Great Controversy, 272](#).

The point being of no real significance, she removed from *The Great Controversy* the temptation that might come to some to employ the book to settle this disputed but inconsequential point.

And note the paragraph bearing the W. C. White statement:

Mother has never claimed to be authority on history. The things which she has written out, are descriptions of flashlight pictures and other representations given her regarding the actions of men, and the influence of these actions upon the work of God for the salvation of men, with views of past, present, and future history in its relation to this work. In connection with the writing out of these views, she has made use of good and clear historical statements to help make plain to the reader the things which she is endeavoring to present. When I was a mere boy, I heard her read D’Aubigne’s *History of the Reformation* to my father. She read to him a large part, if not the whole, of the five volumes. She has read other histories of the Reformation. This has helped her to locate and describe many of the events and the movements presented to her in vision. This is somewhat similar to the way in which the Bible helps her to locate and describe the many figurative representations given to her regarding the development of the great controversy in our day between truth and error.—W. C. White in [The Great Controversy, 1911 Edition](#) (p. 4).

Pursuing this matter a little further, and enlarging it to include chronology, we turn to a rather enlightening W. C. White statement written a few months later:



Regarding Mother's writings and their use as authority on points of history and chronology, Mother has never wished our brethren to treat them as authority regarding details of history or historical dates. The great truths revealed to Mother regarding the controversy between good and evil, light and darkness, have been given to her in various ways, but chiefly as flashlight views of great events in the lives of individuals and in the experiences of churches, of bands of reformers, and of nations. What has thus been revealed to her she has written out first briefly in the *Early Writings*, then more fully as in *Spiritual Gifts* and in *Spirit of Prophecy*, and finally in the *Great Controversy* series.

When writing out the experiences of reformers in the time of the Reformation and in the great Advent Movement of 1844, Mother often gave at first a partial description of some scene presented to her. Later on she would write it out more fully, and again still more fully. I have known her to write upon one subject four or five times, and then mourn because she could not command language to describe the matter more perfectly.

When writing out the chapters for *Great Controversy*, she sometimes gave a partial description of an important historical event, and when her copyist who was preparing the manuscripts for the printer, made inquiry regarding time and place, Mother would say that those things are recorded by conscientious historians. Let the dates used by those historians be inserted. At other times in writing out what had been presented to her, Mother found such perfect descriptions of events and presentations of facts and of doctrines written out in our denominational books, that she copied the words of these authorities.

When *Controversy* was written, Mother never thought that the readers would take it as authority on historical dates or use it to settle controversy regarding details of history, and she does not now feel that it should be used in that way. Mother regards with great respect the work of those faithful historians who devoted years of time to the study of God's great plan as presented in the prophecy, and the outworking of that plan as recorded in history.—W. C. *White Letter to W. W. Eastman*, Nov. 4, 1912.

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### How Far Can We Depend on Mrs. White

Just how far, then, can we depend on Mrs. White? Where do we set the bounds? There were other points in *The Great Controversy* in the historical account, which even when challenged Ellen White, because of the visions, refused to surrender. Note the W. C. White statement in the same document and on the same page as the much-used “Mother has never claimed to be authority on history“:

On pages 50, 563-564, 580, 581, and in a few other places where there were statements regarding the papacy which are strongly disputed by Roman Catholics, and which are difficult to prove from accessible histories, the wording in the new edition has been so changed that the statement falls easily within the range of evidence that is readily obtainable.

Regarding these and similar passages, which might stir up bitter and unprofitable controversies, Mother has often said: “What I have written regarding the arrogance and the assumptions of the papacy is true. Much historical evidence regarding these matters has been designedly destroyed; nevertheless, that the book may be of the greatest benefit to Catholics and others, and that needless controversies may be avoided, it is better to have all statements regarding the assumptions of the pope and the claims of the papacy stated so moderately as to be easily and clearly proved from accepted histories that are within the reach of our ministers and students.”

Here in a historical area was a *basic concept* brought to Ellen White by vision. Any modification in the account was made by Ellen White for reasons quite different from *inconsequential details* concerning which she made no claim for “authority.”

