

THE *Sabbath Sentinel*

JULY 1993

The GREAT CONTROVERSY

over disconcerting deletions,
embarrassing edits, and
embellished rewriting of
the Spirit of Prophecy



“In ancient times God spoke to men
by the mouth of Prophets and Apostles.
In these days He speaks to them by
the Testimonies of His Spirit

One stood by my side, and said:
‘God has raised you up, and has given
you words to speak to people and
to reach hearts, as He has given
to no other one.’”

— Ellen G. White

Testimony for the Church
Volume 5:661, 667

THE BIBLE SABBATH ASSOCIATION



BIBLE
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The early engraving of Ellen White and the hand-calligraphed type focus on the controversy inherent in our cover story, "Are SDAs Ready to Rewrite Ellen G. White?" by Sydney Cleveland, beginning on page 6 of this issue. Mrs. White's writings were acclaimed as the "Spirit of Prophecy" by Adventist pioneers. Early editing and a proposed contemporary rewrite are constant sources of controversy among this large body of seventh-day Christians. — MG



Ellen G. White

EDITORIAL

ROOTED AND BUILT UP

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." (Colossians 2:6,7)

I am continually amazed how Jesus inspired the writers of His Word to so succinctly exhort, instruct and encourage believers. As just one of many texts, the above passage of Scripture illustrates the process of Christian growth and development. Let's reflect on the beautiful word picture Paul gives us of this spiritual process:

- Step One Before we can grow we must receive Christ Jesus as Lord. As our "Lord" He is the Captain of our life. He directs us, guides us, encourages us, and empowers us.
- Step Two Once we have received Christ Jesus as our Lord, the Word tells us we cannot back down, slack off or give up. Rather, we must continue to live in Christ. "Continue ... in" suggests an ongoing process of immersing ourselves in Christ, relying on Him, following Him, being filled to overflowing with His life.
- Step Three Now the Lord expects us to become rooted and built up in Him. Remember that mature, majestic tree in Grandma's yard you used to climb when young? Why did it grow so large and stand so tall? Why was it able to withstand the summer drought and winter chill? It had great roots under the ground absorbing and disseminating nourishment to create a strong trunk and branches until the tree became firmly established. We also are to become mature in Christ as we reach out for His nourishment and strength.
- Step Four This process strengthens us in the faith. We are not asked to be steeped in the traditions or opinions of any group, church or denomination. We will not find strength in a list of rules or regulations. But we will be strengthened in the faith that Paul and the disciples taught — the faith of Jesus Christ — if we are rooted and built up in Him.
- Step Five With steps one through four accomplished we can rest in the joy of the Lord, overflowing with thankfulness. He has taken us from death to life, from sickness to health, from poverty to great spiritual riches! And for this we thank and praise Him!

If you have a friend or neighbor, co-worker or relative who is not overflowing with grateful thankfulness and praise, won't you share these simple steps with them? Paul makes it so easy to witness. Let's just do it! — SC

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STAFF

SYDNEY CLEVELAND
EDITOR

ED OZALAS
DEPARTMENT EDITOR

MICHAEL GALIMORE
ART DIRECTOR

SHERRY CLEVELAND
ASSISTANT EDITOR

JONATHAN GALIMORE
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

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**Correspondence and Manuscript sub-
missions** to *The Sabbath Sentinel*
should be addressed to Sydney or
Sherry Cleveland, *The Sabbath Senti-
nel*, 172 Suncrest Drive, Greenwood,
IN 46143; telephone (317) 885-8122.

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Render unto Texaco

DAVE HOGAN

Staff Writer for *The Oregonian*

For religious reasons, Barry Davis of Salem wanted to close his three Oregon gas stations from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday each week.

For business reasons, Texaco wanted him to stay open and sell its gasoline.

And for legal reasons, they battled in federal court. But not even a federal judge was able to help much. Judge Helen J. Frye in Portland ordered Davis to keep the stations open as outlined in his agreements with Texaco, at least until another court hearing.

Davis' response? He said he would continue to close the Clackamas, Salem and Eugene stations Friday evenings, as he has since the start of this year. "If they find me in contempt, they find me in contempt," Davis said. "That's just the way it's going to be."

