

# **The Work of Ellen White**

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## **Ellen White and Her Visions**

One of Mr. Canright's most bitter attacks is launched against the life and work of Mrs. E. G. White, who, until the time of her death, was a respected, beloved worker in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He devotes an entire chapter to her, and frequently attacks her in other chapters. Besides, there was published under his name, just about the time of his death, a volume of 201 pages devoted entirely to an effort to discredit her work.

We do not hesitate to say that Seventh-day Adventists recognize in Mrs. E. G. White's work a special manifestation of the gift of the Spirit spoken of in the Bible as the "Spirit of prophecy." (See Revelation 19:10.) Nor is this a strange or new doctrine, since among the spiritual gifts promised to the church, and ranking with apostles, evangelists, teachers, etc., is the gift of prophecy, and its work has been recognized by the church in all ages.

Thus Paul speaks of these gifts as follows: "Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." 1 Corinthians 12:27, 28. In speaking of the last stage of the church of Christ, John the revelator describes it and the experience of its members thus: "The dragon was wroth with the woman [the church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17.

The church of God, here spoken of as a remnant, and against whom the dragon (Satan) will be especially angry in the last days, was foreseen as a commandment-keeping company who would have the "testimony of Jesus Christ." if we inquire as to what is meant by the "testimony of Jesus," we find an answer to our query in Revelation 19:10, where the angel, (Gabriel) clearly explained to John that "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." These two characteristics will therefore distinguish the true remnant church of God in the latter end of the history of the world. Its members will be commandment keepers, and the Spirit of prophecy will be manifested among them.

To this also agree the words of Paul' recorded in 1 Corinthians 1:54: "That in everything you are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that you come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let it be noted that as the church waits "for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," she is to come behind in no gift. Therefore, all the gifts of the Spirit are to be found in her. And lest there should be a question about the gift of prophecy, this is especially mentioned by the inspired writer: "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you." Verse 6. And "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy," or the prophetic gift. Seventh-day Adventists believe that this gift of the Spirit was early manifested among them through the work and writings of Mrs. White. They believe that just as in past ages God raised up prophets and messengers to perform a special work for the church, and to counsel and warn God's people in times of special peril and need, so He raised up Mrs. White and bestowed upon her the gift of prophecy; and that He has used her life and work to bless and unify the church.

Someone perchance may be ready to say, "Then you have another Bible." We answer, No. That God sends special counsel, admonition, and help through some specially chosen servant is no evidence that the Bible is thus added to or taken from. Were there not prophets and prophetesses in the apostolic church who gave counsel and instruction to the church in their day, but whose writings did not become a part of the Bible?

Luke tells us of one "Philip the evangelist," and says of his family, "The same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." Acts 21:9. Here, then, in the early church, were four prophetesses from one family. And while it is definitely stated that they exercised their gift and "did prophesy," yet no prophecy of theirs is recorded in the Bible. In 1 Chronicles 29:29, 30, we read of two other prophets whom God raised up to do a work of local import, who wrote books, and whose influence extended over Israel and over all the kingdoms of the countries round about, and yet whose writings form no part of the Bible, which was handed down to succeeding ages. "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries."

Why should Nathan the prophet or Gad the seer have written books under inspiration of God, and then the books be allowed to be lost? We answer, Because God desired to give to the church in that day special counsel and instruction, warnings and entreaties that applied especially to that time and age, and that would not be "present truth," to succeeding ages.

The Bible contains the revealed will of God, and if followed, is sufficient to furnish men thoroughly unto all good works. (See 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.) It contains all the instruction necessary to salvation. But the difficulty is that men are so prone to wander away from the written word and ignore its silent witness, that it has been necessary from time to time for God to raise up an Elijah to call the people back to the worship of the true God and the keeping of His commandments, and to destroy the heresies brought into the church by the priests of Baal. (See 1 Kings 18:17-41). Such is the work God has done through Mrs. White, and for this cause she was raised up. Her appeal was ever to the Bible. Her entire life was spent in a supreme effort to lead men to a clear understanding of the Book of God. She never claimed verbal inspiration for her writings; but she claimed that through the gift of the Spirit special light was shed upon the written word, and this has been written out in her own words and given to the church and the world for their edification.

We dare say that no candid person can read through one of the many volumes from her pen without being constrained to admit that thus many old familiar Bible texts are made to shine forth with new brilliancy and that many obscure passages have become clear and understandable. New rays of light are thus received, not because they are found in Mrs. White's writings, but because they now clearly shine forth from the Old Book. It is not a new or additional Bible that the church needs today, but inspired counsel that can help the befogged minds of the people of the world to grasp the glorious truths of the Bible we have. Does someone reason that this gift is no longer necessary to the church? We inquire then, What mean the words of Peter when he said: "It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on My servants, and on My hand maidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy"? Acts 2:17, 18.

Here is a positive statement that the gift of prophecy will be seen in the church in the last days. And why not? Has God entirely removed Himself from His people? Is He not as able today as in former times to give them needed counsel, reproof, and encouragement? Has the channel of communication between heaven and earth become so obstructed that nothing more can flow through? We think not, for in these last days of abounding iniquity God will have, as He has had in former ages, "a glorious church, not

having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but . . . holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27), and He promises to enrich it with "all utterance," and "all knowledge," through the full bestowal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thus the church will "come behind in no gift," as it waits "for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (See 1 Corinthians 1:5-7.)