The Ellen G. White declaration that historical evidence has been destroyed is well sustained by the purging of libraries and the combing of secondhand bookstores. Andrews University holds some of the rarest of volumes, dating back to the beginnings of printing and having to do with the persecutions by the Catholic Church. They are in our possession today only because the director of a large public library in Minnesota placed these priceless works from its rare book room in the hands of Elder Christian Edwardson, with the suggestion that he check them out and not bring them back, for, said the director, “I have orders to get rid of them.” The author personally

saw these books in the Edwardson study as he related how he came into possession of them. They are now in the university's Heritage Room.

The reader will find further discussion of *The Great Controversy*, in *The Ellen G. White Writings*, Chapter 4, "Ellen G. White as a Historian."

### **E. G. White Appraisal of History Presented by the Prophetic Writers**

A few quotations suffice to remind us of Mrs. White's evaluation of history as presented by the Bible prophets:

The Bible is a history that tells us of the creation of the world, and opens to us past centuries. Without it we should have been left to conjecture and fable in regard to the occurrences of the remote past.—*Counsels to Parents and Teachers*, p. 421.

The Bible is the most instructive and comprehensive history that has ever been given to the world. Its sacred pages contain the only authentic account of the creation. Here we behold the power that "stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth." Here we have a truthful history of the human race, one that is unmarred by human prejudice or human pride.—[Fundamentals of Christian Education](#), 84, 85.

The divine mind and hand have preserved through the ages the record of creation in its purity. It is the word of God alone that gives to us an authentic account of the creation of our world.—*Counsels to Parents and Teachers*, p. 13.

Ellen White saw the Bible as an inspired reliable history. Concerning its first records she states:

The preparation of the written word began in the time of Moses.... This work continued ... from Moses, the historian of creation and the law, to John, the recorder of the most sublime truths of the gospel.—[The Great Controversy](#), 4.

Concerning the history of the life of our Lord as recorded by the apostles, she declared:

The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to exalt the Lord alone, and guided the pens of the sacred historians.—[Gospel Workers](#), 286.

Of the record of the lives and work of the apostles, she refers to it as “history, written under the direction of the Holy Spirit” ([The Acts of the Apostles, 593](#)).

### **Chronological Problems**

Granted there are some chronological problems. The verbal inspiration concept on the basis of such problems would force us to abandon confidence in the authenticity of the Bible history. With a factual understanding of how the Lord imparted light to the prophets, do we need to permit such problems to discount the value of the record? Is the validity of the historical account bound up entirely with the chronology? Is there not some danger of our attaching too much weight to these problems?

On this point W. C. White, who for years worked closely with Ellen White, observed in his November, 1912, letter to W. W. Eastman, a leader in Seventh-day Adventist publishing work:

It seems to me there is a danger of placing altogether too much stress upon chronology. If it had been essential to the salvation of man that he should have a clear and harmonious understanding of the chronology of the world, the Lord would not have permitted the disagreements and discrepancies which we find in the writings of the Bible historians, and it seems to me that in these last days there ought not to be so much controversy regarding dates.

[122] Considerable chronology appears in the Ellen G. White writings. It is worthy of examination, in the *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White*, under “Chronology and Time Relationships,” eight pages (543-551) are devoted to an enumeration of such references in the current Ellen G. White books. It will be observed that there are items of direct and precise treatment and there are a few references to incidental statements often couched in vary general terms, as “a thousand years,” “fifteen hundred years,” and so forth.

### **Statements in the Field of Science and Geology**

Ellen White kept before the church and the world the fact that “since the book of nature and the book of revelation bear the impress of the same master mind, they cannot but speak in harmony.”—

[Education, 128](#). Her concepts of the reliability of the Word of God in the field of science are revealed in such statements as:

There should be a settled faith in the divinity of God's holy word. The Bible is not to be tested by men's ideas of science, but science is to be brought to the test of this unerring standard. When the Bible makes statements of facts in nature, science may be compared with the written word, and a correct understanding of both will always prove them to be in harmony. One does not contradict the other. All truth, whether in nature or revelation, agrees.—[The Signs of the Times, March 13, 1884](#).