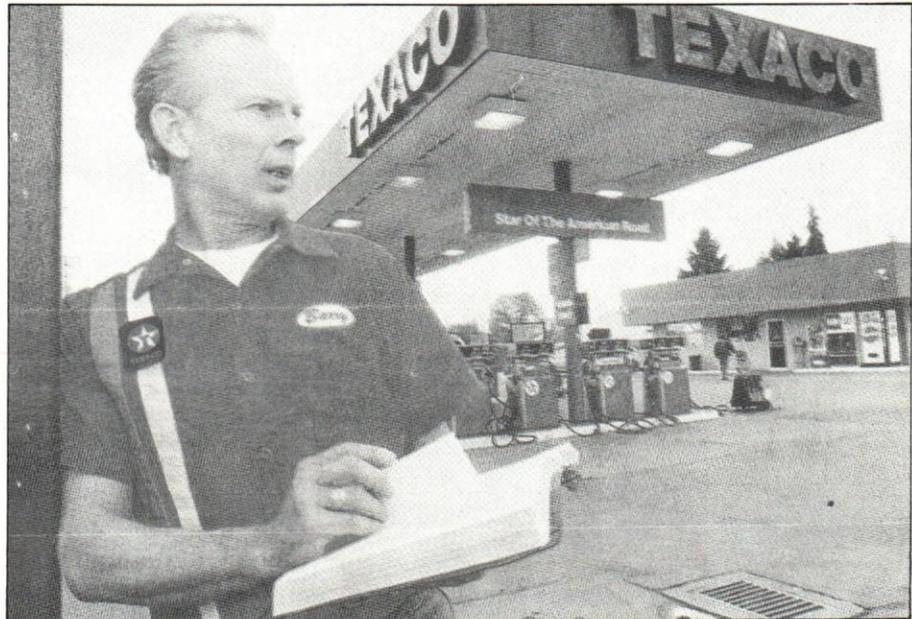
Davis, 50, operated Barry's Texaco stations near Interstate 5 in Eugene and Salem and near Interstate 205 in Clackamas. Until this year, Davis kept all three of the high-volume stations open 24 hours a day, closing only for a few holidays.

And he sold a lot of gas.

In fact, Davis was one of Texaco's most successful dealers. His three stations sold almost 11 million gallons of super, unleaded and regular gasoline and diesel fuel last year. In March, 1991, his Salem station sold 930,000 gallons, which still stands as Texaco's national record for a month, according to Davis. A Texaco official said the company couldn't confirm if that was a national record.

Last fall, Davis told Texaco that "due to events in my religious life" he wished to close his stations from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. He said this period is what he considers the Sabbath. "I promised God that's what I would do at the start of the year. That's when I would start, and nothing would deter me from it," Davis said. When asked about his religious denomination, Davis said his religious beliefs are "strictly Biblical" and "non-denominational."

Texaco filed suit in Portland, alleging that the closing of the stations each week violated its agreements. Texaco leases the stations to Davis. "Defendant has repeatedly claimed that he has had direct communication with God about his closures, and that he was told that God wants Texaco to close all stations between sundown



Friday and sundown Saturday to observe the 'Sabbath,'" Texaco attorneys said in court documents.

Texaco says hundreds of customers have pulled into the closed stations on weekends and sat at the gasoline pumps before leaving, probably confused and frustrated about being unable to obtain service during customary hours. Texaco also noted Davis' gas sales in January dropped more than 25 percent from what he sold in January 1992.

Davis, on the other hand, claims the first three months of this year made up his most profitable first quarter ever. "What I technically lose on the Sabbath, I gain on other days," Davis said.

Texaco is pushing to have Davis keep all three stations open all day and night on Fridays and the Salem and Eugene stations open on Saturdays. They're not asking to keep the

Clackamas station open on Saturdays because a typist inadvertently left the space for the Saturday hours blank when typing a new contract for that station last year.

Davis said he still likes Texaco and is not surprised or upset that he ended up in court. "It doesn't bother me any," Davis said. "I expected it. I already know the outcome. They don't."

What's the outcome?

"I win, and God wins," Davis said. "Bottom line."

Editor's note: Further information has been received updating Mr. Davis' experience. On May 19, 1993, Texaco terminated his leases. In addition, Texaco sued Barry Davis claiming he operated the stations twenty-four hours a day for years, and by closing now on Sabbath he cost Texaco both customers and profits. David Shannon, attorney for Davis, planned to challenge the termination under the United States Petroleum Marketing Practices Act, on the grounds it requires a notification of termination to be served 90 days before any action is taken. Norm Stanley, Texaco's spokesman, said the company's main concern is for its customers: "Our whole effort is to keep the stations open because a lot of our customers are frustrated that they can't get fuel from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday."

S

Aid Without Politics

IAN MATHER

London Observer Service

Ask the average citizen of Sarajevo to name their favorite humanitarian relief organization, and few will mention those best known in the rest of the world.

The efforts of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the Roman Catholic Caritas and the major Muslim charity, Mehamet, are all appreciated. But all come second to the Seventh-day Adventists in the estimation of the besieged citizens of the Bosnia capital of Sarajevo.

The group, which has only 30 members at its church in Sarajevo and was virtually unknown before the war began, has shot to preeminence as the most important charity for delivering food parcels to Sarajevo. Since September, the Adventists have delivered 80,000 food parcels and 140,000 letters, making them by far the largest organization here for delivering aid sent to individuals by friends and relatives abroad.

