

**THE MAN WHO BOARDED  
THE PHANTOM SHIP**

**D.M. CANRIGHT**

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN  
WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE  
TO ATTACKING HISTORIC ADVENTISM  
AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY**



*Harvestime Books*

PB-832

Canright:

*The Man Who Boarded the Phantom Ship*  
by Vance Ferrell

Published by Harvestime Books

Beersheba Springs, TN 37305 USA

Printed in the United States of America

Cover and Text Copyright © 2004

by Pilgrims Books

Go to our website  
***ellenwhitedefend.com***  
for a  
**massive collection**  
**of articles**  
**defending the Spirit of**  
**Prophecy writings.**

“Said the captain: ‘I shall not let you go there, for I know that vessel will strike the rocks before she reaches the harbor.’

**“You straightened yourself up, and said with great positiveness:** ‘This vessel will become a wreck; I can see it just as plain as can be.’

**“The captain looked upon you with piercing eye, and said firmly.** ‘I shall not permit you to lose your life by taking that boat. The timbers of her framework are worm-eaten, and she is a deceptive craft. **If you had more knowledge you could discern between the spurious and the genuine, the holy and that appointed to utter ruin.’ ”**

**—5 Testimonies, 571**  
**Written to D.M. Canright**

## THE MAN WHO BOARDED THE PHANTOM SHIP

## D.M. CANRIGHT

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE  
TO ATTACKING HISTORIC ADVENTISM AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

***There are still many people who rely on the writings of this individual to disparage both Ellen White and the Truths of Adventism. You deserve to know how he came to write what he wrote and what happened in his own life.***

***A phantom is something like a mirage. It may seem mysteriously inviting, but what it offers isn't really there.***

***According to our Divine Captain, it was a deceptive craft, with worm-eaten timbers which would eventually flounder on the rocks (5 Testimonies, 571-573, written to Canright).***

***Canright boarded that ship anyway; and it led him into something terrible. But just now, let us go back to the early 1800's, to the beginning of the story.***

In late 1831, Hiram and Loretta Canright moved to an eighty-acre farm near Kinderhook in southern Michigan. Soon after, their first son, Dudley Marvin, was born. The date was September 22, 1840. Nineteen years later in 1859, Dudley went to live with an uncle near Albion, New York, so he could attend school. That spring he began working for a Seventh-day Adventist farmer and minister, Roswell F. Cottrell. While working in the cornfield together, young Dudley learned about the Sabbath truth and the Third Angel's Message.

That summer, following a tent effort held by James White not far from Albion, he accepted the Advent Message and was baptized shortly afterward by Elder Cottrell. Thrilled with the message, he hurried home to share it with his family. Canright's first convert was his mother. She remained true to the Advent Message until her death. Remaining on the farm for a time, he helped with the work; then, when about 21, he traveled the nearly forty miles north to Battle Creek to talk with James White

about entering the ministry. Elder White gave him a Bible and a set of prophecy charts; and Canright went out and began preaching. Later, Elder White raised money for a library for the young evangelist.

"Present truth looks clearer and more beautiful to us the more we study it . . . Praise the Lord for a religion that agrees with the Bible, common sense, and the wants of man."—*Advent Review*, November 8, 1864.

Canright wrote those words to the *Review* while holding evangelistic series up and down the State of Michigan. On May 29, 1865, D.M. Canright was ordained to the ministry by James White and J.N. Loughborough, in a service held at Battle Creek. He was 24 years of age.

In the middle of 1866, Canright began evangelistic work in New England; but he found the territory so conservative that, frequently, he had but little fruit.

***It was during this period that certain weaknesses in Canright's character began to reveal themselves. Following an apparent failure in the work, or a supposed slight by another, a deep discouragement would come over him that could go on for weeks and even months. Doubts about the existence of God would sweep over his mind. At times he came close to outright atheism.***

But when success was seen in his work and the encouragement of his brethren would waft aside the gloom, cheerfulness would once again return.

***In his private diary for 1867 he wrote of his struggles with pride, self-exaltation, and a spirit of harshness toward others. He declared that he was spiritually sick and feared that God had forever forsaken him. The thought tortured him that perhaps he was eternally lost.***

A good portion of 1866 and 1867 were passed amid such gloomy and morose feelings; oddly enough, in 1867, his life was brightened with the

happiness of marriage. On April 11, he married 19-year old Lucretia Cranson.

When her parents had died prematurely, Lucretia had been raised by the George Amadon family in Battle Creek. Often she and her two sister orphans were befriended by Ellen White.

**Excerpts from Canright's personal diary, collected later by George Amadon, reveal that he was emotionally unstable and subject to intense psychic depressions, even prior to his first marriage:**

"On April 10, 1867, Dudley Canright arrived in Battle Creek after conducting evangelistic meetings in Maine with J.N. Andrews. His diary reveals that a courtship by letter had been going on between him and Lucretia Cranson, the orphaned girl who had been cared for by George and Martha [Amadon]. Gloomy entries appeared in the diary when he had not heard from Lucretia for a week or more. Immediately after receiving a letter his spirits soared. Both before and after marriage he depended on her stabilizing influence to steer him between depths of despondency and delusions of grandeur.

"Before marriage [on April 11] he wrote in his 1867 diary:

" 'January 2. Got a loving letter from Lucretia with her picture. How can I avoid loving her?'

" 'February 3. I almost fear that I shall be lost.'

" 'February 4. I got almost out of patience with Lucretia because she does not write.'

" 'February 7. Got a loving letter from Lucretia. She is too good for me.'

" 'March 11. I am in a very bad state. Nearly dead spiritually.'

" **'March 25. Got a good letter from L[ucretia]. I feel all right now.'**—*George Amadon Compilation, "Much in Little," Heritage Room, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.*

**Here are additional Canright diary excerpts, compiled by Amadon:**

"Lucretia was nineteen years old, and Dudley was twenty-six. In his diary entry for his wedding day, Thursday, April 11, 1867, he writes:

" 'Lucretia never seemed half so lovely and good. About 30 assembled at 1 p.m. [at Amadon's home in Battle Creek] and we gave some of them a surprise. Elder Loughborough married us. Then we had a good dinner and all seemed to enjoy it. This was truly the happiest day I ever saw. I will praise God for it.'

"After marriage the fluctuating pattern persists:

" 'April 21. Lucretia is helping me much. We agree first rate and love each other more and more every day.'

" 'August 17. I have got into a dark spell again. Hate myself and all others. Am very unhappy.'

" 'September 22. Cretia was feeling bad because I

neglect her.'

" 'November 16. I am in a bad condition . . . Had a long talk with L[ucretia] and told her how I felt. She wept bitterly. I fear that God has left me.'

" **'December 26 [after returning from a trip]. Found Lucretia well and looking more lovely than ever.'**—*Ibid.*

The above excerpts, compiled by George Amadon, were later reprinted in *Milton R. Hook, Flames over Battle Creek (Review Publishing Association), pp. 55-56.*

Back in New England again, Canright pushed hard at evangelism. But there were difficulties. Something of a driver, he did not understand why his frail wife could not keep up with all that he demanded of her as a busy evangelist's wife. But Lucretia devotedly did her best to please.

"For myself, I never felt so much confidence in the third angel's message as now; I never prized the gifts as now, never loved God's tried servants as now."—*D.M. Canright, Review, November 12, 1867.*

**The year 1868 marked the emergence of what would prove to be one of Canright's cleverest abilities—a talent for debate. He could rapidly parry arguments, invent counterlogic in an instant, and ridicule his opponents.** Because he handled them so well, soon fellow evangelists called for him—as the need arose—to hold debates in their areas.

**At this juncture, we need to briefly turn our attention to another Adventist minister. Early in his career, Canright had worked with Moses Hull and learned debating techniques from him. He also imbibed his conceit. Well-aware of his outstanding speaking and writing talents, Hull was so certain of his abilities that he took on spiritualists in public debates—and ultimately was drawn by them into the depths of spiritualism.** They had declared that they would overcome him; and they did.

On November 5, 1862, and again in June, 1863, Ellen White wrote appeals to Hull, asking him to let God take away his pride of heart. She also warned him against friendship with spiritualists; and she added, "Never should one man be sent forth alone to combat with a spiritualist" (*1 Testimonies, 428*).

**As later did the younger minister, Canright, with whom he had earlier worked for a time, Moses Hull was so sure of himself that he disregarded the warnings and accepted a challenge to another debate with several spiritualists.** During the debates, he became confused and a mysterious cloud rested on his mind. Hull then announced at the meeting that he was now a spiritualist!

1 But a few days later, making confession to the  
2 church, he was granted another chance on condi-  
3 tion that he work with Loughborough. This he did  
1 for several months; but Moses Hull had changed.  
**Waves of depression would settle on him at times. Then, in September 1863, he preached his last Adventist sermon. Joining the spiritualists, Hull became a lecturer and writer for them.** (*Read 1 Testimonies, 426-439, 442-443; 2 Testimonies, 625; and 3 Testimonies, 212, for more on Elder Hull's fall.*)

This story is mentioned because of the striking parallels it holds to the experience of the younger minister who had worked with him for a time: D.M. Canright. We now move forward several years to the late 1860s.

After the death of their second child, the Canright family moved west; and Canright began work under Elder George I. Butler, at that time president of the Iowa Conference. The two men would work together for a number of years, both in Iowa and elsewhere. By this time, Canright had begun serving on important conference committees. Soon he was recognized as the champion debater of the conference.

**But in the midst of so much success, once again the strange flaw came to the surface.** It was December of 1869. Canright, now 29, was holding evangelistic meetings in Monroe, Iowa; and 40 had taken their stand. On Tuesday evening, the 28th, **flushed with success from a debate won that night, he returned to his hotel room.** Elder Butler had attended the debate. Following it, he walked with Canright to the hotel; for he planned to also lodge there that night.

**But before retiring, Butler was astounded to hear Canright begin confessing to him that he was on the verge of atheism! Powerful waves of temptation to give up all religion pressed upon him. That evening, he told Butler that impulses to renounce his belief in Scripture and go into outright infidelity were almost more than he could handle.**

All night long, without sleep, the two men talked and prayed. Butler reported that in the morning Canright appeared more calm and possessed. A few weeks later, at the General Conference session in Battle Creek, he made some confessions and seemed to feel better.

Immediately, Canright pushed himself even harder in new evangelistic meetings in Iowa. As he traveled from place to place, he took Lucretia with him. By that time they had a house in Monroe. Life

was hard for his little wife. After her death, he called her a "saint" for what she had gone through. Four years later, they sold it. This had been their first home; but it had hardly been lived in.

**"Looking over the past year, shame, sorrow, and regret fill my heart that I did not stand the test better. Thank God, probation still continues.** My health is good and strong."—*D.M. Canright, Review, January 9, 1872.*

**In June he was called to Minnesota, where he found less success in the meetings. Lacking quick success, he was again plunged into gloom.**

**Nine years after his mentor, Moses Hull, had been finally captured by the spiritualists in debates, one Friday night in August 1872, Canright debated with a spiritualist.**

Billed as a "trance speaker, a celebrated lecturer among the spiritualists," the worshiper of Satan arrived in town. A debate between the two occurred shortly afterward. Into the evangelistic tent strode the spiritualist; and, when it came his turn to speak, all could see that he spoke in a trance. When the audience hissed at some of his satanic remarks, he became angry and called them geese. At this they laughed; and the tide was turned in favor of Canright. **He was later to report it in the Review as a great debating victory over the spiritualists** (*Review, September 17, 1872*). At the end of that year he wrote:

**"God has been better to us than all our fears. I am resolved not to be so cast down again under any circumstances."**—*Review, January 14, 1873.*

In the summer of 1873, Canright and his wife went for a vacation trip with Elder and Mrs. White to the Rockies. James was recovering from a stroke and needed a change. And Ellen, knowing that the Canrights needed a rest also, invited them along. Arriving at their destination, they stayed in a mountain cabin near Black Hawk, Colorado. For several weeks all had a happy time, amid walks and strawberry picking. Sister White was awaiting an opportunity to speak with the young couple. She had been given counsel for them.

But before the opportunity came, bad weather kept them in for a spell and Elder White became so ill that he could not sleep. **Irritated at the cramped quarters, Canright burst into anger against the man who had so many times befriended him.** He was later to write of the incident, "I told the elder my mind freely. That brought us into an open rupture. Mrs. White heard it all, but said nothing." **Shortly thereafter, Ellen spoke with them both and told what had been revealed in vision. But they resisted all of the counsel**

given.

A letter, dated August 12, was later sent to them. (You can read it in 3 Testimonies, 304-329.)

Again, Sister White tried to help them but as she wrote in her diary, they “seem unfeeling, and unimpressible as stones” (*Manuscript 10, 1873*).

**On August 26, the Canrights left; and, once again despondent, he moved his family to California and “came very near giving up everything.”** For a time he worked at farming. Then in a letter in Lucretia’s handwriting, Dudley wrote and asked for forgiveness.

“Your words and spirit are very tender, humble, and forgiving . . . I have never seen any sins or faults in the character and life of Sister White . . . I am satisfied that the time had come in my life when it was important that I should make a radical change in several important points. This I am now fully determined to do at all events.”—*D.M. Canright, letter, November 8, 1873.*

Meeting again in late 1873, the two men, Canright and James White, wept together in a manzanita thicket near Santa Rosa, California.

**From the fall of 1873 until the moment of her death, Lucretia never again had a question about Ellen White and the Testimonies.** She had come to recognize that the counsels given to them by Inspiration were true and applied to them. For the remainder of her life, she ever sought to be a helper to her husband and a faithful child of God.

**In the spring of 1877 Canright wrote a series of articles for the Review under the title, “A Plain Talk to Murmurers,” presenting “Some Facts for Those Who are not in Harmony with the Body.”**

**In these articles he traced the rise of the church; then, in some detail, he told the story of various ones who had apostatized and later fought the church.**

**In other articles in this series he spoke about Ellen White, whom he had personally known for many years, and about the immense value of the Testimonies in the history of the church and in his own life.**

Later in this biography of D.M. Canright, we shall include some passages from this significant series of articles; since they provide us with a clear understanding of his real feelings, when that mysterious despondency did not overwhelm him.

Following two years of evangelistic work in California, Canright was called back East and continued work. **At the 1876 General Conference ses-**

**sion, he was one of three men elected to the General Conference Executive Committee. There is no question but that the brethren tried to have confidence in Dudley.**

Re-elected at the next session, he served two years on this, the highest, committee in the denomination. The three men on that committee were James White, S.N. Haskell, and D.M. Canright.

In a letter dated August 13, 1877, Canright wrote to Elder White, that “we are all well and of a good courage.” But the truth of the matter was that, in Massachusetts, all was not well. Tiny Fred and his sister, Genevieve, were recovering from the measles and Lucretia was growing weaker. A month after the letter was written she suffered a lung hemorrhage. Tuberculosis was setting in, from which she was later to die.

By February of 1878, recognizing that she needed help, Canright took her to the Battle Creek Sanitarium. **In Battle Creek he busied himself with visits to leaders and committee work, rarely taking time to visit her.**

Then, in early March, he was elected president of the newly created Sabbath School Association while Elder White took a fatherly interest in Lucretia and frequently arranged for friends to take her for pleasant carriage rides in the country. Large-hearted Martha Amadon, wife of the superintendent of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, took the two children and lovingly cared for them. You will recall that she was the one who, years earlier, had raised Lucretia when she had been orphaned.

**At this time, Dudley was beginning to eye the presidency. Elder James White was again in poor health and in need of rest; obviously someone with unusual abilities would be needed to take his place if he passed off the scene of action.** When it was learned that Elder White was planning for another trip to Colorado for rest, **Canright determined that he would accompany James White, although friends urged him to remain near his sick wife.** But leaving her, he made the long journey to Colorado. While there, Elder White concentrated on hiking and writing. And soon after, Elder W.C. White (their eldest son) arrived and later wrote of the experience:

“Elder Canright was in Battle Creek to be near his wife, who was dying with consumption. Suddenly he decided to go to Colorado with Father, for his health. And he went, contrary to the pleadings of the friends of his wife, and spent several weeks in the mountains

# THE MAN WHO BOARDED THE PHANTOM SHIP

PART TWO OF EIGHT

## D.M. CANRIGHT

W M ————— Continued from the preceding tract in this series

1 near Black Hawk, with us.