Many points in the field of science were revealed to Ellen White. Those of particular interest at the moment are largely in the area of physiology and nutrition. Just now, at a time of intensive research, her declarations of 70, 80, and even 100 years ago and more are being verified with such precision that little room is left for question or doubt.

### **Similarity of Concepts No Indication of Source**

Because Ellen White in her writings presents some points of historical interest found elsewhere only in tradition, or in dealing with the subjects of health and education her counsels parallel views set forth by some of her predecessors or contemporaries, it has been assumed by some that tradition or the writings of her contemporaries constituted the source of her information. This is a subtle pitfall and not in harmony with the facts. Jude, a New Testament writer, informs us of views given to Enoch. There is no mention of them in the Old Testament. Because there is reference to this fact in certain writings of questionable source does not mean that Jude was dependent upon this source for his information.

Neither Ellen White nor well-informed Adventists have taken the position that on many points stressed in the E. G. White writings she was the first to speak or write. If a historical event is correctly reported in tradition and if Ellen White viewed this history in vision, her account would be bound to harmonize with such points in tradition. The apostle John being placed in a caldron of boiling oil is an illustration. If careful men in their research discover the laws of nature manifest in physiology and nutrition, what was shown

by God to Ellen White in this field would be bound to harmonize, because God is the author of those laws. *It is neither correct nor in harmony with the facts to assume that similarity of views indicates that Ellen White gained her information from men, instead of from God.*

An early statement on this point is worthy of note.

J. H. Waggoner, a prominent minister in our ranks, wrote as we were opening our first medical institution:

We do not profess to be pioneers in the general principles of health reform. The facts on which this movement is based have been elaborated, in a great measure, by reformers, physicians, and writers on physiology and hygiene, and so may be found scattered through the land. But we do claim that by the method of God's choice it has been more clearly and powerfully unfolded, and is thereby producing an effect which we could not have looked for from any other means.—*The Review and Herald, August 7, 1866.*

The same might be said in the field of education and perhaps other areas. But Ellen White disclaims the writings of others as the source of her information.

### **Recalled by the Aid of the Spirit**

Obviously the prophet could not accurately remember all that had been revealed in vision. An outstanding case in point is the vision given to the 17-year-old Ellen Harmon in the late summer of 1845. At family worship a vision was given to her in which a card was held up before her on which were written “in letters of gold” the chapter and verse of 50 texts of Scripture. (See [Early Writings, 22-31](#).) After the vision she took the large family Bible and turned to all the texts that she had seen on the card. She jotted them down also as the Spirit recalled them to her mind, for they are listed in *Early Writings* and elsewhere. What normal individual, let alone a frail teen-age girl with three years of schooling, could, unaided, recall 50 texts seen in a list on a card? A few years later she wrote:

After I come out of vision I do not at once remember all that I have seen, and the matter is not so clear before me until I write, then the scene rises before me as was presented in vision, and I can write with freedom. I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in

relating or writing a vision, as in having the vision. It is impossible for me to call up things which have been shown me unless the Lord brings them before me at the time that he is pleased to have me relate or write them.—[Spiritual Gifts 2:292](#).

In dealing with the apostles, Henry Alford names as one of the gifts bestowed upon them the ability of “recalling by the Holy Spirit of those things which the Lord had said to them” (*op. cit.*, par. 8). And he hastens to point out that “this was his own formal promise, recorded in [John 14:26](#).” The Gospels were written at a point many years after the events took place. The sayings and acts of the Lord are recorded. Even though they were eyewitnesses, without the Holy Spirit’s recalling these facts to the mind the Gospel writers would have been involved in hopeless garbling.

Of their experience Ellen White wrote:

When the apostles of Christ were to bear His gospel to the world and to record it for all future ages, they were especially endowed with the enlightenment of the Spirit.—[The Great Controversy, ix](#).