The reason is that unlike all the other big charities, they aren't associated with Catholics, Muslims, the Orthodox Church or the U.N. and so are not regarded as favoring the Coats, Bosnians, Muslims or the Serbs. As a result, their convoys are allowed to pass through the roadblocks ringing the city.

Every day, people pore over some 5,000 names pinned on a notice board outside the Adventist church. The names are of people who have a parcel or a letter waiting for them. Each parcel has a number, which people write down and take to an Adventist warehouse. Every day — except Saturday — around 1,000 parcels are collected from the warehouse, which at any time houses around 30,000 parcels which are being processed.

The man in charge of the Adventist relief effort is Rade Nikolic, president of the church's southwest Bosnia district. He spends most of his time on the road organizing or shepherding the convoys through numerous roadblocks. "When you set off in the morning, you never know what is going to happen at the roadblocks be-

cause the situation changes all the time," he said. "All the time there are problems."

The hazards include being shot at. His Volkswagen has 30 bullet holes in it. All the trucks used by ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) are full of holes too. "Some soldiers know me, but some don't because they change all the time," he said philosophically. "But ADRA is generally recognized as an organization which is not interested in politics."

The food parcels are sent from all over the world by friends and relatives to Adventist centers in Belgrade, Zagreb and Split. "Stealing is a problem," says Nikolic. "But we are managing it. Less than one percent of the parcels are stolen." He added, "This is a strictly humanitarian operation. We do not want to use the letters and parcels to influence people. ... We are not interested in what people believe or which ethnic group they belong to. We help everybody because Christ said that you must love your neighbor as yourself."

S

Tax Exemptions

A tax auditor came many years ago to a poor servant of the Lord to determine the amount of taxes he would have to pay.

"What property do you possess?" asked the auditor.

"I am very wealthy," replied the Christian.

"List your possessions, please," the auditor instructed.

"First, I have everlasting life, John 3:16. Second, I have a mansion in heaven, John 14:2. Third, I have peace that passes understanding, Philippians 4:7. Fourth, I have joy unspeakable, 1 Peter 1:8. Fifth, I have divine love that never fails, 1 Corinthians 13:8. Sixth, I have a faithful wife, Proverbs 31:10. Seventh, I have healthy, happy obedient children, Exodus 20:12. Eighth, I have true, loyal friends, Proverbs 18:24. Ninth, I have songs in the night, Psalm 42:8. Tenth, I have a crown of life, James 1:12. Eleventh, I have a Savior, Jesus Christ, who supplies all my need, Philippians 4:19."

The tax auditor closed his book and said, "Truly you are a very rich man, but your property is not subject to taxation!"

— *The Christian Reminder*

It's the Law — But Not in Colorado!

The Ten Commandments may be the Law of God's Kingdom, but they will not stand on Colorado state property! Carved in stone, the two modern tables of the Ten Commandments stand about 4 feet high and are located in Lincoln Park — practically in the shadow of the Colorado state Capitol. A plaque indicates that the Fraternal Order of Eagles placed the Ten Commandments there back in 1956.

In the meantime a Wisconsin-based non-profit organization, Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc., filed a lawsuit to remove the monument. Even though the Colorado Attorney General's office argued in favor of

retaining the Ten Commandments, the state Court of Appeals ruled it violated the First Amendment guaranteeing separation of church and state.

In the course of the trial both sides agreed that the moral standards described in the Ten Commandments are yardsticks of behavior found in all civilized societies. Nevertheless the Appeals Court found that the monument had "an essentially religious message," and feared citizens would be led to believe the state was endorsing God's Law if it were allowed to remain.

S

Are SDAs Ready to Rewrite Ellen G. White? — Part 1

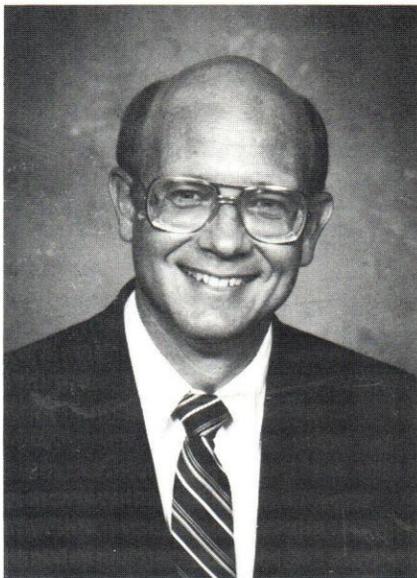
SYDNEY CLEVELAND

COVER STORY

The Seventh-day Adventist Church may be preparing the faithful for an extensive rewriting of Ellen White's Testimonies. In fact, according to Paul A. Gordon, current Secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate, the process of changing, abridging, and/or simplifying her writings was begun during her lifetime. Long considered to be a Divinely inspired prophet, Seventh-day Adventists have carefully treasured each word Ellen White wrote. Reading her materials is a significant undertaking considering that she wrote some 100,000 pages of handwritten manuscripts containing an estimated 15-20 million words. While the Church claims it does *not* subscribe to the verbal inspiration of either the Bible or Ellen White, it sees no inconsistency in carefully preserving Ellen White's verbatim. The Ellen G. White Estate, a subsidiary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, has historically cared for and published her writings. As a safety factor, microfilm duplicates of her manuscripts have been established in various locations around the world.