When Mr. Canright was preaching for the Seventh day Adventists, he was well aware that they made a distinction between the Bible and the writings of Mrs. White. And while still among them he wrote a clear testimony to that effect. Here it is:

"Right here let me say that we do not throw away the Bible, and take Mrs. White's visions instead. No; if there is a class' of people under heaven who believe the Bible strongly, who love it devotedly, who study it and go to it for everything, it is Seventh-day Adventists. Here is our storehouse of doctrine and truth. We preach this everywhere and always. We have no other authority. We go to this to test and prove the genuineness of Sister White's labors and visions. If they did not harmonize with this in every particular, we would reject them. 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 no time here to take up an argument on spiritual gifts, or enter into a lengthy statement of her [Mrs. White's] labors, their nature, 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; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 1 Thess. 5:1-21, etc." D. M. CANRIGHT in Review and Herald, April 19, 1877.

In his later statement that "they [Seventh-day Adventists] have another Bible, just the same as the Mormons have" *Adventism Renounced*, p. 136), Mr. Canright stands convicted by his former testimony. It seems difficult to believe that he was not willfully misrepresenting the facts as to the distinction well understood by the Seventh-day Adventists between the Bible and Mrs. White's writings. Mrs. White has published to the world her own estimate of the absolute and final authority of the Scriptures, and of the 'relationship of her writings to the Bible. The following is from her pen: "In His word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience. 'Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.' 2 Tim. 3:16, 17, R.V. "Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and the guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Savior, to open the word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings. And since it was the Spirit of God that inspired the Bible, it is impossible that the teaching of the Spirit should ever be contrary to that of the word.

"The Spirit was not given-nor can it ever be bestowed -to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. Says the apostle John, 'Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are, gone out into the world.' 1 John 4:1. And Isaiah declares, 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Isaiah 8:20." *The Great Controversy*, p. vii.

Mrs. White always emphatically declared that her writings were not to be, considered an addition to the Word of God, and that anyone who claims this for them puts them "in a false light." Her Testimonies were intended to bring men to "a clearer understanding" of the Scriptures. On one occasion she wrote: 'Brother R. would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the Testimonies is an addition to the word of God; but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people to His word, to give them a clearer

understanding of it.' 'The word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind, and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the word of God their study, are found living in direct - opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed Testimonies, bringing them back to the word that they have neglected to follow.' 'The word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the Testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles.' Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 663, 664.

### ***Mrs. White's Character and Work***

In his book Mr. Canright makes damaging statements regarding the character and personality of Mrs. White. Before quoting some of these, let us note a former statement regarding her character and work, written by him before he left the Seventh-day Adventists. The following was written by Mr. Canright in 1877, while he was still an Adventist:

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

"I know Sister White to be an unassuming, modest, kindhearted, noble woman. These traits in her character are not simply put on and cultivated, but they spring gracefully and easily from her natural disposition. She is not self-conceited, self-righteous, and self important, as fanatics always are. I have frequently come in contact with fanatical persons, and I have always found them to be full of pretensions, full of pride, ready to give their opinion, boastful of their holiness, etc. But I have ever found Sister 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 Sister White speak hundreds of times, have read all her Testimonies through and through, most of them many times, and I have never been able to find one immoral sentence in the whole of them, or anything that is not strictly pure and Christian; nothing that leads away from the Bible, or from Christ; but there I find the most earnest appeals to obey God, to love Jesus, to believe the Scriptures, and to search them constantly. I have received great spiritual benefit times without number, from the Testimonies. Indeed, I never read them without feeling reprov'd 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.

"For thirty years these Testimonies have been believed and read among our people. How has it affected them? Has it led them away from the law of God? Has it lead them to give up faith in Christ? Has it led them to throw aside the Bible? Has it led them to be a corrupt, immoral people? I know that they will compare favorably with any other Christian denomination. One thing I have remarked, and that is, that the most bitter opponents of the visions of Sister 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 an 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." Review and Herald, April 26, 1877.

This earnest tribute to the character of Mrs. White, based on an intimate acquaintance of eighteen years, was written by Mr. Canright in 1877. In 1885 he again bore testimony to his confidence in the integrity of Mrs. White's work:

"The tendency and influence of the Testimonies is not, like the teachings of Spiritualist mediums, to lead away from the Bible, away from God, and away from faith in Christ; nor, like Mormonism, to lead to sensuality, dishonesty, and crime; but they lead to faith in the Holy Scriptures, devotion to God, and a life of humility and holiness. Can a corrupt tree bear good fruit? Jesus said not. What is a tree known by? Its fruit. Here is a tree which has been standing among us for forty years, and bearing fruit. What has been the nature of that fruit? What have been its effects upon those who have partaken the most of it? "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. . . .

"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 Sister 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." Ibid., Feb. 10, 1885.