2 **“At that time my father was president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. His associates on the Committee were S.N. Haskell and D.M. Canright. Father’s health was uncertain, and it was expected that one of these associates would be the next President.**

2 **“My wife and I were surprised and shocked to observe the diligence and enthusiasm with which Mr. Canright improved every opportunity to exalt himself, and to discredit Elder Haskell in my father’s estimation. In the good providence of God my father’s health improved, and he was re-elected, and there was no contest over the office of President.”—W.C. White, letter to E.W. Barr, July 26, 1920.**

It was early in August, while still in Colorado, that word reached Canright that his wife had suffered a relapse and was rapidly failing. On the 12th he headed back to Battle Creek. He had been away from her for six weeks. Deep was her love for her husband, and she regretted that soon she would be parted from him. One day, when he took her out in the country in a carriage, she showed him the spot in the cemetery where she wanted to be buried.

Dudley had arrived in Battle Creek just in time to attend the General Conference Session, to be held there that year. **During its proceedings, the constituency voted James White, J.H. Kellogg, and Sydney Brownsberger as the new members of the General Conference Executive Committee. Canright was elected to the Presidency of the Ohio Conference, with the understanding that he would have to spend part of the time with his invalid wife at Battle Creek.**

At about this time, he did some serious thinking and mentioned some of his thoughts in a letter to Ellen White:

“I started in [the work] very much behind in everything. When I was twenty-one I did not know anything and had nothing. I have had everything to learn since . . . Lucretia never was naturally a student. She is wholly

a motherly, domestic woman, loves to stay at home and simply take care of her own household duties, and family; hence it has always been very hard for her to enter into my feelings and to take an interest in my studies or work. I have no doubt that I did not realize how much stronger physically I was then she; how much more natural energy I possessed, than she. Hence I have made it pretty hard for her . . . I am very glad, Sister White, for the advice you give me from time to time, and I do try to profit by it; but you know how hard all habits are to break off; we need line upon line. I hope you will not get discouraged at the little improvement.”—D.M. Canright, letter to Ellen White, November 26, 1878.

**Such a written communication is of special interest in view of later statements on his part. One statement, after his departure from the faith, was that Elder and Mrs. White had treated him in an unkind and cruel manner.**

Many of Canright’s later charges (such as his statement that Ellen White ate pork at the table with him) should be considered in light of the caliber of honesty evidenced in the man. **We have a number of evidences that, after his apostasy, a strange power had finally taken full control of him and that, among other things, simple honesty had fled from his heart.**

A month later his wife wrote him:

“The Lord blesses me with peace of mind . . . The only thing lacking is your presence . . . If I can never be with you in your work again, I do not want to feel that I have hindered you, however much the natural feelings have to be sacrificed.”—Lucretia C. Canright, letter to her husband, quoted in Review, December 12, 1878.

Her last-known letter was dictated on February 25, 1879, from her hospital bed. It was written to one of her closest friends—Ellen White. **This letter expressed thankfulness for the messages of comfort and assurance Ellen had sent in the year and a half of her confinement and for the years of love and continued interest before that. She said that she felt the love and mercy of God and was resting in it. In closing she called Elder and Mrs. White her “dearest friends.”**

Her nurse added a postscript to the letter:

“She is very weak, but ever patient, uncomplaining, and even cheerful . . . Your words were appreciated, I can assure you. She expresses much gratitude and affection for the kindness and interest you and Brother White have extended to her. With love and haste. (Signed) Mary Martin.”

On Sabbath, March 29, near sunset, Lucretia

---

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO ATTACKING HISTORIC ADVENTISM AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

Canright died. She was thirty-one years old. The burial was at Oak Hill Cemetery in the site she had chosen.

Canright was now at the height of his influence. At the dedicatory service for the Battle Creek Tabernacle (April 20, 1879), he was one of those who took part in the ceremonies, along with such men as John N. Andrews, George I. Butler, and Uriah Smith. (The White's were not in Battle Creek at the time.) His pay was equal to that of the General Conference President—\$12 a week. In August the Ohio Conference elected Canright president. In addition to supervising conference executive work, he also carried on meetings in different localities.

It was at this time that a Drury W. Reavis came to the Ohio Conference. A student at Battle Creek College, Canright had asked him to help promote the Sabbath School work in Ohio. (Later, Reavis was to work for many years in the offices of the Review and Herald Publishing Association.) In Ohio, he came to be an especially close confidant of Canright. His experiences in Ohio were later written up in a book which he published under the title, *I Remember*.

Here are some pertinent selections from this book:

"I felt highly honored by being selected by Elder Canright to do special Sabbath school work in Ohio. This appointment proved to be the beginning of a very close, mutual, friendly association.

"Elder Canright talked freely with me about everything in which he was interested, about his personal difficulties, about his past trials and sorrows, and of his future hopes and plans. He seemed to find consolation in going over these things with me.

"The elder was remarkably bright, and grew rapidly from his humble beginning, through the blessing of God, and the power of the message he proclaimed with Heaven-bestowed ability. **He was so greatly admired and openly praised by our workers and the laity, that he finally reached the conclusion he had inherent ability—that the message he was proclaiming was a hindrance to him rather than the exclusive source of his power.**"—*I Remember*, p. 117.

In the *Review* for September 13, 1881, Canright mentioned that he encountered many trials in the summer of 1879.

One of these was a worsening throat condition. On May 4, 1880, he wrote to Ellen White about this problem:

"You know the difficulty I have had in my throat, and with my voice, on account of bad habits of speaking. From the instruction I have had since last fall, in *Elocution*, I believe I can get over that and learn to speak properly and easily. If not, it is certain I will

have to abandon speaking sooner or later . . . In the middle of the summer I propose to spend a few weeks with Hamill in Chicago. The way is open for me to do this now, and if I lose this chance I may never get it again. I feel as though it is about life or death with me."—*D.M. Canright, letter to Ellen White, May 4, 1880.*

Hamill was a worldly speech teacher. *Elocution* was a 19th-century study in worldly universities. The student was taught a variety of artificial intonation and gesturing patterns, intended to heighten the apparent greatness of the speaker. It was not a subject that God's people should study; *read 4 Testimonies, 605-606.* Better methods were available to Dudley: Total dedication of his life and objectives to the service of God. An abandonment of efforts, damaging to his vocal cords, to speak in such a way as to make himself appear to be a great man and an intensely dramatic speaker. A humble but firm reliance upon the Holy Spirit for guidance and enabling. A careful use of diaphragmatic breathing. —All these could restore his voice and do for him that which no human device could accomplish.

And so it was that, in the summer of 1880, Canright went to Chicago to continue elocution studies in Hamill's school. But the worldly pride of performance, so common to schools of this type, plus the contacts that Canright had that summer and early fall with large non-Adventist church audiences, deepened his desire to rise to greater acclaim and honor than he could have in our small denomination.

**What happened next was a deeply significant incident in the life of Dudley Marvin Canright. It marked a turning point in his life.** Reavis describes what took place. Canright was still President of the Ohio Conference at the time.

"During the summer and fall of 1880, immediately after graduation, I, with other students from Battle Creek College, attended Professor Hamill's *School of Oratory* in Chicago. **Elder Canright, inoculated, at heart, with a belief that through a thorough study in, and mastery of, 'expression' he could accomplish his consuming desire to be a popular public speaker** [on non-doctrinal topics before non-Adventist audiences] joined us: and because of my former pleasant association with him, I became his 'critic' as he lectured, upon invitation through the influence of the School of Oratory, in many of the largest popular [Sundaykeeping] churches in Chicago during the summer vacation of the pastors of these churches.

**"In these lectures he applied the oratorical principles taught in the school, and needed a critic versed in these principles, to follow him in his lectures and later point out his misapplications, and of course to compliment him on all that were rightly applied.** He had more invitations than he could pos-

sibly accept; so he selected the largest and most popular churches.

“One Sunday night, in the largest church of the West Side, he spoke on *‘The Saint’s Inheritance’* to more than 3,000 people, and **I took a seat in the gallery directly in front of him, to see every gesture and to hear every tone, form of voice, emphasis, stress, and pitch, and all the rest.** But that was as far as I got in my part of the service, for he so quickly and eloquently launched into this, his favorite theme, that I, with the entire congregation, became entirely absorbed in the Biblical facts he was so convincingly presenting. I never thought of anything else until he had finished.

“After the benediction I could not get to him for more than half an hour because of the people crowding around him, complimenting and thanking him for his masterly discourse. **On all sides I could hear people saying it was the most wonderful sermon they had ever heard. I knew it was not the oratorical manner of the delivery, but the Bible truth clearly and feelingly presented, that had appealed to the people—it was the power in that timely message.** It made a deep, lasting impression upon my mind. **—I saw that the power was all in the truth, and not in the speaker.**

“After a long time we were alone, and we went into a beautiful city park just across the street, which was almost deserted because of the late hour of the night, and sat down to talk the occasion over and for me to deliver my criticisms. But I had none for the elder. I frankly confessed that I became so completely carried away with that soul-inspiring Biblical subject I did not think once of the oratorical rules he was applying in its presentation. Then we sat in silence for some time. **Suddenly the elder sprang to his feet and said, ‘D.W., I believe I could become a great man were it not for our unpopular message!’**

“**I made no immediate reply, for I was shocked to hear a great preacher make such a statement. To think of the message, for which I had given up the world, in the estimation of its leading minister, being inferior to, and in the way of, the progress of men,** was almost paralyzing. Then I got up and stepped in front of the elder and said with much feeling, **‘D.M., the message made you all you are, and the day you leave it, you will retrace your steps back to where it found you.’**

“**But in his mind the die was evidently cast. The decision had doubtless been secretly made in his mind for some time, but had not before been expressed in words. From that night the elder was not quite the same toward our people and the work at large.**”—Drury W. Reavis, *I Remember*, pp. 118-119.

Elsewhere in his book, speaking about Canright’s later defection from the church, he makes the following comments. Remember, they come from one who at one time was very closely acquainted with D.M. Canright:

“**His estrangement began and developed through**

**harboring that greatest seductive thing that finds its way into some human hearts, which I name an abnormal desire to be great;—not great in the true meaning of the word, but great only in the estimation of people—to be popular.**”—*Ibid*, p. 117.

“**The feeling that being an Adventist was his principal hindrance increased as time passed. He finally reached the conclusion that he could achieve his goal of fame through denouncing the unpopular doctrines of the denomination, and he finally worked himself out of the denomination.**”—*Ibid*, p. 119.

**An unseen spirit was working on Canright’s mind, leading him, through an overmastering thirst for greater fame and complements, to imagine that the only way up was out. Somehow, he felt he must leave the Advent people and the narrow path in order to receive all that recognition and honor that he felt was his due.**

Late in September, the Ohio camp meeting convened; and its President, D.M. Canright, made his way there, fully intending to decline a request to continue on as its president even though offered. And this he did; but the brethren urged the matter until he agreed “to act as President with the privilege of being absent from the Conference a share of the time” (*Review*, September 30, 1880).

But soon thereafter he resigned the post; and George I. Butler was later to report:

“**In October of 1880, he had another backset. He became discouraged—we never knew from what special cause—and ceased to preach.**”—*Review Extra*, December, 1887.

Reavis knew why, but he told no one.

Canright had heard whispered voices telling him of the great things he could attain by leaving the Advent work. In obedience, he left. **Soon after, he accepted an offer to be an elocution teacher for a worldly school.**

But although Reavis was to say nothing for a number of years to come, the messenger of the Lord heard about the problem—and the reasons—through another source. On October 15, 1880, she wrote a letter to Canright that is dramatic, both in its clarity and appeal:

“I was made sad to hear of your decision, but I have had reason to expect it . . . Satan is full of exultant joy that you have stepped from beneath the banner of Jesus Christ, and stand under his banner. He sees in you one he can make a valuable agent to build up his kingdom. You are taking the very course I expected you would take if you yielded to temptation.

“**You have ever had a desire for power, for popularity, and this is one of the reasons for your present position. But I beg of you to keep your doubts, your questionings, your skepticism to yourself. The people have given you credit for more strength of purpose and stability of character than you pos-**

**essed.** They thought you were a strong man; and when you breathe out your dark thoughts and feelings, Satan stands ready to make these thoughts and feelings so intensely powerful in their deceptive character, that **many souls will be deceived and lost through the influence of one soul who chose darkness rather than light, and presumptuously placed himself on Satan's side, in the ranks of the enemy.**

**"You have wanted to be too much, and make a show and noise in the world, and as the result your sun will surely set in obscurity.** Every day you are meeting with an eternal loss . . . You are nursing a feeling which will sting and poison your soul to its own ruin . . . **Your ambition has soared so high, it will accept of nothing short of elevation of self. You do not know yourself. What you have always needed was a humble, contrite heart . . .**

"God has chosen you for a great and solemn work. He has been seeking to discipline, to test, to prove you, to refine and ennoble you, that this sacred work may be done with a single eye to His glory which belongs wholly to God. What a thought that God chooses a man and brings him into close connection with Himself, and gives him a mission to undertake, a work to do, for Him. A weak man is made strong, a timid man is made brave, the irresolute becomes a man of firm and quick decision. What! is it possible that man is of so much consequence as to receive a commission from the King of kings! Shall worldly ambition allure from the sacred trust, the holy commission? . . .

"Whoever follows Christ is a colaborer with Him, sharing with Him the divine work of saving souls. **If you have a thought of being released from it because you see some prospect of forming an alliance with the world which shall bring yourself to greater notice, it is because you forget how great and noble it is to do anything for God, how exalted a position it is to be a colaborer with Jesus Christ,** a light bearer to the world, shedding light and love upon the pathway of others.

"You will have a great conflict with the power of evil in your own heart. **You have felt that there was a higher work for you, but, oh, if you would only take up the work lying directly in your path, and do it with fidelity, not seeking in any way to exalt self, then peace and joy would come to your soul,** purer, richer, and more satisfying than the conquerors in earthly warfare . . . I now appeal to you to make back tracks as fast as possible; take up your God-given mission, and seek for purity and holiness to sanctify that mission. Make no delay; halt not between two opinions. If the Lord be God, serve Him; but if Baal, serve him. You have the old lesson of trust in God to learn anew in the hard school of suffering. **Let D.M. Canright be swallowed up in Jesus . . .**

"Now, Elder Canright, for your soul's sake grasp firmly again the hand of God, I beseech you. I am too weary to write more. God deliver you from Satan's snare is my prayer."—*Ellen White, letter to D.M. Canright, October 15, 1880; published in 2 Selected Messages, pp. 162-170.*

G.I. Butler later wrote of this time in Canright's life:

**"When he gave up preaching he began to lecture on elocution, and traveled considerably in Wisconsin and Michigan, holding classes. He told me himself that for a time he then ceased to observe the Sabbath . . . He thought then quite seriously of preaching for the Methodists . . .** But the Elder's conscience troubled him greatly at times. He wrote me, desiring to see me and have a long talk. We met in Battle Creek the following January [1881], and had some fifteen hours' conversation."—*G.I. Butler, Review Extra, December, 1887.*

Eight months later in September, Canright, himself, was to speak about this experience. He wrote it for an article, titled "*Danger of Giving Way to Discouragement and Doubts,*" that was published in the *Review*. Here are his words:

"About a year ago I became wholly discouraged. It seemed to me that my work amounted to nothing, and that I might as well give up . . . I passed four months in this way. **I looked in every direction to see if there was not some mistake in our doctrine, or if I could not go some other way. But I could not see why, according to the Bible, the great pillars of our faith were not sound . . . I found that my faith in the Advent doctrine was so strong that I could never believe anything else; so I gave up trying to . . .**

"So . . . I came to Battle Creek . . . and freely talked over with Eld. Butler, Bro. and Sr. White, and others, my difficulties and trials. **They did all they could, and all I could ask, to assist me . . . As I took hold again to labor, and tried to look on the side of courage and faith in the work, I found my difficulties disappearing, and my former interest and confidence in the message reviving, till now I feel clear and satisfied in the work again . . . If the Bible does not plainly and abundantly teach the doctrines of the third angel's message, then I despair of ever knowing what it does teach . . . I have no further doubt as to my duty and the work of my life. As for years in the past, so in the future, all that I am and have shall be thrown unreservedly into this work . . .** I humbly trust in the grace of God to help me keep this resolution.

"One who has not experienced it, can have little idea how rapidly discouragement and doubts will grow upon a person, when once they are given way to. In a short time, everything seems to put on a different color . . . **Of course I regret now that I gave way to discour-**

# THE MAN WHO BOARDED THE PHANTOM SHIP

**PART THREE OF EIGHT**

## D.M. CANRIGHT

W  
M

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

1 **agements and doubts, but I think I have learned a**  
2 **lesson by it which I shall not need to learn again as**  
3 **long as I live.**—D.M. Canright, “*Danger of Giving*  
*Way to Discouragement and Doubts*,” in *Review*, Sep-  
tember 13, 1881.