Early Controversy Over Sources

Almost from the moment Ellen



Sydney Cleveland

White's visions were published her claims to Divine inspiration were challenged. As early as 1847, her husband James White published a tract titled *A Word to the "Little Flock,"* and included the following excerpts from a letter he received: "I cannot endorse sister Ellen's visions as being of Divine inspiration, as you and she think them to be; yet I do not suspect the least shade of dishonesty in either of you in this matter. ... I think that what she and you regard as visions from the Lord, are only religious reveries, in which her imagination runs without control upon themes in which she is most deeply interested. While so absorbed in these reveries, she is lost to every thing around her. ... In either case, the *sentiments*, in the main, are obtained from previous teaching, or study."¹

Claiming Divine Inspiration

Seizing the opportunity to affirm the Divine inspiration of his wife's visions, James White wrote: "However true this extract may be in relation to reveries, it is *not* true in regard to the visions: for the author (Ellen White) *does not* 'obtain the sentiments' of her visions 'from previous teaching or study.'"²

James' statement was consistent with the position taken by Ellen White: the sources of her writings were Divinely inspired visions and not the result of copying or plagiarizing other authors. In 1880 he wrote: "Mrs. White has written and spoken a hundred things, as truthful as they are beautiful and harmonious, which cannot be found in the writings of others, they are new to the most intelligent readers and hearers. And if they are not to be found in print, and are not brought out in sermons from the pulpit, where did Mrs. White find them? From what source has she received the new and rich thoughts which are to be found in her writings and oral addresses? She could not have learned them from books, from the fact that they do not contain such thoughts."³

The "Remnant Church" and the "Spirit of Prophecy"

Being one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen White was early revered by the faithful as "the Imitation of Christ," and later as "the Lord's Messenger." As both organization and doctrinal beliefs were developed the church found its mission and identity in the "Remnant Church" concept. By linking Revelation 12:17 to Revelation 19:10, Adventists claimed their identity as "the Remnant Church" on the basis that they alone kept the Sabbath and had a living prophet. The faithful gave credence to this concept by referring to Ellen White and her writings as "The Spirit of Prophecy." This link between Ellen White and the Remnant Church is the cornerstone of Seventh-day Adventism — so much so that the following statement appeared in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 14, 1883: "Our position on the Testimonies is like the keystone to the arch. Take that out, and there is no logical stopping place till all the special truths of this message are gone. ... Nothing is *surer* than this, that this message and the visions belong together and stand or fall together."

Testimonies from the "Spirit of Prophecy"

As "the Spirit of Prophecy," Ellen White herself repeatedly claimed that not only were her visions Divinely inspired, but that she also required Divine inspiration in writing out the messages she had received: "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."⁴

Ellen White's claim to Divine inspiration not only included the written version of her visions, but also the writing of all her books and letters (commonly referred to as "Testimonies"). The following quotations are indicative of her claims: "The Lord has seen fit to give me a view of the needs and errors of His people. Painful though it has been to me, I have faithfully set before the offenders their faults and the means of remedying them, according to the dictates of the Spirit of God."⁵

"In my books, the truth is stated, barricaded by a 'thus saith the Lord.' The Holy Spirit traced these truths upon my heart and mind." ⁶

"I arose at three o'clock in the morning to write to you. God was speaking through clay. You might say that this ... was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. 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." ⁷

"I am only an instrument in the Lord's hands to do the work He has set for me to do. The instructions that I have given by pen or voice have been an expression of the light God has given me. I have tried to place before you the principles that the Spirit of God has for years been impressing upon my mind and writing on my heart." ⁸

"I have written many books, and they have been given a wide circulation. Of myself I could not have brought out the truth in these books, but the Lord has given me the help of His Holy Spirit. These books, giving the instruction that the Lord has given me during the past sixty years, contain light from heaven, and will bear the test of investigation." ⁹

The evidence is clear that Ellen White openly taught that she was Divinely inspired and that her visions were the source of the information she communicated through her letters, books, articles, and verbal Testimonies. But during her lifetime, and over the succeeding years, information has repeatedly surfaced indicating Ellen White was not honest about her sources. Long before her death in 1915, Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders were becoming more and more aware that Ellen White had voraciously copied the works of others.