These testimonials regarding Mrs. White and her writings express the sum of his convictions resulting from twenty-six out of the twenty-eight years of his labors among the Seventh-day Adventists. What shall we say regarding the consistency of entirely opposite statements, when we are asked to accept his derogatory caricature of this same individual, written just a few years later? At that time he declared: "I long studied Mrs. White to determine for myself her real character till her case is clear to my mind." Seventh day Adventism Renounced, p. 137.

Let us note a few of his most flagrant contradictions on this point. From his volume under review we quote the following statements published in 1889. Mr. Canright the Baptist speaking: "She has a harsh, uncharitable spirit.... Her severity and harshness have driven many to despair." Ibid., p. 160.

In 1877 Mr. Canright the Adventist said: "I know Sister White to be an unassuming, modest, kindhearted, noble woman. These traits in her character are not simply put on and cultivated, but they spring gracefully and easily from her natural disposition."

In 1889 he said she "is simply a religious enthusiast, and a fanatic," and "is always telling what great things she has done." "Hear her laud herself."

In 1877 he testified of her: "She is not self-conceited, self-righteous, and self-important, as fanatics always are. I have ever found Sister White the reverse of all this."

Of her writings he said, in 1889: "These inspired 'Testimonies' now embrace ten bound volumes. Thus they have another Bible, just the same as the Mormons have.' Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, p. 136.

In 1877 he said of these same writings that there is "nothing that leads away from the Bible, or from Christ"; and in 1885, just four years before he wrote his renunciation of Adventism, he added: "The tendency and influence of her Testimonies is not, like the teachings of Spiritualist mediums, to lead away from the Bible, away from God, and away from faith in Christ; nor like Mormonism."

Now we submit to our readers that Mr. Canright could not have been sincere in both instances when these conflicting statements were made about the character and work of the same person. If he was sincere in his published utterances regarding Mrs. White in 1877, when he claims to have had eighteen years' acquaintance with her, and in 1885, at which time his acquaintance had lengthened to twenty-six years, then he could not have been sincere in 1889 when he clearly contradicted all that he had previously written of her. On the other hand, if he was sincere in his later statements, it surely proves insincerity on his part in what he had formerly said. Mr. Canright, after renouncing Adventism, also said of Mrs. White:

"Mrs. White received no school education, except a few weeks when a child. She, like Joanna Southcott, Ann Lee, and Joseph Smith, was wholly illiterate, not knowing the simplest rules of grammar." Ibid., P. 35.

What he failed to tell in connection with his portrayal of Mrs. White's gross ignorance, is how such a person managed to produce "ten bound volumes" which he calls the Seventh-day Adventist Bible. Usually persons in such a terrible state of mind and body, and with only a few weeks' schooling, do not become great authors.

After Mr. Canright published his book, this same woman continued to write and publish until the number of volumes produced by her increased to thirty-six, besides hundreds of articles published in religious journals, and many tracts and pamphlets. Her published volumes include some enlarged revisions of earlier publications, and when laid flat and stacked one on top of another, make a column higher than a man's head.

Many of her writings are highly regarded by Christians of all denominations. Her little volume Steps to Christ ranks among the best sellers of religious books published in modern times, and has been translated into more than a score of languages. Her large Conflict of the Ages Series-Patriarchs and Prophets, Prophets and Kings, The Desire of Ages, Acts of the Apostles, and The Great Controversy—are studied by many ministers of other churches, and pronounced by them to be among the most helpful commentaries. Her work Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, has brought blessings to thousands. Her volume Gospel Workers insists upon a standard of purity and holiness for the ministry unsurpassed by any other publication, and the volumes of counsels to the church, of which Mr. Canright speaks, have brought light and courage, as well as instruction and reproof, to their many readers.

Mrs. White's books on the principles of Christian education, written for the guidance of teachers in the denominational colleges and schools, have been commended by educators of the world. The head of one training college for teachers, in one of the world's greatest cities, gave many copies of the book Education to his graduates, recommending it as the best book he knew on educational principles. In one country the staff of the university brought out the book Education in part, translating it from the English, and the university issued it for the benefit of educators.

Strange, this! An ignorant, sickly woman, with a bad temper, starts on a mission of deception, gets a following of People as illiterate as herself, and then, behold, she becomes a well known author, producing some of the most prized religious books; goes on long lecture tours through many countries of the world, where thousands hang on her gracious words and are led to Christ through her labors. And stranger still, these ignorant followers of hers start colleges in all continents, conduct a Grade A medical school, operate sanitariums and large publishing houses in many lands, become noted for their piety, and extend their missions to nearly all countries of the earth. One would hardly have expected such excellent results from such an inauspicious beginning.

Shortly before Mr. Canright's change of church affiliation from the Seventh-day Adventist to the Baptist, he gave the following unsolicited testimonial for one of these books: "I have read many books, but never one which has interested me so intensely and impressed me so profoundly as Volume IV of 'The Great Controversy,' by Sister White. . . . The historical part is good, but that which was of the most intense interest to me, was the last part, beginning with 'The Origin of Evil.' The ideas concerning the nature and attributes of God, the character of Christ, and the rebellion of Lucifer in heaven, carry with them their own proof of inspiration. They moved the depths of my soul as nothing else ever did. I feel that I have a new and higher conception of the goodness and forbearance of God, the awful wickedness of Satan, and the tender love of Christ. I wish everybody could read it, whether of our people or not. Get it, brethren, and read it care fully." Review and Herald, Jan. 6, 1885, P. 9. We believe that to the unbiased reader it will already be apparent that in his eagerness to deal Seventh-day Adventists a fatal blow, Mr. Canright has caricatured the picture of Mrs. White. The things he says of her now, and the facts of her life work and influence as recognized by himself in earlier years, cannot be harmonized.