The merciful forgiveness of God is wonderful, and so is the compassionate kindness of the brethren in the church. Elder White happily wrote to Ellen on February 4, 1881, that “Elder Canright is doing splendid in getting on the track.” He had taken him on a trip to New York. And once back in the saddle of preaching the Advent message, Dudley had come back to himself. In a follow-up letter, penned on February 17, Elder White wrote to Ellen: “I am glad to report him on better ground than ever before. Poor C[anright] has been crowded too hard, but God is rescuing him.”

**It was while he had most recently left God’s work for worldly greatness that Canright had met a Miss Lucy Hadden** of Otsego, Michigan. At the time he was holding elocution lectures in that area. He fell in love with her and they later married. By early April of 1881, back in the Adventist ministry, he took his new friend to meet the Whites. Later that same month, on April 24, they were married. D.M. was forty; Lucy was twenty-five. This may have been one of the last marriages that James White performed; for he died on August 6.

**Lucy appeared quite friendly; but she never had that closeness to the Whites and to the church that Lucretia had had.**

“The personality of Canright disintegrated rapidly after the death of Lucretia.”—Milton R. Hook, *Flames over Battle Creek*, pp. 84-85.

Up again, down again, is the story of Dudley Marvin Canright. The problem was neither the doctrinal teachings of the church nor Ellen G. White and her writings; the problem was the man himself. Having returned to the work, Canright vigorously entered upon evangelistic work again; but rather quickly he realized that this was all

he was now,—*just an evangelist*. Other workers were rejoicing with the angels over every sheep recovered from a world of sin; but Dudley was concerned about something else: He was no longer the respected conference president, the executive officer, and the leader among men. He was little more than a soul winner.

**After a few months of preaching, he again lapsed into doubt and darkness. A year after he wrote “*Danger of Giving Way to Discouragement and Doubts*,”** partly quoted above, **he gave up preaching and went to farming** in Otsego, Michigan. In a letter to an acquaintance he said that he was busy with farming work and never intended to return to ministerial work.

**Through it all, Ellen White had been one of his best friends, especially during his lapses. She would write pleading letters** in which she would clearly state the problems he was facing and point out to him the path he must take in order to once again have peace with God.

But the letters rankled in his heart. We do not always appreciate those who come the closest in seeking to help us. In a letter written near the end of 1883, Canright spoke of high regard for “Elder Butler and all the other leading men,” but he quickly added:

“I have no feelings against any of them, excepting Mrs. White. I dislike her very much indeed . . . But they are good men for all that, and I never shall willingly oppose them. I am a member of the church still and do all I can to help it. But if I were situated differently, I would just as soon join some other church.”—D.M. Canright, letter dated December 8, 1883.

Elder Butler, Canright’s longtime friend, later wrote about this latest lapse of Canright:

“So notorious was his apostasy at the time, that without doubt the church stood where a little encouragement would have led them to withdraw the hand of fellowship from him. But **some of us who felt a pity for him, knowing his weakness, counseled delay, and commenced to labor earnestly to help him.**”—G.I. Butler, in *Review Extra*, December, 1887.

**His friends would not give him up. Pleading with him, they urged him to come to a camp meeting at Jackson, Michigan.** Arriving at this September 1884 gathering, the clouds of darkness seemed to dispel as he gathered with the Advent believers once again. **After much prayer and counseling with brethren, he had opportunity to get the personality conflicts, that he had imagined to exist between him and others, resolved. Then,**

---

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE  
TO ATTACKING HISTORIC ADVENTISM AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY**

publicly on September 26, he took his stand with Seventh-day Adventists. And approximately a thousand people, many with tears in their eyes, heard his tearful confession of uncalled-for bitterness and discouragement. He spoke of the clouds of darkness that had swirled through his mind, and said that now all that was past. He again stood in the light. He told of how for years he had felt bitter feelings toward Ellen White; and he said it was because of the personal testimonies she had sent him, pleading with him to put away his sins.

With a few of the brethren, he then went to Sister White, told her of it and asked her forgiveness. She later wrote about this experience:

“You then humbled your heart, and upon your knees asked me to forgive you for the things you had said about me and my work . . . I freely forgave you, and it was not against me. None of these things were against me; I was only a servant bearing the message God gave me.”—5 *Testimonies*, 623.

**Back to work he went, holding public meetings, seeking to win souls for Christ. And he wrote up a fuller explanation of the “bitterness against the Testimonies” problem.** In the *Review*, he told that the difficulty went back some eleven years to the time when he and Lucretia had received a testimony from Ellen White that told him of improvements he needed to make for his own safety.

You may read that letter for yourself. It is printed (without mentioning his name, of course) in 3 *Testimonies*, pp. 304-329, under the title “*To a Young Minister and His Wife*.” Here, in this reference, mention is made of the 1873 Colorado visit which was earlier referred to.

In this *Review* article, he also mentioned the testimony he received in 1879 (the year, incidentally, when he was to begin elocution studies in Chicago). **He told of how, in his heart, he had rejected both testimonies.** But he said that, with the help of Elder Butler, he had re-examined those testimonies and discovered that he had “put a wrong meaning on some things, and that other things were certainly true.”

“For the first time in years I could truly say that I believed the *Testimonies*. **All my hard feelings toward Sister White vanished in a moment, and I felt a tender love towards her. Everything looked different.**

**“I think that my disbelief of the Testimonies and other truths has come by opening my heart to doubts, cherishing them and magnifying them . . . Like Peter, I did not know myself till God left me to be tried. I feel greatly humbled under the shameful failure I have made . . . Friday, Sept. 26, while on the campground at Jackson, Mich., I felt in my heart the most remarkable change that I ever experienced**

**in all my life. It was a complete reversion of all my feelings. Light and faith came into my soul, and I felt that God had given me another heart.** I never felt such a change before, not even when first converted, nor when I embraced this message, nor at any other time. **I want to say to all my friends everywhere, that now I not only accept, but believe the Testimonies to be from God.** Knowing the opposition I have felt to them, this change in my feelings is more amazing to myself than it can be to others.

**“I am fully satisfied that my own salvation and my usefulness in saving others depends upon my being connected with this people and this work.”**—D.M. Canright, in *Review*, October 7, 1884.

And so it is with all of us. We dare not forsake either the Advent truths, nor confidence in both the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, or we will drift away and be lost.

**Personal sin, the pride of life, and resentment against the messages calling for him to repent and change his life—lay at the heart of the Canright problem.** And this is the problem that many since his day have had also.

A young Adventist stenographic secretary in one of the Battle Creek institutions was present that weekend at the Jackson camp meeting. His name was W.A. Spicer. He was later to become a General Conference President.

Spicer said that he heard Canright read a testimony from Ellen White that he said he had rejected eleven years before:

“‘I did not believe it when I read it eleven years ago,’ he [Canright] told us, holding it up before the congregation. ‘But I have lived to see every word of it fulfilled.’ He came back into the work.

“But for me that campmeeting brought a coming ‘into the work’ also . . . **At the Jackson meeting somebody’s preaching sent the conviction into my heart that going only halfway into this thing meant losing eternal life. I surrendered anew to Christ and this message.** Then everything was new to me. I went back to the headquarters ‘in the work.’ I was in this movement heart and mind and soul and all.”—W.A. Spicer, in *Review*, November 17, 1949.

Spicer’s experience is a powerful witness to what can happen to men and women who, through divine grace, put away pride and self-love and fully yield themselves to obedience to Christ and His messages to our people through the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. Oh, that it had been the same for poor Canright!

A month and a half after that camp meeting, a General Conference Session was held during the first three weeks in November 1884; and Canright attended it. Area meetings were held, just following it, in Otsego, Michigan. Ellen White wrote of her re-

sponse to see Elder Canright up in front, speaking to the people again:

“How my heart rejoiced to see Bro. Canright all interest, heart and soul in the work, as he used to be years in the past! I could but exclaim, What hath the Lord wrought!”—*Ellen White, in “Review,” December 2, 1884.*

Kindly Ellen White! Always concerned for souls, never holding any animosity because of grudges earlier held against her. May our lives be as used of God as was hers!

Having spoken at the Saturday night meeting, Canright then presented the Sunday morning meeting, at which he spoke of his current feelings about the unchangeable truths:

**“It seems to me, dear elder, that my whole soul is now bound up in this present truth . . .** I have tried to analyze my feelings, and I have reached some conclusions. Sometimes an individual gets started on a wrong train of reasoning, and he sees it when he’s far away. Then he finds it hard to get back again. This was my case, exactly . . . I went to farming . . . [Some] may say, **Why did you not do right? I am satisfied that man’s wisdom is not always reliable. He must have the Spirit of God to guide him, or he will go wrong.** Now I want to say that I have been changed right around in my feelings and convictions . . .

“There is a point that has bothered me a little, and I want to speak of it. **In the twenty-five years I have been with our people, I have traveled from Maine to California, and I have never known one man who has drawn back and begun to harbor doubts who did not begin to separate from God. I have never known one who through such a course has become more spiritual or more anxious to do something to save his fellow-men.** I have never known one man to do that, and I do not believe I ever shall.

“When I left off preaching, I vowed to myself and to my God, that I would go right along laboring as I had done, be faithful in the church, and do my duty every time. Well, brethren, after I had gone that way for a time, I found that I had lost my hold upon God. I lost my spirituality. Now there must be something wrong about such a course, for if it is right it seems to me that a man would certainly prosper in that way . . .

“Brethren, I will say this: **So far as I am concerned, I will start right here,—and all that I have, all that I am, I will put into this work,** and take my risk of everything. **I will never do this backing up any more; and I believe that if I ever go back from this I am lost.** All I have I will give to this cause. I believe there is in this truth that which will save men. I have seen drunkards saved by it, and the wickedest of men saved by it, and may God help us to triumph with it when Jesus comes.”—*D.M. Canright, Sermon at Otsego, Michigan, November 23, 1884, quoted in Review, December 2, 1884.*

**Ellen White was deeply happy that Canright was back in the work,** preaching and helping the

people. During those Thursday to Sunday meetings at Otsego, she stayed at his home. Later she wrote of it:

“We were continually grateful to God that we felt indeed at home, and that Bro. Canright had met with so great a change in his feelings . . . I felt that peace rested in the plain but comfortable home of Bro. and Sr. Canright. **I could but make melody to God in my heart every moment as I considered the work that had been wrought so wonderfully in this case. Eld. Canright saved to the cause! His precious family led into the ways of truth and righteousness!**”—*Ellen White, in “Review,” December 2, 1884.*

Back into the field went Elders Butler and Canright. Evangelistic meetings were held in Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Iowa.

Joy and renewed faith in the work, as he worked with the angels in bringing souls to Christ, animated his face and overflowed in his reports sent to the *Review*. **At the heart of it was confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy. Speaking of the blessing that reading those writings had again brought to him, he wrote early in 1885:**

**“If the Spirit of God does not speak to us in these writings, then I should despair of ever discerning it.”**—*D.M. Canright, Review, January 6, 1885.*

That winter his fourteen-month-old son, George, died. In response, he wrote Ellen White, wondering why God could allow such a thing and whether it were possible that the child might someday be in heaven. He concluded with trust that somehow God might overrule in the matter.

Between March 15 and June 14, 1884, Canright had written ten provocative articles for the *Review*, in defense of historic Adventism and the Spirit of Prophecy.

And now, in 1885, he again wrote another impressive one on the same topic. **This one (published in the February 10, 1885, issue) was titled “To Those in Doubting Castle.” It was a powerful defense of present truth and God’s last-day messenger.**

**In view of the savage attacks that, within two years, he was to spew out both in lectures and in print, they are well-worth reading.**

(Excerpts from two *Review* series are included later in this present historical study: “*To Those in Doubting Castle*,” and “*Some Plain Talk to Murmurers*.”)

**Dudley Marvin Canright received so much light and was so repeatedly convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit that, when he finally turned away, there was no return. A dark spirit took control of the man.** He knew the truth; he knew that it was the truth. But he turned from it in the

hope of obtaining praise from a larger audience. The result is one of the most startling Jekyll-and-Hyde personalities that the present writer has ever come across.

But it carries a lesson—a solemn lesson—for each one of us. **Any man having learned this precious message, given us by Heaven, who then turns upon it—and fights it and denounces it, is in serious danger of a demon possession that he may never escape from.** Better were it that such a one were never born.

**Fellow believer in the Advent Message: You have Canright's experience before you. Consider it carefully, lest personal sin or unwise associates lead you into his track.**

That summer Canright wrote a note to Ellen White, expressing his firmness in the faith:

**"As for myself, the old difficulties which I had, as you know, have been removed. I think I see now clearer and better than ever I did before.** There was always something that bothered me because I did not have right understanding of it. **I feel as though my faith and confidence are stronger and on a more solid basis than ever before.** I think that the evidence is rapidly increasing that this is the Lord's special work. I have no other thought but to give every energy of my life to it. **I pray God will bless you, and give you strength to do the work you are so much needed to do.** It would be worth a good deal to us if you could be here a few days now. It may be that you can come here yet this summer. Your brother in the faith, (Signed) D.M. Canright."—*Letter dated June 23, 1885.*

Near the end of July, as she was in transit to Europe, Ellen White stopped at Canright's home for several days. Learning that she was coming, he arranged a number of speaking appointments for her. **After her departure to Europe, he wrote appreciatively of her visit.** She spent the full year of 1886 in Switzerland, where a number of letters arrived from Canright.

"I never felt better physically. Can work hard all the time and feel well, too. My courage is good and I love the work."—*D.M. Canright, letter to Ellen White, dated February 17, 1886.*

The last three weeks of Uriah Smith's spring semester 1885 Bible classes at Battle Creek College were concluded by Canright. Smith's health was failing and D.M. offered to finish up the year for him. That autumn, he also taught the first five weeks of Smith's fall semester classes, as well. **Canright was later to use this as the basis for his claim that he was a veteran Bible teacher**

**at the Adventist college in Battle Creek.**

During his work with the denomination, he had prepared eleven Sabbath School lessons, two books (*The Bible From Heaven*, heavily copied from a book by Moses Hull, and *The Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul*, which he wrote himself), four pamphlets, and fifteen tracts.

**By now it was the fall of 1886 and the final turning point in Dudley's life. Satan would lead him to burn enough bridges this time that he never afterward felt that he could return to the church and the people and the message that he had so loved. He continued onward, ever traveling into deeper darkness and personal misery to his very death.**

Although talented and highly regarded by workers and laymen, **D.M. Canright could not be crossed. The appreciation must be unceasing or he felt he had been wrongly treated.**

G.I. Butler knew Canright better than many others. Here is his comment:

**"When everything went pleasantly, he could usually see things with clearness. When he was 'abused,' as he always thought he was when things did not go to suit him, the evidences of our faith began immediately to grow dim.** Dark clouds of unbelief floated over his mental sky, and he felt that everything was going by the board. Here was the Elder's special weakness.

**"He is a strong man in certain directions when all goes smoothly, but very weak in adversity.** He failed to 'endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.' He was good in a fight, and appeared at best advantage when in a hot debate. This was his *forte*.

"But when things apparently were against him, he seemed to have no staying, recuperative qualities . . . **His desire to have his own way sometimes got him into trouble. He never could bear reproof with patience, or feel composed when his way was crossed.** When he came to mingle in important matters with brethren in prominent positions, these and other traits naturally got him into trouble."—*G.I. Butler, in Review Extra, December, 1887.*

These traits, easily observable by those who worked closely with him, caused them to hesitate to place Canright in positions of responsibility when choices were made for conference and General Conference leadership.

Elder E.R. Potter was a minister for many years in the Michigan Conference. It appears that **the following statement provided by him reveals the event that marked the final turning point in**

# THE MAN WHO BOARDED THE PHANTOM SHIP

**PART FOUR OF EIGHT**

## D.M. CANRIGHT

W  
M  
1  
2  
2  
4

---

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

**the life of Dudley Marvin Canright.** He left the church, God, and eternal life—over an election:

“About the year 1918 a cousin of Eld. D.M. Canright came to our home and spent a few days. I asked this cousin what he knew about D.M. Canright. **He replied ‘I will tell you one thing. Just before he left the denomination, Eld. Canright came to the [1886] Mich. campmeeting with his team and I took care of his horses. On that occasion my cousin said, “If I am not elected President of this Conference at this meeting, I am not going to preach for them any more.”’**” — *Statement concerning D.M. Canright, by Ray Birmingham, Alma, Michigan, September 7, 1947.*

At that fateful camp meeting, George I. Butler, not D.M. Canright, was elected to the presidency of the Michigan Conference. **Such powerful events, and even destinies, can be hinged on such little matters.**

There is a striking passage on pp. 571-573 of Volume 5 of the *Testimonies*. You, no doubt, are well-acquainted with it. **What you may not know is that it was written to D.M. Canright.** It was penned in the late 1880’s, very possibly in the late fall of 1886. The “vessel” referred to the Advent Movement and its “passengers,” to those who would be faithful to those messages to the end.