Charges of Plagiarism

In the 1880's Ellen White published her book *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 3. The book was later republished under the name *Sketches From the Life of Paul*. Curiously, the book was dropped from print for nearly 100 years before it was republished in facsimile form by the Review and Her-

ald in 1974. Thumbing through a few pages inside the front cover you will see a section titled "Preface to Facsimile Edition." There you will discover this unusual explanation: "The much-loved Ellen G. White book *Sketches From the Life of Paul* was issued by the Seventh-day Adventist church's two publishing houses, the Review and Herald, and Pacific Press, early in the summer of 1883. ... The book ran through two printings at each house and was being considered as a book to be sold by literature evangelists, but it dropped out of print. The reason for its demise is easy to understand in view of the historical context." ¹⁰

What was the "historical context" which caused Ellen White's book to "drop out of print?" The answer is given by Arthur G. Daniells, then General Conference President and long-time associate of Ellen White. Speaking to some fifty top leaders, theologians, teachers, and writers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on August 1, 1919, Daniells said: "Now you know something about that little book, (*Sketches From the Life of Paul*). You know the difficulty we got into about that. We could never claim inspiration in the whole thought and make up of the book, because it has been thrown aside because it was badly put together. Credits were not given to the proper authorities, and some of that crept into *The Great Controversy*. ... I suppose you all know about it and knew what claims were put up against her, charges made of plagiarism, even by the authors of the book, Conybeare and Howson, and were liable to make the denomination trouble because there was so much of their book put into (*Sketches From the Life of Paul*) without any credit or quotation marks. ... I found it out, and I read it with Brother Palmer when he found it, and we got Conybeare and Howson, and we got Wylie's *History of the Reformation*, and we read word for word, page after page, and no quotations, no credit, and really I did not know the difference until I began to compare them. I supposed it was Sister White's own work!" ¹¹

Was There a Lawsuit Charging Plagiarism?

According to Daniell's explanation it is evident Ellen White had copied so much from Conybeare and Howson's

Life and Epistles of Saint Paul (written 30 years prior to Ellen White's *Sketches From the Life of Paul*), that its authors threatened to make trouble for the denomination! Since their book had not been copyrighted they probably would not have won a lawsuit, but they could have publicly exposed Ellen White's fallacious claim to Divine inspiration. Therefore it was in the Church's interest to immediately drop Ellen White's plagiarized book from publication.

Wrestling Over Inspiration

During this same Bible Conference, the Church's leadership wrestled with questions concerning Ellen White's claims to Divine inspiration and the mounting evidence to the contrary. Eleven times they were asked for a definitive answer, and eleven times they avoided an official decision. The flavor of their discussion and concerns is brought out in the following quotations:

"F. M. Wilcox (Editor of the *Review and Herald*): 'I think we have to deal with a very delicate question, and I would hate terribly to see an influence sweep over the field and into any of our schools that the Testimonies were discounted. There is great danger of a reaction, and I do feel concerned. I have heard questions raised here that have left the impression on my mind that if the same questions are raised in our classes when we get back to our schools, we are going to have serious difficulty. I believe there are a great many questions that we should hold back and not discuss. ... I think if we destroy faith in them (Ellen White's Testimonies), we are going to destroy faith in the very foundation of our work. ... And unless these questions can be dealt with most diplomatically, I think we are going to have serious trouble.' ...

"C. L. Benson: "If there are such uncertainties with reference to our historical position, and if the Testimonies are not to be relied on ..., and if the same is true with reference to our theological interpretation of texts, then how can we consistently place implicit confidence in the direction that is given (by Ellen White) with reference to our educational problems, and our medical school, and even our denominational organization?" ...

"J. N. Anderson (Bible teacher at Washington Foreign Mission Seminary): "Can we hold those things back and be true to ourselves? And furthermore, are we safe in doing it? Is it well to let our people in general go on holding to the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies? When we do that, aren't we preparing for a crisis that will be very serious some day?" ...

"C. L. Taylor (Head of the Bible Department at Canadian Junior College): 'I think we have made a great big mountain of difficulty to go out and fight against. ... If we must lay aside what Sister White has said interpreting history ... as unreliable, and also lay aside as unreliable (her) expositions of Scripture, the only natural conclusion for me, and probably a great many others, would be that the same authorship is unreliable regarding organization, regarding pantheism, and every other subject that she ever treated on — that she may have told the truth, but we had better get all the historical data we can to see whether she told the truth or not.' ...

"M. E. Kern (President of Foreign Mission Seminary): 'The question is, ... how can we feel, and believe and know that there is an inconsistency there, — something that is not right, and yet believe that the Spirit of Prophecy (Ellen White) is inspired? ... The question is how to present these matters to the people.'"¹²

Those were questions that the highest Seventh-day Adventist leadership wrestled with back in 1919: how do we admit Ellen White was not verbally inspired; how do we admit her writings are untrustworthy in every area — yet still keep people's faith in the Church, its organization, and its doctrines? On the other hand, how do we as leaders who know these things about Ellen White maintain our own integrity by continuing to teach myths? And if we do teach the myths about Ellen White, aren't we just setting up the church for a future crisis when the truth does come out?