Three of the Gospel writers were disciples continuously with Jesus. The fourth, Luke, was not so favored. He asserts that he diligently traced down from the first the account of all things. In other words, as Alford puts it, he was “a faithful and honest compiler” (*op. cit.*, par. 12). But this work he must have done under the leading of the Holy Spirit. The same must be said of Matthew as he presents the story of the birth of our Lord.

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In *The Desire of Ages* Ellen White writing of Nicodemus’ night visit with Jesus informs us that “Nicodemus related to John the story of that interview, and by his pen it was recorded for the instruction of millions” (page 177). As John records the incident and conversation in his Gospel some sixty years after the event, the Holy Spirit must have fulfilled His mission in recalling the words of conversation to the apostle’s mind.

The Holy Spirit frequently recalled to Ellen White’s mind what years earlier was revealed in vision, as when she visited publishing houses in Switzerland and Norway in 1885 and recognized printing presses shown to her ten years before and delivered appropriate messages of correction and reproof to employees imparted to her a decade before the plants were established. The experience was

repeated in Australia six years later as she recalled instruction given her for publishing-house employees sixteen years before.

Frequently people would come to Ellen White for counsel, and she would respond immediately, presenting a message that both she and the person who approached her would consider inspired. Any question on this point is easily dissipated if the relationship of the testimony Ellen White presented to the vision in which information was imparted to her is clearly understood.

### The Relation of the Testimony to the Visions

The testimony that Ellen White bore was related to the visions in four different ways. First the testimony she bore might be (a) *a direct account of a single vision*. For instance, she says, “August 24, 1850, I saw,” and then she tells what she saw.

It might be (b) *a composite account of many visions* given over a period of many years, as is true of the *Conflict of the Ages* series. In her introduction to *The Great Controversy* she explains this:

Through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the scenes of the long-continued conflict between good and evil have been opened to the writer of these pages. From time to time I have been permitted to behold the working, in different ages, of the great controversy between Christ, the Prince of life, the Author of our salvation, and Satan, the prince of evil, the author of sin.—Page x.

Mrs. White here informs us that from time to time she saw parts of the history transpire and then she put it together as one great composite account as we have it in the *Conflict of the Ages* series. This was increasingly so as she amplified the account.

The third relationship would be (c) that Ellen White is giving *counsel based on one specific vision*. Note; “In the night of March 2, 1907, many things were revealed to me regarding the value of our publications.”—[Testimonies for the Church 9:65](#). Then she gives counsel, but she doesn’t tell just what she was shown. The counsel was based on that vision.

Or it might be (d) *counsel based upon many visions*. She writes, “God has given me a testimony of reproof for parents who treat their children as you do your little one.”—Ellen G. White [Letter 1, 1877](#).



The Lord is sparing of miracles. He did not give a vision for each family, but she had been given a vision with light for parents who treated their children a certain way. When she found other parents treating their children the same way, what she had been shown regarding a similar case would fit their experience, too. She had a message for them.

Here is another illustration:

This matter has been brought before my mind, in other cases, where individuals have claimed to have messages for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, of a similar character, and the word has been given me, “Believe them not.”—[Selected Messages 2:63, 64](#).

As we understand these four ways in which the testimony that Ellen White bore is related to the visions we can see how people could come and talk with Sister White and she would give an answer to questions that was accepted as a message from God. Her answer was based on the visions—perhaps one given recently or on many given over a period of years. On the other hand, she might be strangely silent, conversing pleasantly, but having nothing to say on the point—no answer to the questions. She did not dare project herself, setting forth her own ideas.

In the Ralph Mackin case of 1908 she listened patiently, made discreet inquiries, but could give no positive word till God a few days after the interview gave her specific light that his experience of speaking in tongues was not inspired by Him.

### **The Question of What Is Inspired**

The question is asked, How can we know which of Sister White’s writings are inspired and which are not inspired?

If Ellen White set forth her own ideas in her books, presenting them as counsel to the church, we would be in a difficult place.

Would we not, quite naturally, take the position that what we agreed with came from God, what cuts across our pathway was Sister White’s idea, or the idea of those who influenced her in reaching that conclusion? We should be honest with ourselves. If we were required to differentiate, would we not tend to use that criterion? In doing so, we would bring the Spirit of Prophecy down below the level of our intelligence.