### ***The "Mistakes" Of Mrs. White***

In 1882 Elder Canright voluntarily left his ministry for the Seventh day Adventists and retired to a farm. Of his attitude of mind at this time we have a description in a handwritten letter written from Otsego, Michigan, December 9, 1883, addressed to "Dear Brother Long":

"I am farming now, which keeps me very busy and hard at work. This is what I naturally love to do the best of anything, and so I feel well contented. I have entirely given up preaching, and have no intention of ever engaging in it again."

"My faith in the whole thing has been shaken. As far as I can see at present much of it may be true or it may not be. I do not feel positive about any of these speculative points as I used to."

"I am a member of the church still, and do all I can to help it. But if I were situated differently, would just as soon join some other church."

In November, 1884, a general meeting was held at Otsego, during which Elder Canright's faith was renewed, and he bore the following testimony:

"It seems to me, dear brethren, that my whole soul is now bound up in this present truth. I have told my brethren that if the world were before me, the truth is so dear that I know I could make them see it. I have also said that I do not believe any man takes as much pleasure in worldly pursuits as I do in this. 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 is far away. Then he finds it hard to get back again. This was my case exactly. I did not see as the brethren did, and so I concluded I would leave the work for the time being. So I went to farming...."

“Now I want to say that I have been changed right around in my feelings and convictions. I do not say I am fully satisfied in everything; but I believe the truth as I used to believe it.” Review and Herald, Dec. 2, 1884.

Soon after this he contributed to the Review and Herald an article addressed “To Those in Doubting Castle.” As to his personal experience he testified:

“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.” Ibid., Feb. 10, 1885.

In explaining his doubts regarding the Testimonies and his renewal of faith in them, he lays down the following general counsel:

“Are there not difficulties in these writings hard to explain? passages which seem to conflict one with another, or with some passage in the Bible, or with facts? I freely grant for myself that there are some passages which bother me, and which I do not know how to explain. But I believe them for all that, just as I do the Bible. There are many passages in the Bible which I should have to admit I could not explain nor harmonize. If any man says that he can explain and reconcile all the statements of the Scriptures, he simply shows his self-conceit and ignorance. Yet I profoundly believe the Bible for all that. . . . “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 is true of the Testimonies.” -Ibid.

It is well to consider these principles in dealing with some of the passages in the writings of Mrs. White that are later given by Mr. Canright as evidence that the Testimonies are unreliable and faulty. Considering the vast number of pages combed by the critics of these writings, there is a surprisingly small number of points that can be brought forward in the effort to belittle the work of their author. The reader of that part of Mr. Canright’s book dealing with the teachings of Mrs. White will note that there are many quotations of a line or two here and a brief sentence there, woven together by arguments in such a way as to make them serve the purpose of the critic. Most of the supposed difficulties would disappear were the context of the quotations given.

Striking examples of this are seen in a number of garbled sentences taken from their setting, which he lists under the heading, “Her Predictions About the Rebellion a Failure.” We will notice these in order. He cites first the words of Mrs. White: “The system of slavery, which has ruined our nation, is left to live and stir up another rebellion.” Then our critic comments: “Was slavery left to live and stir up another

rebellion? Now we know that that statement is utterly untrue.” Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, p. 148. In its setting, this sentence quoted from Mrs. White will be seen not to have been intended as her prediction. It is a statement of the thoughts of others, as expressing their feelings at that time. Here is the entire paragraph, a reading of which will remove all grounds for listing this as a mistake”:

“Those who have ventured to leave their homes and sacrifice their lives to exterminate slavery, are dissatisfied. They see no good results from the war, only the preservation of the Union, and for this thousands of lives must be sacrificed and homes made desolate. Great numbers have wasted away and expired in hospitals; others, have been taken prisoners by the rebels, a fate more to be dreaded than death. In view of all this, they inquire, If we succeed in quelling this rebellion, what has been gained? They can only answer, discouragingly, Nothing. That which caused the rebellion is not removed. The system of slavery, which has ruined our nation, is left to live and stir up another rebellion. The feelings of thousands of our soldiers are bitter. They suffer the greatest privations; these they would willingly endure, but they find they have been deceived, and they are dispirited. Our leading men are perplexed; their hearts are failing them for fear. They fear to proclaim freedom to the slaves of the rebels, for by so doing they will exasperate that portion of the South who have not joined the rebellion but are strong slavery men.’ Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 254, 255 (dated Jan. 4, 1862). Thus it is seen that Mrs. White was simply expressing the fears of others as to what the outcome of the Civil War might be, rather than predicting that it would surely be so.