What was their verdict? In Part 2 we will examine the historic decision of Seventh-day Adventist leadership, the results, and current trends as the Church continues to refine its views of Ellen G. White.

1 James White, *A Word to the "Little Flock,"* (1847), p. 22. This facsimile reproduction of the original was published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association and is available through local Adventist Book Centers.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 22

3 James White, *Life Sketches*, (1880 edition), pp. 328, 329, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

4 Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, (1860), vol. 2, p. 293.

5 Ellen White, *Testimonies*, (1876), vol. 4, p. 14.

6 Ellen White, Letter 90, 1906, quoted in *Ellen G. White*, vol. 4, p. 393, by Arthur L. White.

7 Ellen White, *Testimonies*, (1882), vol. 5, p. 67.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 691.

9 Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, (1906), vol. 1, p. 35.

10 Note by the Board of Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate placed in the facsimile edition of *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, "Preface to Facsimile Edition."

11 Taken from the official transcription of the August 1, 1919 Bible Conference minutes, published in *Spectrum*, vol. 10, number 1, pp. 51, 52.

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 45-48.

S

A Word to the "Little Flock"

EARLY EDITS FROM EARLY WRITINGS

Sabbath of the Lord thy God. But I saw that it read the same as when written on the tables of stone by the finger of God, and delivered to Moses in Sinai, "But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." (k) I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question, to unite the hearts of God's dear waiting saints. And if one believed, and kept the Sabbath, and received the blessing attending it, and then gave it up, and broke the holy commandment, they would shut the gates of the Holy City against themselves, as sure as there was a God that rules in heaven above. I saw that God had children, who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They had not rejected the light on it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth (l) and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. This enraged the church, and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time, God's chosen, all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us. And I saw the sword, famine, pestilence, and great confusion in the land. (m) The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments down on them. They rose up and took counsel to rid the earth of us, thinking that then the evil would be stayed. (n)

I saw all that "would not receive the mark of the Beast, and of his Image, in their foreheads or in their hands," could not buy or sell. (o) I saw that the number (666) of the Image Beast was made up; (p) and that it was the beast that changed the Sabbath, and the Image Beast had followed on after, and kept the Pope's, and not God's Sabbath. And all we were required to do, was to give up God's Sabbath, and keep the Pope's, and then we should have the mark of the Beast, and of his Image.

In the time of trouble, we all fled from the cities and villages, (q) but were pursued by the wicked, who entered the houses of the saints with the sword. They raised the sword to kill us, but it broke, and fell, as powerless as a straw. Then we all cried day and night for deliverance, and the cry came up before God. (r) The sun came up, and the moon stood still. (s) The streams ceased to flow. (t) Dark heavy clouds came up, and clashed against each other. (u) But there was one clear place of settled glory, from whence came the voice of God like many waters, which shook the heavens, and the earth. (v) The sky opened and shut, and was in commotion. (w) The

† Ex. 20 : 10. † Ho. 6 : 2, 3. m Eze. 7 : 10—19. 2 Esdras, 15 : 5—27
 n 2 Esdras, 16 : 68—71. o Rev. 13 : 15—17. p Rev. 13 : 18.
 q Eze 7 : 15, 16. Luke, 17 : 30—36. See Campbell's Translation.
 r Luke, 18 : 7, 8. s Hab. 3 : 11. t 2 Esdras, 6 : 24.
 u 2 Esdras, 15 : 34, 35. v Joel, 3 : 16. Heb. 12 : 25—27.
 w Rev. 6 : 14. Mat. 24 : 29.

A Word to the "Little Flock" is significant as the first primary source of literature published by James White and pertains directly to the visions of Ellen White. Deletions occur eleven times in subsequent editions as the text takes on the form of the "Spirit of Prophecy." The highlighted edits as reproduced here from page 19 are omitted from identical passages on pages 33 and 34 of *Early Writings*.

Baptism For The Dead?

LARRY DEAN SPURGEON

One of the most puzzling verses in the Christian Scriptures is 1 Corinthians 15:29. It states, "Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?"

What this verse means has been the subject of much debate. Does it mean, as it seems to mean in English, that Sally was being baptized in the place of Great-aunt Mildred who had died before ever hearing of Yahshua? Some believe exactly that. Others strongly oppose that interpretation, but offer no alternative view, while others say that it's simply impossible to know what was being referred to.

Is there another explanation to the mystery of baptism for the dead? If so, in what long neglected book can one find the explanation to this puzzle? That long neglected book from ages past is Leviticus, *Sefer Vayyikra*, the third book of Moshe (Moses), the centerpiece of the Torah, in the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures). Chapters 12 through 15 of Leviticus deal with the Laws of Purification, as also does Numbers chapter 19. A look at a few of the details from the Purification Laws will help one to understand what was going on in Corinth with the baptism for the dead.