“Dear Brother M [Canright]: I had an impressive dream last night. I thought that you were on a strong vessel, sailing on very rough waters. Sometimes the waves beat over the top, and you were drenched with water. **You said: ‘I shall get off; this vessel is going down.’**

“**‘No,’ said one who appeared to be captain, ‘this vessel sails into the harbor. She will never go down.’**

“But you answered: ‘I shall be washed overboard. **As I am neither captain nor mate, who cares?** [This would summarize his thoughts at the time; he wanted not to be a mere passenger, but a leader: a captain or mate.] I shall take my chances on that vessel you see yonder.’

“**Said the captain: ‘I shall not let you go there, for I know that vessel will strike the rocks before she reaches the harbor.’**

“You straightened yourself up, and said with great positiveness: **‘This vessel will become a wreck; I can see it just as plain as can be.’**

“The captain looked upon you with piercing eye, and said firmly: **‘I shall not permit you to lose your life by taking that boat. The timbers of her framework are worm-eaten, and she is a deceptive craft.** If you had more knowledge you could discern between the spurious and the genuine, the holy and that appointed to utter ruin.’

“I awoke, but it is this dream that leads me to write to you. **I was feeling deeply over some of these things when a letter came, saying that you were ‘under great temptation and trial.’ What is it, Brother M (Canright)? Is Satan tempting you again? Is God permitting you to be brought to the same place where you have failed before? Will you now let unbelief take possession of your soul? Will you fail every time, as did the children of Israel? God help you to resist the devil and to come forth stronger from every trial of your faith!**

“Be careful how you move. Make straight paths for your feet. **Close the door to unbelief and make God your strength. If perplexed, hold still; make no move in the dark.** I am deeply concerned for your soul. **This may be the last trial that God will grant you.** Advance not one step in the downward road to perdition. **Wait, and God will help you. Be patient, and the clear light will appear. If you yield to impressions you will lose your soul,** and the soul is of great value with God.”—5 *Testimonies*, 571-572.

How valuable the counsels of God can be in the moment of great perplexity and trial. Oh, that we may value those counsels always! Dear reader, please, never forsake the Spirit of Prophecy!

**But Canright did not do so. He chose to board that phantom craft out in the dark waters.** In January of 1887, Canright informed his old friend, George I. Butler, president of the Michigan Conference that he was leaving.

**In a letter to the General Conference, he said that he could be a Seventh-day Adventist no longer.**

On the evening of February 17, 1887, at a business meeting of the Otsego Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dudley Canright poured out reason after reason why he was forsaking the ship. In view of the whole story, before and after, of this man, the present writer questions whether Canright really believed the things he said that night. **He seemed driven by an unseen power, that night, to cut the connection as thoroughly as he could. Here is the church clerk’s record:**

---

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE  
TO ATTACKING HISTORIC ADVENTISM AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY**

**“That he had come to a point where he no longer believed that the Ten Commandments were binding upon Christians and had given up the Law, the Sabbath, the Messages, the Sanctuary, our position upon [the] U.S. in prophecy, the Testimonies, health reform, the ordinances of humility. He also said that he did not believe that the papacy had changed the Sabbath. And though he did not directly state it, his language intimated that he would probably keep Sunday.**

“He thinks that Seventh-day Adventists are too narrow in their ideas, and that in quoting so much as they do from the Old Testament are going back into the moonlight rather than experiencing the sunlight of the gospel of Christ. He thought we were exalting the law above Christ. **Also has no faith in the missionary work as conducted by our people, feels as if it is not the way God designed to do the work.**

“He still claimed to believe that the coming of Christ was near, making the same application of Daniel 2 and 7 and Matthew 24 that he always had, but did not believe that there was to be any special message preceding Christ’s second coming in the sense in which Seventh-day Adventists teach.”—*Church clerk’s record, February 17, 1887, Otsego, Michigan SDA Church.*

Close friends knew that his wife, Lucy, would have been glad to remain in the church; for she had many friends there. Years later, Canright admitted that she cried deeply when the break was made (*letter and obituary of his wife, submitted to the Review on May 5, 1913, and published on June 12, 1913*). But Lucy had always gone with him in his several trips into, and out, of the church. That evening she said she pretty much agreed with his doctrinal ideas and stood with him. So, at their request, both were dropped from the church.

In writing to Ellen White, who was still in Europe, Canright said this:

“Whether I have decided right or wrong the judgment must tell. **Sister White, believe me when I say I wish you and our people well and hope that you may help to save some and reach eternal life with them . . . My wife and family go with me.**”—*D.M. Canright letter to Ellen White, dated March 18, 1887, written from Otsego.*

Elder Butler, who attended the fateful meeting that night at the Otsego Church, wrote that **Canright told him that he “expected to unite with the Methodists, Baptists, or some other evangelical denomination, and continue to labor in the ministry as long as he lived”** (*Review Extra, December 1913*).

**Finally he chose the Baptists.** And, on March 5, 1887, he, his wife and their daughter Veva (Genevieve) were accepted into the Otsego Baptist Church. **On the 17th, they gave him a license to preach; then they ordained him and made him their**

**salaried pastor two days later. This arrangement continued for a year and a half, when his services were terminated.**

E.J. Waggoner, editor of the *Signs of the Times*, published an account of what had happened to Canright’s pastoral work during those two years, in the February 27, 1889 issue of the *Enterprise*, a Healdsburg, California newspaper.

**During that year and a half, “his congregation had come down from 200 to 25 and he was obliged to resign his pastorate,** which he did some five or six months ago. There were only twenty-five present to hear his farewell sermon.” In addition, Waggoner mentions that **some of “the leading Baptist ministers” had become estranged from him during that time. “The feeling of these ministers [was] that Canright seemed so important and overbearing.”** “The policy of the Baptists is such that if a preacher can find a single [Baptist] society, or part of a society that will acknowledge him, he cannot be shaken off, although he may be despised by the great body of Baptists. It is often unfortunate for the Baptist denomination that such is the case; but so it is. Mr. Canright was wise in selecting that body when he left the Adventists.”

Late in September 1890, Canright moved with his family to Grand Rapids, Michigan. There, the young Berean Baptist Church took him on as their pastor. He remained their pastor for a year and a half. Then, two years later, he was taken on again for another year. **So, in October of 1896, he was dropped from the active ministry and never again was able to obtain a church pastorate.** Fortunately, the Berean Baptist Church gave him a paper stating that he was “*pastor emeritus*” of the church. For much of the remainder of his life, the title that he used in his writings was, “Pastor Emeritus, Berean Baptist Church.”

During his two pastorates, Canright had represented his local church at regional Baptist conferences. There, both workers and leaders had opportunities to meet with him and size him up. So when his own churches dropped him, he had no calls elsewhere. **He who wanted so much to move on up the ladder—was out entirely. He was through; and he knew it.**

With the termination of his employment in October, he moved to South Bend, Indiana, and then to Toledo, Ohio, where he engaged in door-to-door religious bookselling. In 1899, he returned to Grand Rapids. **From 1897, onward, while still in his prime, D.M. Canright had no employment other than the selling of books from door-to-door and what income came in from the writing of books**

1 **against Adventists.** But, unfortunately, the book-  
2 writing business did not pay very well. And so much  
3 of the time, he and his wife Lucy would go out sepa-  
4 rately each morning with books and try to sell them  
from door-to-door, in an effort to keep food on the  
table. **By the 1900s, the books that both were  
selling were Adventist books. When asked why,  
he would respond that they sold better than  
other books.**

In 1897 he and his family lived in Toledo, Ohio,  
and the following three years in Adrian and Kal-  
amazoo, Michigan, and then back to South Bend.  
In 1900 Canright returned to Grand Rapids, not to  
pastor a church but, to care for a garden and or-  
chard. In 1904, the Baptists let his ordination pa-  
pers lapse. With sufficient urging, they renewed  
them in 1907.

**But at this point, let us return to the year  
1887. As you will recall, he and his family left  
the Adventist Church on February 17 of that year.  
He then requested Elder Butler that he might  
speak once more to the church through the pages  
of the *Review*.**

In his article, he commented on his recent de-  
cision to leave it and then made this statement:

**“Personally I have not one word of fault to find  
either with the church where I live or with those  
with whom I have labored. I have been treated fairly,  
liberally, and tenderly. There is not one hard feeling  
between us as far as I know. It will always give me  
pleasure to regard our people and speak of them as  
an honest and devout people.”—D.M. Canright, in  
*Review*, March 1, 1887.**

**It was intriguing that in the years to come he  
would repeatedly speak of the Advent people as  
“our people.” —Even though, within a few  
months, Canright began writing articles for the  
religious press of America in which he would  
slander and attack the Advent Movement and  
its beliefs. With the exception that he charged less,  
he made himself available for lectures against Ad-  
ventists and Mrs. White, much as Walter Rea does  
now. Canright’s fee was \$2 a night.**

In August, one Michigan Adventist wrote him a  
few lines to help him see what he was doing. Here  
is part of the letter:

**“I must declare that your own arguments are as  
weak and forceless as you have met a hundred times  
. . . What will not a man do for the honor that comes  
from man? Balaam was a prophet of God and doubt-  
less felt well, as you say you do, with the wages of  
unrighteousness in his hand, and the emoluments  
that a king could bestow. But he perished on the field  
of battle, when arrayed against the people of God . . . I  
choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of  
God. **I am astonished, but not disheartened that you****

**have joined the hue and cry against us.** For you, and  
yours, whom I remember with tenderest feelings, I  
pray, as Jesus prayed on the cross.”—D.H. Lamson  
*of Armada, Michigan, letter to D.M. Canright, dated  
August 16, 1887.*

**Only a year and a half after Canright had  
solemnly pledged that he would never pursue  
such a course, he arranged for handbills attack-  
ing Seventh-day Adventists to be printed and cir-  
culated, both in the public press and at the Sep-  
tember 1887 Adventist camp meeting that was held  
in Grand Rapids. He made a special point of di-  
recting his attack particularly against Ellen  
White, who spoke at that camp meeting.**

**But Ellen White had earlier given him good  
advice. And it was dangerous to give Canright  
advice.**

**“He never could bear reproof with patience, or  
feel composed when his way was crossed . . . He al-  
ways hated reproof, hence bore it like a fractious  
child.”—G.I. Butler, in *Review*, December, 1887.**

When Canright was a 33-year-old minister in  
the church, he had been given the following good  
advice. It perfectly described his danger; yet such  
messages rankled in his heart for years thereafter:

**“Brother Canright, in your labors with others, you  
have been the man who was severe and overbear-  
ing. Where your gray-headed gospel father [James  
White] would be pitiful, discreet, and cautious, you  
have sometimes been provoking and insolent. It is  
your nature to be overbearing . . . Rashness is natu-  
ral to you. You need to restrain yourself. Unless you  
bridle and restrain your rash spirit, you will be hur-  
ried to make some move which will ruin your use-  
fulness, forever . . . You are either on the pinnacle, or  
down in the low slough of despond. An accidental  
circumstance will arouse you, and call out every power  
of your soul. For a season, you will be exhilarated,  
and come up upon the wave of excitement or popular-  
ity. You will excel yourself and astonish your friends.  
But you are in danger of spending your force, and los-  
ing the exhilarating power which stimulated you to  
action, and sink down into despondency and discour-  
agement. In these fitful efforts you lose more than you  
would gain by steady, earnest effort . . . **Consider me  
not an enemy because I tell you the truth.** I long  
and pray that you may be found in your right mind  
sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning of Him . . . **I  
pray the Lord to help you to get rid of some of your  
lofty ideas of yourself and come down in meekness,  
feeling your nothingness without Christ. Then will  
He be unto you a very present help in time of  
need.”—Ellen White, letter 1, 1873, to D.M. Canright.****

Later, Ellen White was to write: “He has used  
every check put on him by myself as a cause to  
throw himself” (*Letter 13, 1887*). And, in corre-  
spondence intended to save Dr. J.H. Kellogg from  
heading the same direction, G.I. Butler spoke of

Canright's experience in fighting the *Testimonies* and what it led him to:

"I dislike to see you, who have professed, time and again, to be a full believer in the *Testimonies*, as strong as anybody, begin to reflect upon Sister White as you do occasionally of late. It reminds me too much of Snook and Brinkerhoff [Iowa ministers who started an offshoot there in 1865], Canright, et al. **That is always the way those things commence. They were 'believers in the truth' and all that, but 'Sister White, Sister White' and you know the result.**

**"Over and over did I try to save Canright** who was once a power to the cause, a lecturer, and a debater. **He was one of those who could not endure hardship. When everything went hard, he would 'fly off the track.'** **Four times I helped that poor man back into the light, but the fifth time he went.** It is enough to look into his face again and see what kind of a wreck he is left. He could do great things when God was with him, and the Spirit was with him, but after he moved out, the Spirit did not go with him; he was left to his own spirit and that of another power, and that has been the trouble with all those who go away from the body."—*G.I. Butler, letter to J.H. Kellogg, dated May 10, 1904.*

**Over the first several years, Canright was asked to travel to several places to speak against Adventists. But before long, his bitterness—and the surprising reversals that he would make in public—lost for him his audiences; and requests for lectures ceased.**

**In the year 1889, Canright brought out his 413-page book, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*.** But many recognized its inconsistencies and the bitterness on which it was grounded.

Two books (*In Defense of the Faith*, by William H. Branson, and *Answers to Objections*, by F.D. Nichol) are probably the best replies to Canright's book. *In Defense of the Faith* was a reprint of the *Reply to Canright*, first published in 1933.

**In 1915, Canright published *The Lord's Day From Neither Catholics nor Pagans*, which soon passed out of print.** The arguments in it were so shallow that people were not much interested in the book. His last book was published in the year of his death, 1919, and was titled *Life of Mrs. E.G. White*. It exhibits the bitterness of a serpent ready to bite. *E.G. White and Her Critics*, by F.D. Nichol, is among the best replies to the unfounded and inaccurate charges made in this book.

As mentioned earlier, D.M. Canright was dropped

from pastoral work in the Baptist Church by the year 1897; and because the royalty income from the sale of his books fell far short of meeting the needs of his family, he, and later his wife, tried to make up the difference by selling books from door-to-door.

We do not know the exact date; but, at some time in the first or second decade of the 20th century, carrying his book bag, **D.M. Canright knocked on the door of the Ambs' home in Otsego.** Elder K.F. Ambs, later a minister in the work, wrote the following account years later while residing in Washington, D.C.:

"One afternoon, while father and I were away at work, mother answered the door and admitted an elderly man who was selling a small book. When she looked at the title it read, *Gospel Primer*, by J.E. White.

"Surprised, she said, 'This is a Seventh-day Adventist book, isn't it?' to which the old gentleman replied, 'Yes, ma'am it is.'

"'And are you a Seventh-day Adventist?' she asked. To this he replied. 'Well, I was a Seventh-day Adventist.'

"Upon asking him his name, he replied that his name was Canright.

"'Are you D.M. Canright?' she asked.

"'Yes, sister, I'm D.M. Canright.'

"'Are you that man who had so much light and who turned his back on it?' mother asked.

"His response was significant. Said he, 'Yes, sister, I am that man, and how often have I sought to find my way back but have been unable to do so.'

"As he was leaving he shook mother's hand saying, as tears filled his eyes, 'Sister, you have the truth, hold fast to it, never let it go. It is the very truth.'"—*Letter from K.F. Ambs to D.A. Delafield, dated December 4, 1964.*

**D.W. Reavis, who had been a lifelong friend of Canright, tells of his last interview with him.**

The date was 1903. (You will recall that Reavis was the one who, in the fall of 1880, told Canright in a lonely park in Chicago that if he ever left the message, he would return to nothing.)