“Again,” continues Mr. Canright, as an instance of a failure of prediction, “‘It seemed impossible to have the war conducted successfully.’ Another failure, for it was conducted successfully.” Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, p. 148.

The setting of this sentence also shows that it was intended not as a prediction, but merely as a statement of fact as it existed at the time of writing, which was during the Civil War. Note the statement with its context:

“A great share of the volunteers enlisted, fully believing that the result of the war would be to abolish slavery. Others enlisted intending to be very careful to keep slavery just as it is, but to put down the rebellion and preserve the Union. And then to make the matter still more perplexing’ and uncertain, some of the officers in command are strong pro-slavery men, whose sympathies are all with the South, yet who are opposed to a separate government. It seems impossible to have the war conducted successfully, for many in our own ranks are continually working to favor the South, and our armies have been repulsed, and unmercifully slaughtered, on account of the management of these pro-slavery men.’ Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 256 (dated Jan. 4, 1862).

In its setting the statement quoted cannot be criticized. Isolated from the obvious reason contained in the latter part of the sentence, and with even the tense of the verb changed in order to make it appear like a prediction, it gives a meaning not intended by the writer. “Here is another, ‘This nation will yet be humbled into the dust.’ Was it? No.” Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, p. 148.

Considering the long, sorrowful record of defeat and disaster of the Northern Army during the’ first year of the Civil War, before the tide of victory turned to its side, it is hardly a stretch of language to admit that it was then humbled in the dust, though it later rose to triumph. Mr. Canright further challenges Mrs. White in these words: “Again, ‘When England does declare war, all nations will have an interest of their own to serve, and there will be general war.’ Did anything of this kind happen? No.” Ibid.

The following statement taken from one of Mrs. White’s books and from which Mr. Canright has extracted the above sentence, can hardly be said to be a prediction. It was written during an early period in the Civil War, was simply picturing conditions as they existed at the time of writing, and reference is made to the influences which were at work among the outside nations. She says:

“England is studying whether it is best to take advantage of the present weak condition of our nation, and venture to make war upon her. She is weighing the matter, and trying to sound other nations. She fears, if she should commence war abroad, that she would be weak at home and that other nations would take advantage of her weakness. Other nations are making quiet yet active preparations for war, and are hoping that England will make war with our nation, for then they would improve the opportunity to be revenged on her for the advantage she has taken of them in the past, and the injustice done them. A portion of the Queen’s subjects are waiting a favorable opportunity to break their yoke; but if England thinks it will pay, she will not hesitate a moment to improve her opportunities to exercise her power, and humble our nation. When England does declare war, all nations will have an interest of their own to serve, and there will be general war, general confusion. Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 259.

It seems to us that the context here shows clearly that it was still a question whether or not England would declare war. “If England thinks it will pay, she will not hesitate.” England was represented as studying whether or not it would pay to make war upon America. She was “weighing the matter, and trying to sound out other nations.” ‘ She was fearful of weakness at home, etc. But it is stated that should she finally decide to launch upon a war with America, all nations would then have an interest of their own to serve, and there would be general war and confusion. But even granting, for the sake of argument, that this was intended as a prediction, and that at the time when Mr. Canright wrote his book nothing of the kind had happened, if he had written his book this side of 1914, when England and Germany declared war and threw the civilized world into a death struggle, would he so flippantly have held this prediction up to ridicule? Or had he written at the beginning of World War II, would he have written as he did? For with both world wars came experiences like that which was here foretold. The prediction was literally fulfilled in all its details.

“Once more, ‘Had our nation remained united, it would have had strength; but divided it must fall.’ How it did fall!” Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, p. 148. Here again the context shows that this statement quoted by Mr. Canright is expressive merely of the view point of other nations, and is not a prediction by Mrs. White at all: “The weakness of our government is fully open before other nations, and they now conclude that it is because it was not a monarchical government, and they admire their own government, and look down, some with pity, others with contempt, upon our nation, which they have regarded as the most powerful upon the globe. Had our nation remained united, it would have had strength; but divided it must fall.” Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 259, 260.

This entire chapter, from which these few quotations are garbled by Mr. Canright, may be found in Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, pages 253-260. The utterances stand today just as they were written early in the Civil War, and Seventh-day Adventists still put this forth, confident that those who will read it in its entirety, and with its obvious meaning, and compare it with history as it has been confirmed by later records, will find nothing to criticize. Instead of predicting final failure for the North in the Civil War, Mrs., White clearly intimated when and by what means the tide of victory would be turned. Here it is in this same chapter:

“The manner in which the poor slaves have been treated has led them to believe that their masters have told them the truth in these things. And yet a national fast is proclaimed! Says the Lord, ‘Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?’ When our nation observes the fast which God has chosen [ie., liberating the slaves], then will He accept their prayers as far as the war is concerned; but now they enter not into His ear.” Page 258.