Laws of Purification and Cleansing
Leviticus 15 starts out dealing with questions about people who have running sores on their skin. "Every bed whereon he that hath the issue lieth shall be unclean; and everything whereon he sitteth shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. ... And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue, then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes; and he shall bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean" (Leviticus 15:4, 5, 13).

Other issues are dealt with in the same manner: "And if the flow of seed go out from a man, then he shall bathe all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even" (verse 16).

The corresponding regulation for women is somewhat better known: "And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be in her impurity seven days; and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean. ... But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean" (verses 19, 20, 28).

These are the same issues that are dealt with in Numbers chapter 19: "He that toucheth the dead, even any man's dead body, shall be unclean seven days; the same shall purify himself therewith on the third day and on the seventh day, and he shall be clean; but if he purify not himself the third and the seventh day, he shall not be clean" (verses 11, 12).

Cleansing From Death

The one thing that all of these matters have in common is death. Sores on the flesh are potential sources of death. Semen and ovum that do not unite to bring life are dead. Contact with death was seen as bringing about a lowered level of spirituality. The sense of this is so strong that not only were husband and wife not to have sexual relations at given times, they weren't even to share the same bed during those times of abstinence.

The washing that is referred to in these passages is not just any washing or bathing. It is specifically the use of a *mikvah*. The *mikvah* is a reservoir of living (running) water used for many types of religious purification. The men and women in the situations mentioned, and in many other places in the Bible were to immerse themselves in the *mikvah*. Converts to Judaism also immerse themselves in a *mikvah*, saying "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us concerning immersion."

Baptism Invented by John?

Far too many Christians, ignorant of the Jewish roots of their faith, think that immersion was the invention of John the Baptist. Immersion in the

mikvah was commanded by the Eternal through Moses. This is how the writer of the book of Hebrews could speak of moving forward from an elementary level to maturity, hoping not to have to re-teach the foundation "of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, *instruction about baptisms* (plural), the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment" (Hebrews 6:1, 2). That author would probably be disappointed to know how ignorant most are concerning the use of the *mikvah*.

So why is one baptized for the dead? One is baptized, or immersed in the *mikvah*, following a touch of death upon one's flesh or clothing, and one is resurrected to a higher spiritual state upon coming out of the *mikvah*. May we all rise to great spiritual heights through a better understanding of the Tanakh.

Tanakh quotations are from the Hertz Chumash. New Testament quotes are from the NIV.

THE GOOD NEWS!

"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, Not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior."
— Titus 3:4-6 NIV

Have You A Burden?

Rahya Montuori

*Have you a burden you alone must shoulder?
Problems that beset your rugged road?
Share them with a friend who's understanding,
You'll find you have a lighter load!
Make everyday a day for spreading sunshine,
Your own heart will reflect the joys you give!
For giving of yourself to make hearts gladder,
Is the only truly happy way to live!*

Of Flowers and Weeds

DONNA KUPP

The other day my husband, Harold brought me a flower he had picked and said: "Donna, even the weeds you grow are pretty!" Then he added, "I got all those weeds pulled up for you." My helpful partner didn't know that I had wanted to brighten up that corner of the yard and had scattered flower seeds all along that edge of our property. Well, we had a good chuckle together about Harold mistaking my flowers for weeds.

The problem is that errors like this not only happen in our yards and gardens, but they also happen in our churches. It isn't funny when one of God's "flowers" is mistaken for a "weed" and pulled up by other believers!

We could learn some lessons in discernment by looking at two reasons why Harold pulled up my flowers thinking they were weeds. First, he didn't recognize they were flowers; and second, he didn't recognize them because they were growing where he expected only weeds to be growing. Even after he saw the beauty of the flowers he still treated them as weeds because they were not growing in an established flower bed.

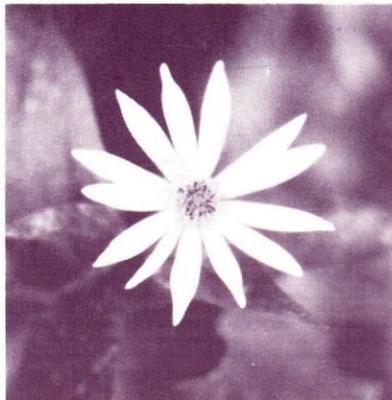
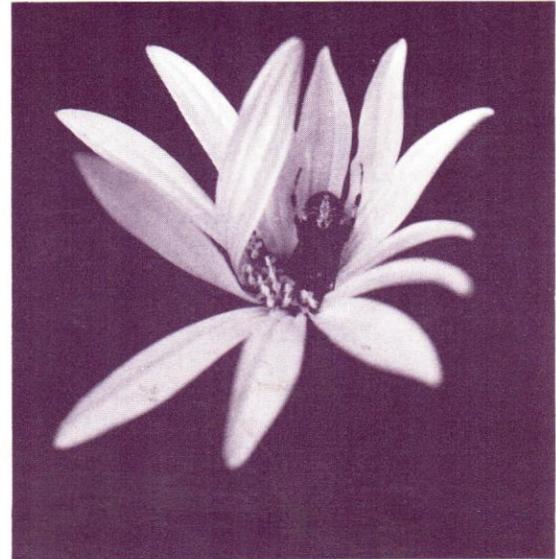
Isn't this also true of our churches? A person's testimony and character can be admired but he still can be rejected by other believers. Why? The answer to that question is that many of God's people do not expect to find a child of God outside of their own church! They reason: "Since he is not part of *my* church, he is probably a 'weed.' After all, I believe 'The Truth' and since he doesn't believe exactly as I believe, he must not be a 'flower.'"