"All the years intervening between the time of our Chicago association in 1880 and 1903, **I occasionally corresponded with Elder Canright, always attempting to do all in my power to save him from wrecking his life and injuring the cause he had done so much to build up.** At times I felt hopeful, but every time my encouragement was smothered in still blacker

# THE MAN WHO BOARDED THE PHANTOM SHIP

**PART FIVE OF EIGHT**

## D.M. CANRIGHT

W M  
1  
2  
2  
5

---

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

clouds.

**“I finally prevailed upon him to attend a general meeting of our workers in Battle Creek in 1903, with the view of meeting many of the old workers and having a heart-to-heart talk together. He was delighted with the reception given him by all the old workers, and greatly pleased with the cordiality of the new workers. All through the meetings he would laugh with his eyes full of tears. The poor man seemed to exist simultaneously in two distinct parts—uncontrollable joy and relentless grief.**

“Finally when he came to the Review and Herald office, where I was then working, to tell me good-bye before returning to his home in Grand Rapids, Michigan, we went back in a dark storeroom alone to have a talk, and we spent a long time there in this last personal, heart-to-heart visit. **I reminded him of what I had told him years before in Chicago, and he frankly admitted that what I predicted had come to pass, and that he wished the past could be blotted out and that he was back in our work just as he was at the beginning, before any ruinous thoughts of himself had entered his heart.**

“I tried to get him to say to the workers there assembled just what he had said to me, assuring him that they would be glad to forgive all and to take him back in full confidence. **I never heard any one weep and moan in such deep contrition as that once-leading-light in our message did. It was heartbreaking even to hear him. He said he wished he could come back to the fold as I suggested, but after long, heart-breaking moans and weeping, he said: ‘I would be glad to come back, but I can’t! It’s too late! I am forever gone! Gone!’** As he wept on my shoulder, he thanked me for all I had tried to do to save him from that sad hour. He said, **‘D.W. whatever you do, don’t ever fight the message.’**”—D.W. Reavis, in *I Remember*, pages 119-120.

It was in 1904 that Elder George I. Butler, now president of the Southern Union Conference, wrote a warning to John Harvey Kellogg, in which he referred to Canright’s present status:

**“Poor Canright, where is he? If ever I pitied a man, I do him. He looks to me like a poor,**

**seedy, used up old man, and he thought he was going to do grand missionary work . . .**

**“No man in the cause, believing . . . as you have believed, can take your stand against what the Testimonies say and maintain your spirituality.”**—G.I. Butler, letter to J.H. Kellogg, dated August 12, 1904.

Elder J.C. Harris, who was for many years a pastor in the Michigan Conference, had a conversation with Canright soon after the turn of the century. William J. Harris, his son, later wrote the incident down:

“Some general meeting, a conference session, or some such type of general gathering, was being held in the old tabernacle at Battle Creek. **My father happened to meet Mr. Canright, who had come to meet some of the brethren. They knew each other fairly well and called each other by their given names. After a word or two upon meeting, my father said, ‘D.M., isn’t it about time for you to reconsider and get back into the faith before it is too late?’**

“‘No, Jap’ (my father’s middle name was Jasper, but many called him ‘Jap’), Mr. Canright replied, **‘No, I can never do that. The Holy Spirit has left me for good. I can never do that. My heart no longer feels the impression of the Spirit.’**

“I have heard my father repeatedly tell this experience as he sought to warn people of the danger of rejecting the appeals of the Holy Spirit to their hearts.”—William J. Harris, *Signed statement to Arthur L. White*, dated December 30, 1964.

**Less is known about the years 1904 through 1913 than about any other period in Canright’s life.** It appears that, during those years, he intermittently turned to bookselling. Frequently these were Seventh-day Adventist books; and often they were the books written by James Edson White, Ellen White’s eldest son.

**During those years, he lost his left eye** (most likely in 1912). Blinding headaches, traceable to this eye, became worse; and he was finally told by a surgeon in Ann Arbor, Michigan, that if he were willing to lose his left eye he might save the other. It was explained to him that the operation might prove to be fatal. He was later to mention in correspondence to Madge Knevals Goodrich, writer for the *Baptist Herald*, that **during the operation he had no assurance of coming out of it alive or of being saved if he didn’t!** During the operation, his left eye, together with the facial nerves around it, were removed. **This left him with a sunken eye**

---

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO ATTACKING HISTORIC ADVENTISM AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY**

**socket. And since he never did anything thereafter to hide it, his appearance was, frankly, repulsive for the remainder of his life.**

Gradually his finances waned still more. He barely made it in door-to-door selling, even with his wife selling also. The royalties from his books dropped off as interest in them declined. A little money came from his farm; but, as he was to recount to W.E. Cornell in May of 1913, it was “a sand hill.”

About the year 1912, Miss Florence E. Ransaw, who at the time was living in Otsego, witnessed the following experience:

“While we were yet living in Otsego, Mother and I went to church one Sabbath. The church was full of people that Sabbath, as we had a visiting minister, an elderly man. I don’t remember his name now. He preached a powerful sermon; it sank deep in every heart. All during the sermon I could hear some one stepping around in the entry-way as the door from the entry-way into the church was open some six or eight inches. I supposed it was some mother trying to keep her child quiet during the meeting as they often did. **But instead it was D.M. Canright that was out there all during the sermon**, and he surely heard a wonderfully good sermon.

**“As soon as the minister finished and sat down, and the elder of the church announced the closing hymn.—in walked Elder Canright briskly up the center aisle to the front of the church and facing the audience said,**

‘I don’t think I need any introduction. I think you all know who I am—D.M. Canright. **I love this church. I love this people**—I got my first wife out of this church and a better woman never lived—**I love this church, I love this people and by rights this is where I belong.**

**“All the while he was speaking he was weeping, using his handkerchief freely . . .** Then the minister spoke up and said, ‘Well, brother, if that is the way you feel you had better come back to us.’

“Elder Canright turned to the minister and said, **‘I can’t, I’ve gone too far.’ Then he sank down on the front seat weeping and was still sitting there when we left the church.**”—*Florence E. Ransaw, letter to J.H. Rhoads, written from Charlotte, Michigan, dated August 26, 1958.*

**At some time during the next year (1913), Canright, who by then was living in Battle Creek,** stopped to visit at the home of Sister Howe. She lived a couple of blocks from the Dime Tabernacle. It seems that **Canright was trying to sell books and apparently did not know that she was an Adventist.** Elder Clinton Lee, who was living in Battle Creek at the time, tells what took place:

‘How do you do, Elder Canright,’ she said in response to his knock at the door. She invited him in.

‘Do you know me?’ he asked.

‘Indeed, I do,’ she replied.

“After they had talked for a time she asked, **‘Why don’t you come back to the church?’**

“His reply, spoken in tones of unutterable sadness was:

**‘Sister, it is too late.’**

**“With every gesture, denoting despair, he arose and walked out the door. The words ‘Too late, too late,’ like an echo, followed him as he made his slow way down the street.”—Statement by Clinton Lee, on file in the General Conference.**

Elder Lee remembers seeing Canright only once, when **he walked quietly into a workers’ meeting at Grand Rapids. Whenever possible, this seemed to be Canright’s custom during the years 1910-1916. He especially enjoyed attending meetings of Seventh-day Adventist ministers.** When Canright was pointed out to Brother Lee, the young minister observed that he had only one eye, the result of surgery. Everyone noticed how pleased he was to meet with some of his former brethren.

**Poor Dudley seemed to be a man without a home—who knew where it was, but unable to return to it. And yet, as we have observed, he often went where Adventists gathered so that he could be among them. And on occasion, he freely admitted that he had made a mistake in leaving the message and the church and that he ought to come back, if somehow he knew how to.** But there seemed to be a strange power that kept him from returning.

And yet, paradoxically, although he did not mind Adventists knowing the truth of the situation, **he would write raging letters of denial if a query came from a non-Adventist who had learned about his words and actions. As rumors spread that he regretted having left the Adventists, he would write and publish heated denials.** And he would repeat these to his relatives and to Baptist friends. On one occasion he had such a statement notarized and published in the public press, with the hope that this would squelch the rumors.

**The truth would be forced out of him at times; yet he feared losing the pitifully few royalties on his attacks against Adventism.** Thus, we find contradictory statements by Canright. He had become something like the fictional character, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. First he might be soft and tender; then he might be violent and malevolent.

**We have now come into the year 1913. It would be well at this point to give attention to the experience of Carrie Shasky. Recently, her family had moved to Battle Creek and her mother**

had passed away. So Carrie, upon being baptized, was now on her own. For several weeks she worked in the kitchen of the large Battle Creek Sanitarium.

In order to better understand the story, you will need to keep in mind that, **by 1913, Dr. Kellogg had separated the Sanitarium from the Adventist Church.** He himself was no longer an Adventist. Although it employed many Adventists; under his management, the Sanitarium was in no way connected with the denomination.

Carrie describes her first contacts with Canright:

“While working in the Sanitarium kitchen I noticed from time to time that a tall, poorly clad elderly gentleman would come in the back door of the kitchen. He stood straight, and his bearing indicated that he had been a man of some distinction. He carried a courtesy meal ticket and he would sit at the corner of a worktable [in the kitchen]. Someone would fix up a tray for him and take it to him. At times I fixed the tray.

**“His uncut hair, his untrimmed and dirty fingernails, his unkempt attire, the absence of one eye, made this stranger somewhat repulsive** to the girls who waited upon him. We were all curious to know who he was, but no one seemed to know. We called him ‘Mr. X.’ All we knew was that we did not enjoy his presence in the helpers’ kitchen, and that he entered and left by the back door.”—*Carrie Shasky Johnson, “I Was Canright’s Secretary,”* p. 119. [Hereinafter, this volume will be referred to as *IWCS*.]

**After working in the San kitchen for several weeks, Carrie enrolled at the Battle Creek Business College. It was managed by a Mr. W.E. Cornell,** who had earlier been an Adventist and apparently returned to the church in later years. But at this time he was out of the church and sympathetic to helping Canright in his writing work. **Cornell had agreed to let Carrie take course work, with the proviso that she repay it later on when she might have employment elsewhere.**

Why was Canright in Battle Creek? By late 1912, Canright and his wife, Lucy, had been living in Grand Rapids—in separate homes because he did not make enough money to support her. Then, on January 2, 1913, Lucy Hadden Canright passed to her rest. D.M. was disconsolate. The man who was so much alone—now seemed so much more alone.

**Fearing that the experience would result in his own death, Canright journeyed down to Battle Creek in the hope that the Amadons would let him stay with them.** The Amadons were lifelong Adventist workers who had known and befriended Canright and his family for years. But, arriving there, he learned that Martha Amadon was living with relatives and her husband George was dying. **Martha urged the grief-stricken man to return to the church. He replied, “I can’t; it is too late.”**

(*IWCS*, 123).

She then told him to go see Cornell, which he did. Cornell contacted J.H. Kellogg who provided Canright with a cottage room, at no charge, and also a daily meal ticket at the San kitchen. Both Cornell and Kellogg were happy to help this adversary of Adventism.

Cornell then told Carrie that she could work off the bill she owed on her schooling by doing secretarial work for Canright.

“After being sworn to secrecy, **I was told that I was to work for a former prominent Seventh-day Adventist minister.** Mr. Cornell told me that he himself had been his first secretary [years before] and that I would be his last secretary. I was reminded that I should not reveal what was said or done or for whom I was to work.”—*IWCS*, 120.

“I was petrified in Mr. Cornell’s office as I was introduced to D.M. Canright. I recognized with consternation that my new boss, ‘the former prominent Seventh-day Adventist,’ was none other than the familiar ‘Mr. X’ whom I had seen in the helpers’ kitchen.”—*IWCS*, 120-121.

**Canright was given the free use of an unused office room in Cornell’s business college. It had an outside door, so that both Canright and Carrie could enter and work unobserved while she did secretarial work for him.** Her first assignment that day was to take dictation on, and then type up, newspaper obituary notices about his wife, who had recently died.

After that, they got into a gradual routine of office work. **It primarily included replying to mail and preparing a book manuscript for Canright’s next book, *The Lord’s Day From Neither Catholics nor Pagans.*** Occasionally, Canright was away and she could do piecework in the Sanitarium College library—and make enough to almost, but not quite, meet her own living expenses.

Canright did not keep regular hours, which was a hindrance to Carrie. Supposed to be working off her business school expenses, she would come and wait in the office room, when she could have been doing piecemeal work at the library. Canright could have notified her the day before when he would be absent, but he did not do this. Learning about this, Cornell would become irritated and confront Canright about the matter; but each time he would plead all his woes and problems, and everything would continue on pretty much as before.

“I remember that Mr. Canright had some copies of Elder J.E. White’s books *Gospel Primer* and *Best Stories from the Best Book*, besides Bibles . . . I asked him one day why he didn’t canvass in Grand Rapids and live at home. He replied, ‘I’m a Baptist in Grand Rapids. These books do not have so ready a sale there

as in Battle Creek. Battle Creek is stuffed with Adventists. They are the people who buy these books and Bibles.' —IWCS, 126-127.

Because his financial situation kept dropping lower, **Cornell, together with Drs. Kellogg and Stewart, decided it would be well to send Canright to unite with and, hopefully, strengthen an offshoot organization in Lincoln, Nebraska,** that they apparently favored. Albion F. Ballenger, John F. Ballenger, Merritt E. Kellogg, A.T. Jones, and a man named Ruppert were there publishing a journal—titled *The Gathering Call*—in the pathetic hope that somehow, if they could get all the Adventists out of the church and following them, all the problems of life would be solved.

Since Cornell, Kellogg, and Stewart were Canright's financial backers in Battle Creek, he dared not disagree with them; so off he went on the train to Lincoln. By now it was late April, 1913. But before long he was back again.

"He was tired and discouraged. As he sat in Mr. Cornell's office he told us [Carrie was present] that John F. Ballenger, who had headed *The Gathering Call*, had died; that M.E. Kellogg, A.T. Jones, A.F. Ballenger, and Elder Ruppert were quarreling among themselves. He further said that *The Gathering Call* was about to be moved to California, and that they had no vacancy for him.

**"He now poured out his lamentations. In substance he declared, 'I'm a man without a home. My daughters Bessie and Nellie are school-teaching. They stay with their half-sister, Genevieve [Veva], who lives in Hillsdale and is having a hard time maintaining a home for her son, who is in college, and her two half-sisters. I am welcome there, but I can't put another burden on her.**

**"I have no way of maintaining myself. The royalties on my books have run out.** The farm is a sand hill. I can't raise much on it, neither can I rent it profitably.'

"Mr. Cornell questioned him about the Baptists.

**"With tears in his eyes he replied, 'The Baptists here in Battle Creek have provided me with a key to the church basement and with an old desk in a corner. I can go and come there at will, and at Grand Rapids they have honored me with the title of *Pastor Emeritus*. But they say I am too shabby and don't grace the Baptist dignity, so they don't contribute to my support. I am virtually rejected by the Baptists.**

"The Adventists still owe me something for all the work I did for them and all the money I raised. There are the fund-raising projects I promoted, which they

still use.

**"My daughter Nellie is a Christian Scientist and a practitioner for the Christian Scientist people. All the girls follow Christian Science. Jasper is in the country; his wife is sick; I can't go there. My cousin, Theodore, lives in town; I don't get along with him; I can't stay there. I have no money to get a glass eye or suitable clothing.'**

**"I later learned that adverse financial conditions had prevailed for years, and that for two years prior to his wife's death he had been unable to maintain their household. His wife had lived with her brother's family, and had sustained herself by door-to-door selling of Adventist children's books."**—IWCS, 128.

So the old secretarial arrangement began again for Carrie. Her first assignment was to take dictation for an obituary request for Lucy (who had died several months earlier) to D.W. Reavis with the hope that it might be inserted in the *Review*. **Carrie was surprised at this; but, she soon realized that Canright's plan was to seem friendly enough to the leaders that they would invite him to the General Conference Session** which would convene on May 15 in Washington, D.C. **When he was not writing articles fighting the Adventist message and people, he was yearning to be back with them.** The obituary was published, but he received no call to attend the Session. **He appreciated Reavis' reply and responded to it with a comment of how much he appreciated Seventh-day Adventist doctrines. He then concluded with a picture of his present prosperous condition:**

**"I am perfectly well in body and in mind, just as active as ever. Have a beautiful home, worth \$10,000 or \$12,000 [equivalent to \$70,000 to 90,000 today]. Everything I need and a lovely family of children. The Baptist Church here [he used his Grand Rapids address on his correspondence], of which I have been pastor twice, always an active member, revere me as their father, and consult me on all important things. My decision on any doctrinal questions settles it . . . I am now 72 years old."**—IWCS, 132-133.