At the lowest ebb in the fortunes of war with the South, President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. From that time began the successes of the North, soon, resulting in victory. Can it be

possible that Mr. Canright overlooked this prediction, which certainly was fulfilled? It must be so, for he says:

"I could give scores of such quotations all through her writings, showing how they have failed, always and everywhere" [italics ours]. *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, p. 149. In an attempt to arouse patriotic indignation against Mrs. White, Mr. Canright quotes one other isolated sentence from an article on "The Rebellion." This perversion of her meaning and misrepresentation of her loyalty should be noticed:

"Again, 'Blood has been poured out like water, and for naught.' Was it for naught, you brave soldiers? You liberated slaves? You freed nation?" *Ibid.*, pp. 148, 149. The context shows that Mrs. White was here referring to blood that had, been needlessly shed by the mismanagement of certain men in the Northern Army who were in sympathy with slavery. No one rejoiced more over the "liberated slaves" and the "freed nation" than did she. This is what she wrote: "Many professed Union men, holding important positions, are disloyal at heart. Their only object in taking up arms was to preserve the Union as it was, and slavery with it. They would heartily chain down the slave to his life of galling bondage, had they the privilege. Such have a strong degree of sympathy with the South. Blood has been poured out like water, and for naught. In every town and village there is mourning. Wives are mourning for their husbands, mothers for their sons, and sisters for their brothers." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 367.

When the reader reflects that this statement was made during the war, and not after, the true meaning is clearly understood. Again Mr. Canright quotes from Mrs. White: 'The nations are now getting angry.' *Early Writings*, p. 29." He then remarks: "That was thirty-eight years ago. It takes, a long time for them to get fighting mad." *Seventh day Adventism Renounced*, p. 146.

Here again Mr. Canright spoke too soon by several years, and was too optimistic that "peace on earth and good will toward men" was to be the order of the day. We ask, did they not get fighting mad before and during the recent world wars? And is there yet any assurance of lasting peace among the nations? It would appear that in this matter, as in very many others, Mr. Canright, instead of Mrs. White, was the one who made a mistake and figured things out wrongly.

### ***The Reform Dress***

"One of the worst blunders Mrs. White ever made," says Mr. Canright, "was the move she made on dress." *Ibid.*, p. 149.

The issue thus raised is due to the fact that at a time when tight corsets were worn, when hoops were in fashion, and when women's dresses were dragging behind and mopping up the filth of the streets, Mrs. White, like some other reformers, advocated a reform dress for women. She urged that women's dresses should "clear the filth of the streets" at least an inch or two, and that nine inches would be better; that for warmth an appropriate undergarment should be worn to protect the lower limbs - pantalettes, these were sometimes called. Now to Mr. Canright this "was a shame and a disgrace." "Think," says he, "of a modest woman on the street with pants on, and her dress cut halfway up to the knees!" - *Ibid.*

And yet a little later the shears in the hands of fashion leaders began to work, and inch by inch the skirts were clipped until they were six to nine inches from, the ground, then just below the knee, then above the knee. True, conservative and modest women did not carry the clipping process quite so far, but stopped at about nine inches from the ground-just where Mrs. White and other reformers of her day advocated that the skirts should stop. And today a modest woman can go about the streets with her "dress cut halfway up to the knees" and not have her modesty questioned in the least degree. In fact, the length of skirt is of the conservative style, and is taken as an evidence of modesty on the part of the

wearer. The reform dress, therefore, only slightly modified from what was originally advocated, is now the prevailing style, minus, however, the protection to the lower limbs suggested by Mrs. White.

Without giving undue space to this subject, we think attention should be called to the most glaring misrepresentations, made by the use of garbled quotations, in Mr. Canright's treatment of this question. As an instance of direct contradiction, Mr. Canright quotes two sentences from Mrs. White, out of their setting, thus: "God would not have His people adopt the so-called reform dress" (Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 421), and a statement written four years later, "God would now have His people adopt the reform dress." Ibid., p. 525. And here is Mr. Canright's explanation of this seeming contradiction:

"What occasioned this change in the mind of the Lord? The answer is easy: In the time between the two revelations Mrs. White had spent some time at Dr. Jackson's Home, Dansville, New York. Here a short dress with pants was worn, and she fell in with the idea, and soon had a vision requiring its adoption as above." Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, p. 149.

The whole question becomes clear when it is stated that there were two distinct styles of dress referred to. In the first quotation let the reader notice that it is the "so-called" reform dress, that was condemned by Mrs. White. The one referred to thus is what was known as the "American costume." In this costume the dress was very short, and the pants worn made the wearer look mannish. That Mrs. White was consistent in condemning this, even while recommending another style of "reform dress," is indicated by the following quotation from a report of meetings written by James White:

"During the meetings up to this date, Mrs. White has taken the opportunity to explain and harmonize her Testimonies on the dress question, showing the difference between the reform dress and the 'American costume,' that while the first mentioned style of dress reaches to about the top of a lady's boot, the 'American costume' does not reach to the knee." Review and Herald, Jan. 15, 1867. Although Mr. Canright was, as we shall prove, familiar with this distinction, and with Mrs. White's consistent attitude in condemning the one while recommending a better, yet he sets out as an apparent contradiction two statements, one referring to the "American costume," and the other the reform dress as it was later developed. That the reader may be assured that it was this ultra-short "American costume" that was condemned, it is necessary only to consider Mrs. White's words in their setting. Here is the quotation as it stands:

"I saw that God's order has been reversed, and His special directions disregarded by those who adopt the American costume. I was referred to Deuteronomy 22:5: 'The woman shall not wear that which pertains unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.' "God would not have His people adopt the so-called reform dress. It is immodest apparel, wholly unfitted for the modest, humble followers of Christ." - Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 421.