But isn't a flower a flower regardless of where it grows? And isn't a child of God still a child of God regardless of where we find him? Under the term "saint" in Revelation 14:12, the Bible gives us a good definition of a child of God — "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who *obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.*" This simple

definition can keep us from repeating the errors of discernment that have hurt God's children and His church for past generations. Anyone who patiently endures by keeping God's commandments and remaining faithful to Jesus is one of God's "flowers!"

We must remember that in God's bouquet not every flower is exactly the same. Knowing this, the next time we meet a faithful child of God in some unexpected place, instead of rejecting him as a "weed," we will be able to accept our new friend as a lovely gift from God.

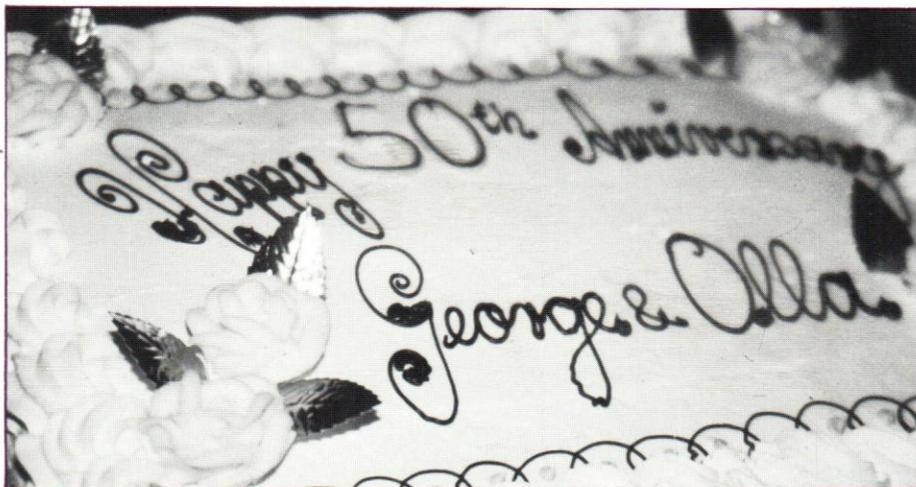
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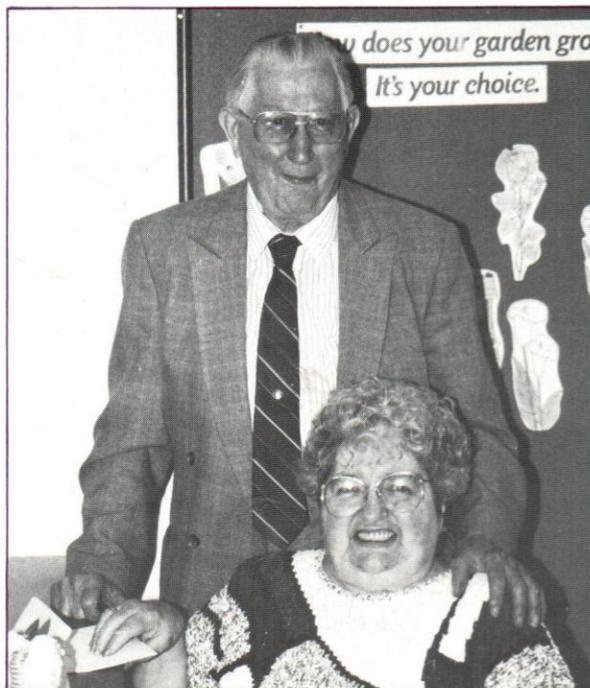
BSA NEWS



George and Olla Estey



It was a happy Sabbath May 22, 1993 as Jeanne Yurke, pastor of Raritan Valley 7th Day Baptist church in Bridgewater, NJ, with her husband Bernie planned a 50th Anniversary celebration for BSA board member George Estey and his wife Olla. Following the 10 a.m. Sabbath service all went to the kitchen-dining area of the church to sing "Happy Anniversary to you, George and Olla," and share in the refreshments. George and Olla were married in a small house wedding in Rochester, NY on May 31, 1943. Congratulations, George and Olla, as you begin your second 50 years together!



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