**If you are one of those inclined to think, as does Walter Martin and Desmond Ford, that everything that Canright said was the truth, read the above paragraph again.**

Prior to the trip to Lincoln, much of Canright's dictation to Carrie was material for his anti-Sabbath book, mentioned earlier; this was a revised

# THE MAN WHO BOARDED THE PHANTOM SHIP

PART SIX OF EIGHT

## D.M. CANRIGHT

W M \_\_\_\_\_ Continued from the preceding tract in this series

1 introduction for a new printing of *Seventh-day*  
2 *Adventism Renounced* and daily correspondence.  
3 But after his return, the main bookwork was the  
4 dictating of chapters for what was to be his last  
5 book, *Life of Mrs. E.G. White*, in which he violently  
6 attacked her character.

“When he was dictating personal letters, I usually sat opposite his desk. At such times he was calm, composed, and had a note of assurance in his voice. **Occasionally he would come to some point in his dictating in which he referred to Mrs. White. Strange as it may seem, his references, made almost inadvertently it seemed, were often favorable. But when he then turned to his work on the ‘Life of Mrs. E.G. White,’ he would become agitated and pace the floor. Then his words would be harsh, vindictive, belligerent, and unreasonable.**

“I have seen him on a number of occasions, when he would come, as it were, to a climax in his dictating on the life of Mrs. White, totally exhausted, tears flowing from his good eye as well as from the open socket, while he wept bitterly. At such times I have seen him drop in his chair by his desk, and momentarily bury his face in his arms on the desk. **Then as he swung his left arm in a gesture of utter despair, he would exclaim with three inflections, each more pathetic than the one before, ‘I’m a lost man! I’m a lost man! I’m a lost man!’ Frequently he would add, ‘She was a good woman! I am gone! gone! gone!’**

“It was almost more than I could take. As a result I decided to take his dictation with my back turned to him, without having to witness his anguish. In this way I was able to proceed with my work.”—*IWCS, 134-135.*

**Canright knew he was dictating lies about Ellen White for this book, as he had dictated lies about Adventists and their doctrines for his preceding books.** One step in the wrong direction leads to more wrong steps. And **Canright knew he was well along the path to perdition. But he could not break the chains that held him.** To do so would require public acknowledgment of his lying words to the non-Adventist world; and he could

not bring himself to do this. To do so would be to stop his last source of “admiration.”

“**The force of what seemed to me to be his repeated appeals for help weighed heavily upon my emotions,** and I longed to go to the Tabernacle and ask for help from the ministers in charge. But I felt I must not do this. I was bound by a pledge to secrecy and my loyalty to Mr. Cornell. I felt I could not reveal what I saw or heard to anyone in or out of the office.”—*IWCS, 135.*

**But mingled with this despair was a desire to learn about, and be with, the only people in the world that he believed had the truth. If he could not live with them in heaven, at least he could enjoy being near them on earth.**

“I kept Mr. Canright informed in regard to Adventist meetings. **Somehow he seemed to enjoy the prospect of attending Sabbath services, prayer meetings, and church functions.** He made repeated attempts through me to secure invitations to church board meetings and other business meetings. His eagerness in this respect led some Adventists to believe he had returned to his former faith, or at least was in the process of doing so. **But Mr. Canright’s frequent remark when urged to do so was, ‘Oh, I want to, but I can’t; it’s too late!’**

“**I often witnessed and heard the bitter lamentations he uttered at times. Then I would see his mood change.** Sometimes this would take place within minutes, and the same old belligerent attitude would be manifested again.”—*IWCS, 135.*

**For a few minutes, Canright would cry out from between the chains. But then the demons would coax him into a proud antagonism and he would be held down again. There is a sense of power in the moment of expressed pride. This was Canright’s undoing. He was unwilling to say good-bye to that spirit.**

Carrie, who regularly attended services at the Tabernacle, mentions that Canright would frequently attend the 11 o’clock services there.

“As a rule, however, Mr. Canright chose to enter just as the first song was announced. He always seemed to come with his small brown satchel in hand and he would march clear down next to the front pew. On more than one occasion when prayer was announced and the congregation began to kneel, I have seen Mr. Canright make as if to kneel, but seemed unable to do so. **Sometimes he would wave his right arm, and utter a distressed cry. ‘Don’t let me fall, brethren, don’t let me fall!’** The deacons would then hurry to his aid, thinking he was ill, and would assist him outside. **When he would reach the vestibule he**

---

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO ATTACKING HISTORIC ADVENTISM AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

would walk away on his own.

“One Sabbath morning, thinking that perhaps he had left the Tabernacle in order to attend services in the Seventh Day Baptist Church about four blocks away, I followed him to see. But his journey only led to the cottage behind the helpers’ kitchen [at the Sanitarium] where he roomed.”—*IWCS*, 136.

Canright would also attend prayer meetings, arranged by Tabernacle personnel, in the community.

“At the cottage prayer meetings he would usually linger in the yard or on the porch until the first song was announced. Then he would enter with his little satchel. **Oftentimes Mr. Canright’s attitudes, his repudiations, his confessions, and the statements such as ‘I’m a lost man,’ or ‘She was a good woman,’ were freely discussed at these prayer meetings, and just as often heartfelt prayers were offered in his behalf.**

“But when reports of his confessions and statements leaked out, Mr. Canright would hasten to make public denial through the press. One day he dictated the following statement to me, which eventually appeared in his book, *Life of Mrs. E.G. White*:

“MY PRESENT STANDING—Since I withdrew from the Adventists, over thirty years ago, they have continued to report that I have regretted leaving them, have tried to get back again, have repudiated my book which I wrote **and have confessed that I am now a lost man. There has never been a word of truth in any of these reports.** I expect them to report that I recanted on my deathbed. All this is done to hinder the influence of my books. **I now reaffirm all that I have written in my books and tracts against that doctrine . . .**—*D.M. Canright, Pastor Emeritus of the Berean Baptist Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.*’

“He used this statement, with some additions, again and again.”—*IWCS*, 136-137.

As we have observed, there is “a great cloud of witnesses” that reveal what really took place back at that time. Sincere Christians, over the years, wrote down what they saw take place. Such testimonies are to be abundantly found in the present historical study you are now reading. **The truth is that under the continual goading of demons, Canright, in the preparation of his books, became a hardened liar,—hardened by devil-possession.**

“It always seemed strange to me that he should write vehement denials for the press, when I daily witnessed in private the very things he publicly denied. At times he seemed to realize that he was possessed by a power over which he had no control. An overwhelming desire for peace of mind seemed to dominate his subconsciousness. **He yearned to be free from whatever power it was that controlled him.** He longed for the warmth of companionship of his former Seventh-day Adventist associates. But he seemed unable to obtain relief . . .

“**He seemed to desperately want a way out of the fog.** He seemed to sense that there were forces operating in his life that led him to do and say things at one time, which he felt grieved about at other times. **The fact that he had seemingly lost his power of choice plagued him.** Yet to my knowledge Mr. Canright never did admit even to his closest friends the fact that he *had* lost his power of personal choice or decision.”—*IWCS*, 137-138.

At first, Canright would hand anti-Adventist tracts to Carrie to enclose with the letters that she typed to mail out. But later he let her select from among them for something to enclose.

“One day while looking for tracts I had discovered a pigeonhole near the place where Mr. Canright kept leaflets, which contained a little pile of tracts entitled *Elihu on the Sabbath*. Not being acquainted with their authorship or content at the time, I one day enclosed these with the form letter rather than the Canright tracts. Several days later two or three of these letters were returned marked ‘Insufficient Address.’ Mr. Canright opened them, and out dropped the Sabbath tracts—**tracts I was later to learn were published by Seventh-day Adventists [in defense of the Bible Sabbath].** I expected to be rebuked for sending letters out without giving the full and proper address. **But again something incredible happened. He looked at the tracts, recognized them as Seventh-day Adventist productions defending the seventh-day Sabbath, and said, ‘This is what I really wanted enclosed, but I couldn’t say it that way.’** It left me puzzled.

“**Repeatedly while I was Mr. Canright’s secretary, I heard him say one thing, as though under the control of some invisible power, while at other times I have heard him openly confess that he felt quite differently.**

“After the above-mentioned incident took place, and while receiving dictation adverse to Mrs. White, I sometimes would inquire, perhaps impertinently, whether that was really the way he wanted to say it. **On such occasions he would sometimes reply, ‘What I want to say, I can’t.’**”—*IWCS*, 138.

Another fabrication of Canright’s were the “*testimonials*” that appeared in his books and newspaper articles. These were purportedly penned by leading citizens and influential Protestants and Baptists. **Canright would write out glowing reports on how wonderful Canright was;** then he would send them to various individuals in the hope that they would sign and return them. Enough came back to enable Canright to keep up appearances of success and greatness in the public eye. **During the time that Carrie was with him, he would dictate the testimonials to her,** and then instruct her who the typed copies should be mailed to for their signatures.

“**Many of the complimentary articles that appeared in newspapers, church organs, broadsides, and testimonials were written by Mr. Canright himself and prepared for the promotion of his literary**

**productions.** In his testimonials, a number of which I wrote at his dictation, he named many of the finer virtues and talents which he thought he possessed. These I sent at his behest to those whose signatures he believed would carry more weight. The careful reader may detect the characteristic Canright style in many of these testimonials and note the repetition of certain typical words and expressions. He may also observe that those who signed the testimonials could hardly have been in possession of all the points of information presented, such as details concerning Canright's work while a Seventh-day Adventist."—*IWCS, 138-139.*

As his secretary, Carrie noticed that Canright usually carried copies of the *Review* in his pocket; and that, **as he read from them in the office, tears would come to his eyes.** Articles that especially affected him, Carrie would later look up and read. They usually dealt with the progress of the Advent Movement and the successful evangelistic and missionary work of former associates of his.

Finally, one hot day in July, 1913, as Carrie was going home to lunch, she stopped in at the Tabernacle to pay her tithes—three dimes. Two ministers were present; and, startled that she only had three dimes of tithes, they began questioning her. —Then the entire story came out.

"Both of them were officers of the church, and they showed sympathy and understanding. I answered simply and briefly. My replies increased their interest. Before I realized it, I had told them all I knew. The circumstances and the heavy burdens that rested on my youthful shoulders dispelled for the moment any thoughts of loyalty either to Mr. Canright or to Mr. Cornell.

"The men told me not to be in a hurry [to go home for lunch]. They counseled between themselves, and then in my hearing Mr. Israel said to Mr. Minier, 'This girl is in danger. Can't you do something about it?' Mr. Minier replied, 'I think something can be done, but when?'

"They seemed to think that if something was to be done, it must be at once. Mr. Israel then concluded the interview, stressing that I should act at once to terminate my services to Mr. Canright. He ended by saying, 'I'll get you a job if I have to pay you out of my own pocket.'"—*IWCS, 146-147.*

Carrie had told them that Canright would not be in the office during lunch hour; so they sent her over there immediately to gather her things together and bring them to the Tabernacle office and store them there temporarily. She immediately quit the Business College at the same time.

A job was then obtained for her at the Battle Creek Food Company. Within a few weeks she was offered, and accepted, a position as secretary to the new president of the Southern Illinois Conference

[now the Illinois Conference]. Leaving Battle Creek by train, she moved to Springfield, Illinois. Later she married the Secretary-Treasurer of the Conference, Frank Johnson. Later still, she wrote a book about her experience, titled *I Was Canright's Secretary*, which (unfortunately) is no longer in print.

**As we have discovered, in those final years Canright had no hesitation about visiting with Adventist Church leaders.** Elder F.M. Wilcox, for thirty-three years the editor-in-chief of the *Review*, tells of one such incident:

"I recall an interesting conversation which I had with D.M. Canright some time before his death. I was attending a general meeting held in Battle Creek, Michigan. Elder Canright was at the Sanitarium taking treatment. He attended some of our meetings.

"One day I sat down beside him, and after a pleasant greeting we had the following conversation: '. . . I have followed your work through the years, and have regretted to see that you have separated from your former brethren. **I am now engaged in the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and I would like to ask what your counsel is to me. Shall I do as you have done?'** . . .

**'He said, 'My counsel to you is to remain right where you are.'**

"It seemed to me that this was significant advice from one who had spent years in fighting the cause which he once espoused . . . **He did not feel free to advise another to follow in his steps.**"—*F.M. Wilcox, in Review, August 22, 1940.*

The following incident took place in 1914. Elder R.J. Sype tells the story:

**'Early Spring of 1914, there was a ministerial meeting held in Davenport, Iowa. I believe it was a [Ecumenical] meeting of all denominations who wished to attend.** It continued for a few days and various guest speakers were there. **Among them was D.M. Canright, who was to address the convention on how to meet Adventism.**

"Elder A.R. Ogden was then president of the Iowa Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He was somewhat acquainted with Brother Canright and since this was a well-advertised meeting at which all denominations were welcome, he decided to attend and incidentally to meet Elder Canright.

**'Elder Canright met him and seemed absolutely delighted to see him. He clung to him as to a long lost brother and proposed that they stay together in the hotel,** which they did.

"Elder Canright was to give his talk at the convention the following day. **When it came his time to speak, his talk was exactly like that of Balaam when he went to curse Israel. —It was a blessing instead of a curse! He told these ministers assembled that the Adventists were a wonderful Christian people, and that they would make a terrible mistake to approach**

the matter of Adventism in any other spirit than this. He then advised them that the best way to deal with the Adventists was to accept them as Christian brethren and to keep down all controversy with them.”—R.J. Sype, letter, dated June 10, 1963.

**Elder Sype, pastor of the Davenport, Iowa, Adventist Church then asked Canright to speak at his church the following Sabbath.** Many years earlier, Canright had held evangelistic meetings in Iowa and so was acquainted with some of the older members.

Here is Elder Sype’s report, through H.O. Olson:

**“When Canright stepped up to the pulpit and faced the audience, he began to cry. For some time he hid his face in his handkerchief and wept. After he composed himself, he said, ‘As I look into the faces of my former brethren, I remember former days. I remember when Elder and Mrs. James White found me, a young man, a sinner, in the woods of New York State, and how they brought me to Christ and helped me to obtain preparation for the ministry . . . I remember J.N. Andrews, Loughborough, Haskell, Uriah Smith, J.H. Waggoner, and others. Oh! those were happy days! I wish those days could return again. You have the truth. You are happier than any other people on earth. Remain true to your denomination!’**

“After the service, he went to the door, and **as he shook hands with the brethren he again appealed to them to be true to this message.**”—R.J. Sype Report, through H.O. Olson, dated June 10, 1963.

**And we appeal to you out there, whoever you may be, who may have slipped away toward the edges of the Great Advent Message—the Three Angels’ Message. We appeal to you who may have been lured toward the “new theology” of Desmond Ford and the liberal college teachers among us, and their graduates, now in the work. Our appeal is to stay by the true message—historic Adventism. This is God’s will for your life; and it is D.M. Canright’s appeal to you also.**

Canright’s elderly mother died in Colorado in 1914. She loved the Advent Message and remained with it to her death. At the time that Canright’s *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* came off the press in 1889, she wrote him and asked for a copy so she could read it. **In reply, he said:**

**“No, Mother . . . It is not a book for you to read. It was not written for people like you . . . No, Mother, I do not want to send the book to you.”—D.M. Canright, letter to his mother, Loretta Canright,**

1889, quoted by W.A. Spicer, in *Review of January 13, 1949.*

Spicer added:

“She was one of the old-line Seventh-day Adventists, rich in Christian experience, happy in the blessed hope, the hope of the second coming of Christ to gather His people . . . **While our former minister [Canright] was representing to the people of the great churches that he was finding great blessing in being free from ‘legalism,’ as he called obedience to the commandments of God, would he not want this good old mother to have the same experience? Not at all.** Apparently our old associate had no inclination to lead that mother of his into the new way.”—W.A. Spicer, in *Review of January 13, 1949.*

**Even Canright recognized that the “new theology” wasn’t worth offering to his own mother.**

In 1915, Canright’s second book came off the press. It was titled *The Lord’s Day From Neither Catholics nor Pagans*. Not received very well, it soon went out of print.

One interesting aspect of this volume was a testimonial, signed by A.J. Bush, the church clerk of the Berean Baptist Church in Grand Rapids. Twice in the statement, Canright is called Elder Canright. This is, of course, strange in view of the fact that the Baptists address their ministers by the unscriptural term, Reverend. But Canright was well-known to use this term in connection with himself after his break with Adventists. Very likely, Canright wrote the testimonial himself.