Elder Canright's plausible explanation as to Mrs. White's change of mind, though in fact there was no change, is that she adopted a style that she saw at the "Home" in Dansville. We are fortunate in having in her own handwriting a letter written by her during that visit to which Mr. Canright makes reference. Here is what she wrote regarding the dress as she saw it worn there: "They have all styles of dress here. Some are very becoming, if not so short. We shall get patterns from this place, and I think we can get out a style of dress more healthful than we now wear, and yet not be bloomer or the American costume. Our dresses, according to my idea, should be from four to six inches shorter than now worn, and should in no case reach lower than the top of the heel of the shoe, and could be a little shorter even than this with all modesty. I am going to get up a style of dress on my own hook, which will accord perfectly with that which has been shown me. Health demands it. Our feeble women must dispense with heavy skirts and tight waists if they value health. We shall never imitate Miss Dr. Austin or Mrs. Dr.

York. They dress very much like men. We shall imitate or follow no fashion we have ever yet seen. We shall institute a fashion which will be both economical and healthy. "From a letter to "Brother and Sister Lockwood," dated September, 1864.

From this letter it will be noted that all that Mrs. White claimed as being given by revelation regarding dress was the principles that should prevail. It is evident that she was seeking a style which she should recommend, a style that should be modest, healthful, becoming, and economical. She, with others connected with the Health Institute in Battle Creek, worked out the details of a costume that was adopted by the ladies at the health institution, and so recommended itself by its good sense that some of the patients adopted it, and took patterns away with them upon their return home.

Regarding some of the details connected with the introduction at the Health Institute of a reform dress in harmony with the principles of health and modesty, we have the following statement:

"When the Health Reform Institute was established, the physicians decided that a better style of dress for women than the long, dragging skirts, was desirable. . . . 'The physicians declared it was not only desirable, but necessary in the treatment of some cases; and that being so, it would be useless and wrong to receive such cases without adopting what they were assured was essential to effect cures. Again, it seemed to be understood and conceded by all health reformers who had investigated the subject, that a reform dress was necessary, and if it was not adopted at the Institute, a class of patients would surely be driven to other institutions, where something different from the prevailing fashion was adopted. Therefore to neglect this reform would be to sacrifice the best interests of the Institute, and of a certain class who most needed its benefits....

"As might be expected, when it was first being adopted at the Institute there was not complete uniformity, but the taste and choice of the wearers had much to do with the length and appearance of the dresses worn....

"At my request the physicians at the Institute named a number of its inmates whose dresses they considered as nearly correct in make and appearance as could be found to that number among the varieties. I measured the height of twelve, with the distance of their dresses from the floor. They varied in height from five feet to five seven inches, and the distance of the dresses from the floor was from 8 to 10 1/2 inches. The medium, nine inches, was decided to be the right distance, and is adopted as the standard.' – Health Reformer, March, 1868.

It is true that positive testimony was borne by Mrs. White regarding the need of dress reform, and certain principles that should be adopted; yet it was the physicians and others at the sanitarium, as shown above doubtless in collaboration with Mrs. White, who was then living in Battle Creek, who experimented, designed, modeled, and recommended it as a dress that conformed to health principles. She urged its adoption, as being consistent with the principles she had been shown.

At the time when the dress reform was agitated by Mrs. White, it was impossible to devise any sort of healthful costume that would not be so far from the prevailing fashions as to arouse ridicule from the devotees of fashion. In later years, when more healthful styles were adopted, Mrs. White expressed her pleasure that Christians could wear healthful and modest clothes without appearing singular. Mr. Canright says of the reform dress:

"It created a terrible commotion. Husbands swore, brothers refused to walk with their sisters, men sneered, and boys hooted." Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, pp. 149, 150. Mrs. White, however, was not responsible for any trouble in families created by the reform dress for she distinctly cautioned her sisters against taking a course to which there was opposition on the part of their husbands:

“Sisters who have opposing husbands have asked my advice in regard to their adopting the short dress contrary to the wishes of the husband. I advised them to wait. . . The opposition which many might receive should they adopt, the dress reform, would be more injurious to health than the dress would be beneficial.” Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 522.

But not all husbands were, as Mr. Canright intimates, opposed to the new costume recommended by Mrs. White. Here is the testimony of one husband:

“The modesty of the short dress is not the smallest thing to be considered. Any one that has traveled as much as I have, can bear testimony with me to the immodesty of the hoop skirt. A lady with one on very seldom enters a carriage, omnibus, car, and such places, without immodestly exposing herself. But with the reform dress on, all exposure is entirely avoided. After seeing it worn, I think it is the most modest dress I have ever seen, and I am not alone in this opinion.” Review and Herald, June 18, 1867.