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But you may ask, “Did not Ellen White think her own thoughts, make free to express her own thoughts? Didn’t she write about ordinary subjects?” Of course she could and did. If you were in her home you would visit with her and talk about the weather. She read the headlines of the paper and knew what was going on in the world, and you would talk about world events. You would visit about the advancement of the cause of God. You would talk of people you knew and a lot of such things. There would be no special significance in what was said. Then you might say, “Sister White, in Chicago in my work there is a certain problem,” and she might launch into a line of counsel for you. Both she and you would know that this counsel was based not on her ideas but upon light God had given her in vision.

She wrote letters to old friends such as Elder and Mrs. Haskell. She might say that the weather had been bad; it was raining and the prune crop was spoiled. She might say, “Next Tuesday I’m going to go down to Mountain View and then on down to Los Angeles. My granddaughter, Grace, the other day fell out of the wagon and broke her arm,” and so forth. Neither Sister White nor Brother Haskell would place any particular significance in those words. But she might go on and say, “Brother Haskell, in your work in Chicago,” so and so, and so and so, as she did in just such a letter. Both she and he would understand that this part of the message was based on the light that God had given her.

Ellen White drew the line between the sacred and the common. That is where we draw the line today.

### **Ellen G. White Biographical Writings**

In her preface to *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 2, a biographical work entitled “My Christian Experience, Views and Labors,” Ellen White states:

In preparing the following pages, I have labored under great disadvantages, as I have had to depend in many instances, on memory, having kept no journal till within a few years. In several instances I have sent the manuscripts to friends who were present when the circumstances related occurred, for their examination before they

were put in print. I have taken great care, and have spent much time, in endeavoring to state the simple facts as correctly as possible.

I have, however, been much assisted in arriving at dates by the many letters which I wrote.—Page III.

The appendix appearing in the first 400 copies carried this statement:

A special request is made that if any find incorrect statements in this book they will immediately inform me. The edition will be completed about the first of October; therefore send before that time.

These statements at times have been drawn upon as an indication of the pains taken by Ellen G. White in preparing her writings, and incidentally revealing the sources of her information. Such information is used rightfully only as explaining the preparation of *biographical* material. To apply it to her work in general is unwarranted and misleading.

We have but to turn to the preceding volume, *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 1, which appeared within six months of the great controversy vision of March 14, 1858. It embodies the expressions, “I saw,” “I was shown,” and so forth, more than once for each page of the book. Or we may turn to the third volume of the series, published in 1864, and read in the preface:

Since the great facts of faith, connected with the history of holy men of old, have been opened to me in vision...

In the biographical account she does not say, “*I was shown* that at the age of nine years an accident happened to me which was to affect my whole life.” This information she got from her mother and from her memory.

But in *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 3, subtitled *Important Facts of Faith in Connection With the History of Holy Men of Old* she states, “I was then carried back to creation, and was shown...”

In none of the scores or more books issued during her life did she include words of the character that appeared in the Preface of her biography of 1860, for the writing was in a different field.

A factual approach, then, to the question of inspiration helps us to see that the prophet could think ordinary thoughts and could converse on ordinary topics. He refrained from confusing the sacred with the common. He was careful not to set forth in his teachings his own opinions or conclusions, nor were his messages molded

by the current philosophies or concepts, even though the messages may be couched in the phraseology of the times and deal with local conditions or situations. It was his task to correctly present the message God entrusted to him.

At times this was in marked contrast to current concepts. In presenting truths as revealed he was aided by the Spirit of God. In his presentation there was the basic concept, at times embellished by points drawn from his mind enriched and molded by the visions, and when dealing with certain subjects, with some details drawn from sources of common knowledge—places, distances, dates, and so forth. The prophet's inspired message could embody an inaccuracy in a minor detail not consequential to the *basic* concept or on a minor point in the field of common knowledge, the "accuracy or inaccuracy, of which human research suffices to inform men." This does not in any measure diminish the weight or the authority of the statement as a whole.

Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.—[Selected Messages 1:21](#).