Carrie Shasky Johnson later learned that the engraving on his gravestone was penned by Canright himself prior to his death and given to the officiating undertaker in a sealed envelope. It contained the wording that was to be placed on the stone marker, when funds might become available to erect one.

ELDER D.M. CANRIGHT

Sept. 22, 1840 - May 12, 1919

AN AUTHOR OF WORLD RENOWN

**As “Elder Canright,” he would be linked with the Adventists; as “Reverend Canright,” he would be linked with the other Protestant churches.**

**On July 16, 1915, Ellen White died. Repeatedly, she had pled, without success, with Canright to turn back from the road which he seemed so determined to take.** The broken-hearted old man well-knew she was one of the best friends he had ever had. After two funeral services in California, **her casket was carried by train to Battle Creek**

# THE MAN WHO BOARDED THE PHANTOM SHIP

**PART SEVEN OF EIGHT**

## D.M. CANRIGHT

W M \_\_\_\_\_ Continued from the preceding tract in this series

1 where, on July 24, the final, larger funeral ser-  
2 vice was held.

3 A number of people observed Canright's words  
4 and actions at that funeral.

G.B. Thompson, an honor guard at the funeral, told of Canright's uncontrollable grief at the bier.

A man just behind Canright in line spoke to him to comfort him. **In reply, Canright said to him: "She is saved, I am lost."** (That individual shared that with an Adventist minister who, in the early 1980s, shared it with the present writer.)

There had been a long line of mourners. After following the line on up the first time, Canright suggested to his brother, Jasper, that they get in line and go on up again the second time. Jasper later wrote:

**"My brother rested his hand on the side of the casket, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, he said brokenly, 'There's a noble Christian woman gone.'"**—*Jasper B. Canright, letter from Battle Creek to Elder S.E. Wight of Grand Rapids, Michigan, dated February 24, 1931.*

Jasper Canright always remained faithful to the Advent Message. In that same letter he wrote these words:

**"My brother, the late Elder D.M. Canright, often told me to remain true to the message. He said to me: 'If you give up the message, it will ruin your life.'** Many years ago in a public meeting at West LeRoy, where he had been called to oppose the work of a Seventh-day Adventist minister, he made the following statements: **'I think I know why you have called me out here. You expect me to prove from the Bible that Sunday is the Sabbath, and that Saturday isn't the Sabbath. Now I can't prove from the Bible that Sunday is the Sabbath, for it isn't there, and I think I can convince you that Sunday is not the Sabbath.'**"—*Ibid.*

Early in 1915, L.H. Christian, president of the Lake Union Conference, visited Canright in his Grand Rapids home:

"In 1915, I was urged to visit D.M. Canright, who at one time was prominent in our church. He lived

then on a poor little farm near Grand Rapids, Michigan. **He was eager to tell about his past experiences and seemed to regret that he had ever left the Advent people. He talked like a discouraged, disappointed man.** As we talked about old-time Adventists, he began to tell about Mrs. White.

**"He said, 'I knew her very well. For some time, as a young man, I lived in her home, and for eighteen years was intimately acquainted with the White family. I want to say to you that I never met a woman so godly and kind and at the same time so unselfish, helpful, and practical as Mrs. White. She was certainly a spiritual woman, a woman of prayer and deep faith in the Lord Jesus.'**

"I asked him what he thought would happen to people if they followed the *Testimonies* of Mrs. White.

"He answered, **'Anyone who follows her writings, the *Testimonies*, as you call them, in prayer and faith will certainly get to heaven. She always exalted Jesus, and she taught true conversion and genuine sanctification as few others have.** I have known a great many men and women who claim to be extraordinary in their imagined divine calling and gifts. I have always found them more or less arrogant and proud, eager to be recognized and often arbitrary and harsh in judging others. With Mrs. White I found the exact opposite. **She was reserved and modest and seemed to have no desire at all to call attention to herself as someone great or to her authority.'**

**"Some months after these visits, at the funeral of Mrs. White in Battle Creek, I met D.M. Canright again.** There were six of us men who stood as a guard of honor while the people passed through the tabernacle to view Mrs. White as she lay in her plain casket. I noticed Mr. Canright as he came down the aisle toward the rostrum. **He stopped at the casket and looked at Mrs. White quite a while. He reached down and took hold of her right hand, which had done all that immense amount of writing.**

"Later I asked him, 'Now that she is dead, what do you really think of Mrs. White?'

"He replied, **'She was a most godly woman All her life she lived near to Jesus and taught the way of living faith. Anyone who follows her instructions will surely be saved in the kingdom of God.'**"—*L.H. Christian, quoted in "Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts," pages 51-53.*

Canright's anti-Sabbath book came out late in 1915. Early the next year, a friend of his from former days, Elder J.H. Morrison, received a copy of it from Canright with a note to examine it and tell him criticisms. Morrison was about to depart to Battle Creek for the Lake Union Conference Session, which was scheduled for March 7-12, 1916. Morrison replied

---

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE  
TO ATTACKING HISTORIC ADVENTISM AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY**

that he would be happy to look over the book; and he asked Canright to attend the Session with him. This Canright gladly did; and they spent a happy time there. Returning to where Morrison was staying, the two visited together a little longer; then Canright left Morrison's home in the growing darkness of the night.

A few minutes later, D.M. approached the local Baptist Church with the intention of walking down the outside steps to the room in the basement that the Baptists kept with a desk for him to use whenever he so desired. **He had not been there for some time and did not realize that extensive remodeling of the building was taking place. The outside steps had been removed.** It was Friday evening, March 10, 1916. Arriving at the church, with the key in his hand, he fell down through the opening in the darkness, landed on rubbish strewn over the basement floor, and remained there until the following Sunday morning when he was discovered by the janitor. He was first taken to the city hospital, then transferred on Monday morning, at his request, to the Sanitarium. **He experienced intense suffering for months, during which time his leg was amputated. Gradually he recovered.** Early in June he was taken by ambulance to the home of his daughter, Genevieve, in Hillsdale, Michigan. She was a Christian Scientist, so didn't have much thought for medical care; but **he remained there, in a wheel chair, for the remaining three years of his life.**

**With the help of an ex-Adventist minister, he assembled the rest of his denouncements of Ellen White for his last book, *Life of Ellen White*.** In July of 1918, it was accepted by the publisher; and, in July of 1919, it came off the press.

**But two months before then, Dudley Marvin Canright died of a paralytic stroke at Genevieve's home. A miserable thirty-two years, since he finally left the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1887, had come to an end.**

As far as D.M. Canright, himself, was concerned, **it could well be said: *It would have been better if he had never been born.***

An old Fiji chief, a dedicated Seventh-day Adventist, was offered Canright's book to read. He took it and read the introduction and then returned the book. When asked why he would not read it, he replied with great wisdom; "*It says this man was with the Adventists for 25 years before he learned that Adventism was wrong. If this is so, the man is a fool, and I have no wish to read the words of a fool!*"

D.M. Canright was a strange man. In his books,

published in 1889 and 1919, he violently attacked the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Ellen White personally. And yet in his earlier *Review* articles, while still a leader in the church, he revealed clear, calm reasoning that was quite different.

**In the year 1877, Dudley Canright presented in the *Review* a series of ten articles.** These appeared between March 15 and June 14. This series of ten articles was issued under the general title of "***A Plain Talk to the Murmurers: Some Facts for Those Who Are not in Harmony with the Body.***"

**Then, in 1885, just half a year before his final break with the church and two years before his *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* was published, he penned a powerful article** that appeared on February 10, 1885, in the *Review*. This article, titled "***To Those in Doubting Castle,***" was well-written; and, as with the ten articles preceding it, it clearly was written to himself. (Both in 1877 and in 1885 he had just returned to the body from a dark cloud of several months in separation from them.)

**Here now are major excerpts from all eleven of these articles.** First, we shall consider the 1877 articles, as a whole. Then, we shall examine much of the 1885 article.

---

## TO THOSE IN DOUBTING CASTLE

By Eld. D.M. Canright

Among the most dangerous of the places which pilgrims had to pass in the days of Bunyan was Doubting Castle. Many a poor pilgrim was caught on these grounds, shut up in this terrible old castle, and finally destroyed by the keeper, Giant Despair. But some were finally lucky enough to make their escape. That same old castle still stands by the way, as grim, and dark, and dreadful as ever. Every now and then some poor pilgrim, venturing too near, is caught. Some are rescued, but many are not. Hoping to help some of these, and to warn others, I write these lines.

Twenty-five years ago I embraced this message. The complete system of truth which it presented seemed to me something wonderful and very glorious. The study of the Bible was a continual feast to me. To preach it to others, and see them embrace it, filled my heart with gladness and peace. But at length things came up which threw me into doubt on some points, and finally were the occasion of my ceasing to preach the message. As the same things have affected others more or less, and will be liable to affect still others in the future, I wish to

give a few of the reasons why I still think that the work is all right, that the Lord is in it, and that these doubts are not well founded.

But even the gospel is not so plain that objections cannot be raised against it if men try hard to find them. Well informed infidels even raise many objections against the Bible itself,—objections which are difficult to answer, and which they claim never have been satisfactorily answered. And so they go on scoffing and disbelieving. But Christians don't give up their faith for all that. The evidence on the other hand is too clear and too abundant to be overbalanced by a few seeming objections.

From the very beginning God's work has been doubted by some who have had a full knowledge of it and a close connection with it. "By faith Noah condemned the world." Heb. 11:7. He had the same evidence which the world had. He believed, they disbelieved . . . No man ever came from God with better evidences of his divine mission than Moses; and yet right among his own people and followers and co-workers doubters were constantly springing up . . . The same spirit of fault-finding and of doubt was continually cropping out during the whole forty years. Yet at the same time there was the pillar of cloud always with them, the manna falling day after day for forty years, besides many other miracles. In the face of all this, a few objections which they could not, or would not, understand outweighed everything else. The fact is that God has never at any time given so much light and evidence that man had to believe whether he wanted to or not. Nor has he been careful to remove all objections out of the way of those who have believed and embraced his truth.

Notice what God says of Christ: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offense." Rom. 9:33. Didn't God know that man would stumble over Him? Yes; and so He knows that they will also stumble over other truths just as they always have done, and always will do. But those who seek God humbly and with tears will not be left to fall. God would send every angel from heaven before one such should miss the way. All these facts apply with equal force to the cause of God in our day, to the third angel's message, and to all connected with it.

But I wish more especially to apply this to the *Testimonies*. What evidence do we have that they are of God? Every argument in favor of the third angel's message is an argument in favor of the *Testimonies*. Why? If it be a fact that the time has come for a special warning to the world on the advent near, the law of God, and other truths which we hold, then we may be sure that God would prepare

the way for that message by raising up proper persons to give it.

Now, admitting that ours is a special message from God designed to warn this generation, look at its history. Sr. 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 had 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. We must either reject the message or receive the *Testimonies*. They stand or fall together. So I repeat that every argument in favor of the main doctrine of our faith is an argument in favor of the *Testimonies*.

Another argument in favor of the *Testimonies* is the fact that all those parties who have drawn off from our people in opposition to the *Testimonies* have come to naught, or at best have had only a feeble existence. Time and again this has been tried by different persons proposing to preach all the message except the *Testimonies*. Now if that position is right, why don't [sic] God prosper them? Why don't they succeed better than those who hold and teach them?

Another evidence in favor of the *Testimonies* is the fact that those who have accepted them have always stood together, and have perfectly agreed in faith and practice; while those who have opposed them have disagreed in doctrine and discipline, and have split up into little factions.

And still another evidence is found in the fact that those who remain among us, and still oppose the *Testimonies*, soon lose their love for the message, their spirituality, their devotion, their zeal for God and for the salvation of souls. I have seen many such cases, and have never yet known an exception to this rule. Why is this so? If they are right, why does it always have this effect? On the other hand, the most devoted and zealous members in all our churches are those who have the strongest faith in the *Testimonies*.

It seems to me now that no one who has ever felt the power of the Spirit of God upon his own heart can candidly read through the four volumes of "Spirit of Prophecy" without being deeply convicted that the writer must live very near to God,

and be thoroughly imbued with the same Spirit that inspired the Bible and animated the apostles and prophets. Such lofty thoughts of God, of heaven, and of spiritual things cannot come from a carnal heart, nor from a mind deceived and led by Satan. I have not a shadow of a doubt about the sleep of the dead, the annihilation of the wicked, the Sonship of Christ, baptism by immersion, etc.; and yet there are scriptures, such for instance, as the rich man and Lazarus, which are as difficult for me to harmonize with these plain Bible doctrines as it is for me to explain the hardest passage in Sr. White's writings. Peter admitted that there were some things in the Scriptures hard to be understood. 2 Peter 3:16. He says that some wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. And that is just what some are doing with the *Testimonies*.

When we consider how extensive these writings are, extending over a period of nearly forty years, embracing ten bound volumes besides many smaller works, it would be a wonder indeed if in all these there should not be anything in the wording, the sentiment, or the doctrine, hard to understand and explain, or on which a sharp opponent could not make a plausible argument. We know that God's revelations in the past have not been given free from all obscurity and difficulties. Neither will they be now.

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*.

And now I want to reason awhile with those among us who are holding off and living in doubt about the *Testimonies*. I believe that your course is not only wrong, but that it is unsatisfactory to you here, and will be unsatisfactory at the Judgment.

My brethren, my sisters, are you willing to let your short life slip by year after year, and finally come up to the searching test of the Judgment in this way? Beware! Many will land in perdition who do not intend to. Shut your eyes to it as you may, such a course must inevitably end in disaster.

But you say, "I would like to believe and have full confidence in the whole work if I only could;

but I am afraid I shall believe an error." Well, let us see if there is really any danger in going this way.

You certainly know that our people hold all the cardinal doctrines of salvation,—faith in God, the Bible, Jesus Christ, repentance, a holy life, etc. Isn't this safe? You know that Sr. White and all our ministers not only so teach, but exert all their influence to have our people live lives of devotion, of honesty, of purity, of love, of plainness, of sacrifice, and of every Christian virtue. You know that every sin is condemned among our people, and the most solemn warnings are constantly given against even the appearance of evil. You know that in almost every church of our people there are at least some who are living blameless Christian lives. You know that there is not one immoral doctrine taught or practiced by our people. Bad men and poor examples there are, to be sure; but they are such in spite of all our efforts to make them better. You know that if any man will strictly live up to the teachings of the *Testimonies* and our people, he will certainly be saved.

Now will it not be better for you,—better in this life and safer in the next,—to believe and labor heartily with this people than it is to believe nobody, be in harmony with no church and have no settled system of doctrine? Of all the miserable, unsatisfactory places to be in, that is the worst.

My friend, is this your condition? How long have you been there? One year? five years? ten years? Haven't you settled it yet? Then give it up, and come in with those who have settled it, where there is faith and hope and zeal and active work for God and man.

Look at the grand truths which our people hold,—the new earth, the beautiful city, the resurrection, the real life hereafter, the literal coming of Christ, the sleep of the dead, the destruction of sin and sinners, the law of God, all those grand lines of prophecy unmistakably pointing to the end near. Can you give these all up, forget them, and shut them from your heart? Can you once more have confidence in intangible spirits, eternal hell, sprinkling for baptism, Sunday-Sabbath, or the millennium? Pshaw! strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!

I find that there is peace and joy, hope and confidence, love for souls, and the blessing of God in giving full confidence to the whole message; and these I have never found in doubting it, nor have I ever seen any one who did find them that way. All admit that we have truth enough, if lived out, to

## THE MAN WHO BOARDED THE PHANTOM SHIP

**PART EIGHT OF EIGHT**

# D.M. CANRIGHT

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

save us. We know that all other churches have many errors. How shall we gain anything, then, by going there? Start a new church of our own? Well, the success of those who have left us and tried that has not been very encouraging.

No, the real trouble lies close at home, in a proud, unconverted heart, a lack of real humility, an unwillingness to submit to God's way of finding the truth.

—*Review & Herald, February 10, 1885*

### SOME PLAIN TALK TO MURMURERS

By Eld. D.M. Canright

The Lord has never had a special work to do upon the earth, but that there was plenty of chances for men to doubt, and get into trial, and lose their faith in the work. Was it not so in the case of Moses? of Nehemiah? of Christ himself? of Martin Luther? If men are disposed to give more weight to a grain of sand than they are to a mountain, then they will always have plenty of things about which to get into trouble. This has always been so. What reason have we to expect that it will be different now? . . .

Do we not all agree that the second advent is near, and the world is now to be warned concerning it? Do we not all agree that in the providence of God, special light is now being given upon the subjects of the second advent near, the kingdom, the new earth, the sleep of the dead, the destruction of the wicked, the doctrine of the trinity, the law of God, God's holy Sabbath, etc.? All Seventh-day Adventists will agree in these things. The time has come that these truths must be preached to the world; and the third angel's message of Revelation 14:9-12 is a prophecy of this work.

We go back to the close of the first and second messages in 1844; in the following year our good Father Bates began to keep the Sabbath and teach this in connection with his Advent views. In a few months' time Brother and Sister White also received the Sabbath and united its observance with the

Advent doctrine. They very soon received the light upon the subject of the Sanctuary, the sitting of the Judgment in Heaven, and all those kindred truths which explain the disappointment in 1844. Here they received light upon the third angel's message, and took the position there and then, that the time had now come for the third angel's message to be given, after the close of the other two, and thus finish the last warning to the world.

Shortly, Eld. J.N. Andrews joined them in this work. So these brethren began to preach this message to the world; but they were without means, without position, without churches, without influence, and everything in the message was new, and it had to be searched out and defended. Yet their faith in the message was then as strong as it is now, and their confidence in its final triumph was expressed in very strong terms. To all human appearance, they had no hope of success; but still they went to work in the fear of God, studying, preaching, traveling, and meeting all kinds of objections and opposition.

It is wicked for men to cry, "The Bible, the Bible, the Bible," and profess to follow that implicitly when they reject one of the plainest doctrines of the Bible,—the doctrine of spiritual gifts. Of course I have not time here to take up an argument on spiritual gifts or enter into a lengthy statement of her labors, their nature, &c [etc.]. We believe, however, that no doctrine of the Bible is plainer than that of the perpetuity of spiritual gifts, and particularly that these gifts are to be restored in the last days. Joel 2:28-32; Revelation 12:17; 19:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-21; &c [etc.].

From the very start of this message, Sr. White has been intimately connected with it. Ever since 1845, she has had visions frequently, and they have had an important bearing upon the work . . .

Not a move of any importance has ever been made in any department of the work but she has spoken in the *Testimonies* supporting it, either before or after it was started, and as her *Testimonies* have been generally believed and received by this people, they have necessarily had a great influence upon the action of our people. I am thoroughly satisfied that without the *Testimonies* it would have been utterly impossible to sustain many movements of great importance which have now proved a complete success in this work. When the *Testimonies* have spoken upon the subject, it has at once put an end to strife and division of sentiments and com-

---

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO ATTACKING HISTORIC ADVENTISM AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY**

W  
M

1  
2  
8

plaints among our people, and they have taken hold unitedly to prosecute the work.

There are no half dozen men in our ranks who have really influenced the faith, the practice, and the different important moves in this work so much as Sr. White and her *Testimonies*.

We look at the means which have been used to accomplish this work, and we find that from the very beginning, chief and very prominent among them are the labors of Bro. and Sr. White.

She has traveled everywhere, and given her influence to the work with all her might as an able speaker. Many have been converted to this truth under her personal efforts. Her voice has been heard in conferences, and in the counsels of our people. Through her urgent appeals and strong entreaties, advance moves have been made, institutions for the prosecution of the work have been founded, and in every conceivable way her important labors for thirty years have been intimately connected with this work, and have done very much for its success.

Look at it a moment. Here are certain great truths—a definitely foretold message, in the success of which we are all deeply interested. We believe that it is not only truth, but the present truth. These truths have brought us from darkness to light, from the fables of men to the commandments of God. Now consider: What means have been used by the Lord to bring out, to maintain, and publish this work to the world? What agents did God use to bring these blessed truths to our attention? First, foremost, and prominent among them all, as we have shown, are the untiring, life-long labors of Bro. and Sr. White . . .

We must either accept Bro. and Sr. White as God's accredited servants, or we must reject the third angel's message; and the facts show that this is just about what every one does. Those who commence by finding fault with Bro. White, and by rejecting the *Testimonies*, sooner or later end by giving up the third angel's message, and finally separating themselves from this people. This result is inevitable, and hence we warn our brethren before they start upon that path just where it will lead to. There has been no exception in the past, there will be none in the future.

As to the Christian character of Sr. White, I beg leave to say that I think I know something about it. I have been acquainted with Sr. 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 Br. and Sr. 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 Sr. 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 frequently come in contact with fanatical persons, and I have always found them to be full of pretensions [sic], full of pride, ready to give their opinion, boastful of their holiness, etc. But I have ever found Sr. White the reverse of all this. Any one, the poorest and the humblest, can go to her freely for advice and comfort without being repulsed. She is ever looking after the needy, the destitute, and the suffering, providing for them, and pleading their cause. I have never formed an acquaintance with any persons who so constantly have the fear of God before them. Nothing is undertaken without earnest prayer to God. She studies God's Word carefully and constantly.

I have heard Sr. White speak hundreds of times, have read her *Testimonies* 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*. Indeed, I never read them without feeling reproved for my lack of faith in God, lack of devotion, and lack of earnestness in saving souls. If I have any judgment, any spiritual discernment, I pronounce the *Testimonies* to be of the same Spirit and of the same tenor as the Scriptures.

One thing I have remarked, is that the most bitter opponents of the visions of Sr. White admit that she is a Christian. How they can make this admission is more than I know. They try to fix it up by saying that she is deceived. They are not able to put their finger upon a single stain in all her life, nor any immoral sentence in all her writings. They have to admit that much of her writings are excellent, and that whoever would live out all she says would be a good Christian, sure of Heaven. This is passing strange if she is a tool of the devil, inspired by Satan, or if her writings are immoral or the vagaries of her own mind.

I could name half a dozen men whose writings you read with great delight, whose talent and ability you all admire, whose piety and doctrine none of you question, who have all confidence in her gift. By a long and intimate acquaintance with Sr. White and her writings, they have had a hundred-fold better chance to decide upon this question than ninety-nine out of a hundred lay brethren. They have seen Sr. White in vision, they have heard her deliver hundreds of testimonies to individuals whom they know. Indeed, they themselves have been reproved through them, and they have read and studied her writings over and over thoroughly. They are conscientious, God-fearing men,—men, too, who are close Bible students.

Another fact I have noticed: Impostors are always anxious to build up themselves. Any one who will support them they will flatter and praise and sustain; but I know it to be just the reverse in this case. Those who have been the most often, and probably, the most severely, reproved through the *Testimonies*, are those who have been the warmest supporters of Sr. White. This does not look like the policy of a deceiver.

Right in connection with this, I want to call your attention to that which has had a powerful influence upon my mind touching this question; *viz.*, the failure and ruin which has every time overtaken those who have undertaken to hold on to the message and the present truth and still oppose the *Testimonies*. Ever since the work began, persons have risen up here and there in opposition to the visions.

Now, says Gamaliel, this is the way it will always be. If the work is not of God, it will all come to confusion; but if it is of God, all the powers of hell cannot arrest it.

Now apply this undoubted principle to the history of those who have drawn off from the body of Seventh-day Adventists. I have known of them, and have been more or less acquainted with their history from Maine to California. Six different papers have been started in the interest of that rebellious work, and all, except one, have gone down . . .

Yet if the visions of Sr. White and the position of Eld. White are not correct, but are really displeasing to God, I ask you this one question: Why is it that God does not prosper and build up these opposers who have gone off from us upon this very issue?

Every time they have started out with simply leaving out the visions and opposing the work of Bro. White. Why does not God help them, and show that they are right and we are wrong? I maintain that the providence of God in the history of this work has settled the question that we must either

accept the *Testimonies*, and Bro. and Sr. White as God's servants, or give up the third angel's message entirely. If you proceed in that direction, you will land just where all others have who have tried it before you.

Brethren, you who believe these *Testimonies*, do you read them and follow them as closely as you should? Do you love them and remember what they say? Do you try to drink in their spirit? Do you have them in your houses? Do you refer to them frequently? I know that nothing would be more profitable to you than these, next to the Bible.

—*Review & Herald*, March 15, 1877; April 12, 1877; April 19, 1877; April 27, 1877; May 10, 1877; June 14, 1877 [a series of six articles written by Canright].

---

**There are reformers and there are critics.**

**The reformers defend the historic teachings of their church in its original purity, and they plead with God and with men that it may be restored to its former condition.** They love their church more than most; for they are willing to stand up and be counted on issues when there is danger that their beloved church is surrendering its heritage for the modernisms of the half-converted.

**The critics do not love the church. They dislike it as well as its teachings.** They would leave it if they had enough backbone to do so. But lacking this, they hang on, year after year, and protest when others wish to do a work for God or implement a return to its earlier, more godly, standards and beliefs.

In a sense, Canright was neither a reformer nor a critic. At his best, he wrote several articles defending the positions and beliefs of the church as they then existed; but generally he gave little concern to upholding the highest principles or urging others to do so.

**D.M. Canright went out because of a personal emotional instability. And such a problem is generally keyed to a personal sin.** He could not live with himself so he separated from the brethren, thinking that this would solve the problem. But, in reality, it was only the brethren which kept him from completely going off the deep end years earlier—and sinking into that continuous state of abysmal dejection that he arrived at within a year after he finally separated from the people of God in 1887.

Canright was neither a petty critic nor a noble reformer. He was an attacker and destroyer. Apparently all he lived for after 1887 was to see the Advent Movement terminated; but events and conversations revealed that what he really desired was to see D.M. Canright exalted in the eyes of men. It was this elusive hope that led to his separation from the church and his subsequent attacks upon it.

Yet it was quite obvious that he did not personally believe the lies that he wrote about his former associ-

ates, the message, and the Movement.

### What lessons can we learn from the life of Dudley Marvin Canright?

(1) **Cling to God and make Him first in your life.** Neither profession nor Christian labor nor friends nor church membership can save you. Every morning you must renew a personal relationship with your Saviour.

(2) **The next step is to walk with Him in humility of heart all the day long.** A proud man is unstable in all his ways. Crying to your Father alone in prayer is the solution. Take time to talk with Him. You need Him so much! Admit your need; practice your need. Tarry long at Calvary and in the Sanctuary. Only there can the proud self be humbled in the dust. There alone can you arise a new man. God can only use humble people. To the degree that they hide in Him they are safe. It is the meek that shall inherit the earth.

(3) **Never be afraid to admit to God that you are small and weak.** You came into this world as a helpless child; why need you imagine now that you are much stronger? Cling to Christ as your only hope, and you will ever be safe—as long as you stay by His side. He will hold you by a hand that will not let go, save by your own choice.

(4) In the church, especially **respect the brethren who have had an experience in Christian things.** These are the brethren of experience. They have had years of insights in careful Christian living that you need. Many may only appear to live for position, prominence, or approval; yet some are men of God. Take note of them. Respect them and consider that which they have to say. You are not an island unto yourself.

(5) Canright had a cyclical personality. (A psychiatrist would probably call it manic-depressive.) If you have a tendency in this direction, recognize your weakness. There are times when, in your grief of mind, you need to lean on the arm of a strong Christian friend. Some people drive away all of their best friends. Then when they need help, there is no one to turn to. **Be the kind of genuine friend that does not drive your loved ones away.** You need them as they need you. But first and foremost—lean on God. Learn to make Him the great strength in your life and, I assure you, He will never fail you as others may.

(6) **It is dangerous to permit the little sins to continue.** Through them, Satan can and will in time take possession of the whole man. Any sin stubbornly clung to will eventually sweep you away. If you need a testimony to the terribleness of sin, consider the life of D.M. Canright. Peevish, pettish, ever willing to blame another instead of himself, he was at the mercy of the evil one. Always trying to rise still higher in the esteem of others, he was continually subject to depths of despair as soon as everything did not seem to go in a manner pleasing to

him.

(7) **Live on an even keel.** Keep your emotions calm and level. It is the high rise that precedes the great fall. Prayer and study of God's Word is the great stabilizer. Apart from Him we are nothing. Remember that little people cannot fall very far. They are on their knees too much of the time. Their concern is not how to rise higher, but how to bow lower before the cross—that grand monument of God's love for mankind.

(8) **Beware of printed literature that extols the critics and attackers of our historic beliefs and the Spirit of Prophecy.** Throw such books and papers in the garbage; refuse to have anything to do with it. Beware of literature that presents either an open or a subtle attack on the Spirit of Prophecy or the historic beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. Whether they know it or not, such authors are led of the devil. Harbor not their writings in your heart or in your home. Do not share them with your friends. They contain poison. In preparing a doctrinal defense to the arguments of Desmond Ford and fellow travelers (see our book, *Biblical Defense*), the present writer was particularly impressed with the willingness of Ford in his 500-page attack (which he called a "thousand-page thesis") to extol the attackers of Ellen White and historic Adventism. The very fact that he would honor such men as D.M. Canright, W.W. Fletcher, and A.L. Ballenger provides a strong indication of the camp in which he stands and the beliefs which he supports.

(9) **Move from principle, stand by principle, live your principles.** Principle is more important than popularity; the favor of God is more valuable than the flattery of men. Do not flinch because men in positions of prominence, in your local church or on higher levels, oppose basic beliefs. —vf

---

## THE MAN WHO BOARDED THE PHANTOM SHIP

# D.M. CANRIGHT

THE STORY OF WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN WHO DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO ATTACKING THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

A phantom is something like a mirage. It may seem mysteriously inviting, but what it offers isn't really there. And when Canright went on board, it led him into something terrible. How he came to write what he wrote and what happened in his own life. An astounding story.

36 pp, 8½ x 11, \$5.00 + \$2.50

---

**THIS IS IDENTICAL TO THE EIGHT-PART TRACT SET YOU HAVE JUST FINISHED READING - NOW AVAILABLE IN BOOK FORMAT SO YOU CAN SHARE IT WITH OTHERS**

## **BOOKS DEFENDING ELLEN WHITE**

**Prophet of the End—224 pp.** Excellent for both believers and those not of our faith. Only 28 cents in boxful quantities.

**Defending the Spirit of Prophecy—272 pp.** An outstanding very low-cost paperback. Discusses a wide range of important topics.

**How God Protected Ellen White's Writings—48 pp.** The history of that protection. Also includes *The Teachings of Vern Bates* and *Searching for Changes in the Testimonies*.

**The Secret Writers Charge—90 pp.** Refuting the charge that other people secretly wrote her writings. This has been enlarged by 16 pages with the addition of *Analysis of the 1919 Bible Conference—Part 1-3 [WM-537-539]* and *Analysis of the Prescott Letter [WM-534]*.

**Editions of Great Controversy—504 pp.** The most complete analysis ever produced of how each edition was written, plus a comparative analysis of the several editions.

**Vindicating Our Prophet—146 pp., now in 176 pp.** **White Tractbook.** Covers many topics, including time setting.

**D.M. Canright—36 pp., 8½ x 11, \$5.00 + \$2.50** See page 210 for a brief description. Outstanding book.

**Go to our website  
*ellenwhitedefend.com*  
for a massive collection of articles  
defending the Spirit of Prophecy writings.**

**LOWEST-COST  
SPIRIT OF PROPHECY BOOKS**

**HARVESTIME BOOKS** has the lowest-cost **Spirit of Prophecy** missionary paperbacks available anywhere. All with full-color covers. Here are some sample prices at the time of this publication. Prices subject to change without notice.

*In boxful quantities plus shipping—*

**84 Great Controversy**, 448 pp - **35¢**

**88 Great Controversy**, 736 pp - **50¢**

**Patriarchs and Prophets**. 800 pp - **88¢**

**Prophets and Kings**, 576 pp - **65¢**

**Desire of Ages**, 856 pp - **80¢**

**Acts of the Apostles**, 488 pp - **60¢**

**Ministry of Healing**, 360 pp - **40¢**

**Christ's Object Lessons**, 376 pp - **39¢**

**Steps to Christ**, 128 pp - **17¢**

*Includes GC chapter 29 and a Sabbath Bible study*

**WE ALSO HAVE A INCREASING NUMBER OF  
SPANISH SPIRIT OF PROPHECY BOOKS**

**Bible Readings**, 648 pp - **88¢**

**You Can Quit Tobacco**, 104 pp - **22¢**

*Includes a Sabbath Bible study*

**Beyond Pitcairn**, 256 pp - **30¢**

*A complete book about the Sabbath*

**National Sunday Law Crisis**, 112 pp - **20¢**

*— Plus over a dozen more outstanding missionary books!*

**HARVESTIME BOOKS - BOX 300 - ALTAMONT, TN 37301  
CREDIT CARD ORDERS: 931-692-2777**