This husband was D. M. Canright, who expressed this opinion before he severed himself from the Seventh day Adventists. And we have the most positive evidence that Mr. Canright, understood the difference between the American costume, which Mrs. White from the first condemned as immodest, and the reform dress which was adopted. In a report of a meeting, in which he set forth the advantages of the reform dress, he says, immediately after the paragraph just quoted: “Nearly all decided in favour of it, and others had but very slight objections to it. . . . The reform dress and the American costume are two very different things. All could readily see this.’ Ibid.

In giving the history of the reform dress agitation, it should be recognized that good judgment was not always used by those who made the change. And no one more than Mrs. White deplored this fact. Thus she says: “In some places there is great opposition to the short dress. But when I see some dresses worn by the sisters, I do not wonder that people are disgusted, and condemn the dress. Where the dress is represented as it should be, all candid persons are constrained to admit that it is modest and convenient.” Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 521.

The reader who desires to judge for himself as to the good sense manifested in Mrs. White’s advocacy of a health reform dress, is referred to a chapter entitled “The Reform Dress,” in Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, pages 521-525.

### ***Was Mrs. White Illiterate?***

Was Mrs. White an illiterate fanatic as she is pictured by Mr. Canright? We answer: Ask anyone who has ever heard her speak or who has ever read her five large books in the Conflict of the Ages Series. Let any candid man or woman take up one of these volumes and read it through, and then answer the question. These books, while written in simple language, are elegant in style and profound in their teaching. They appeal to both the intellect and the heart. Preachers from other denominations have often quoted from her writings because of the richness of expression and clarity of thought found there. Is this the work of an illiterate fanatic? The question answers itself.

It is true that Mrs. White did not have the advantage of a college education; neither did Abraham Lincoln, nor Professor Butler, president of the University of Missouri, who stopped school at the age of thirteen, neither did James nor John nor Matthew. Were they therefore ignorant fanatics? If her scholastic attainments were meager, then all the greater glory attaches to God for the mighty work He accomplished through her. She was probably one of the best educated religious leaders of her day, not in technical, worldly wisdom, but in an understanding of the Scriptures. Like Apollos of Alexandria, she was “eloquent.... and mighty in the Scriptures.” Acts 18:24. The fact that she had been handicapped in her schooling and yet produced such marvelous volumes filled with truths so deep and sublime as to stir

the very souls of untold thousands, is one of the strongest testimonies that can be borne to the fact that God was with her.

Of Jesus we are told that as He taught in the temple in Jerusalem, "the Jews marveled, saying, How knows this man letters, having never learned?" John 7:15.

There is an education that comes through personal study, close application, prayer, and meditation, that may far exceed that to be had in the schools of the world, and this is what Mrs. White had. And besides this, those who were best acquainted with her life and work, and who are the closest students of her teachings, have no hesitancy in saying that, through the gift of prophecy she had access to stores of divine knowledge that enabled her to flood the Scriptures with a light and radiance hitherto unseen since the papal apostasy of the Dark Ages all but obliterated Bible truth from the minds of men.

On one occasion the leading citizens of Battle Creek, Michigan, arranged a meeting for her to speak on some subject of her own choosing, and publicly invited her in the Daily Journal to do so on the occasion of her visit there after a camp meeting which she had attended in Grand Rapids. She complied, and spoke to a large congregation. This shows clearly whether she was considered a fanatic, or one unworthy to speak in any pulpit. The following report of the meeting appeared in the Battle Creek Journal of October 5, 1887: "There was a good attendance, including a large number of our most prominent people, at the lecture of Mrs. Ellen G. White, at the Tabernacle, last evening.

"This lady gave her audience a most eloquent discourse, which was listened to with marked interest and attention. Her talk was interspersed with instructive facts which she had gathered in her recent visit to foreign lands, and demonstrated that this gifted lady has, in addition to her many other rare qualifications, a great faculty for attentive, careful observation, and a remarkable memory of details. This, together with her fine delivery and her faculty of clothing her ideas in choice, beautiful, and appropriate language, made her lecture one of the best that has ever been delivered by any lady in our city. That she may soon favor our community with another address, is the earnest wish of all who attended last evening; and should she do so, there will be a large attendance." Quoted in Review and Herald, Oct. 11, 1877.

Years later, after Mr. Canright's book was in circulation, in which he so shamefully maligned Mrs. White, branding her as a fanatic, a deceiver, an impostor, etc., this same man attended her funeral, and as he stood by her casket with his brother, B. J. Canright, with tears in his eyes he said, "There's a noble woman gone."

This statement is attested to by his brother in writing. Mr. Canright was under no obligation of any kind to be present at the funeral of Mrs. White, much less to offer any eulogy of her life or character. In view of this, his spontaneous statement, "There's a noble woman gone," stands in striking contrast to the defamatory statements he made concerning her after he left the denomination, and which he published both before and after her death.

### ***The Shut-Door Question***

Mr. Canright launches a thrust against the Seventh day Adventists, and particularly against Mrs. E. G. White, because for some time after the disappointment of 1844 they believed in the "shut-door" theory, that is, that probation for sinners had closed.

Everybody acknowledges that the followers of William Miller believed Jesus was coming in 1844. And believing that, how could they have thought otherwise than that probation for the whole world would close at that time? That Mrs. White and her associates at one time believed thus we do not deny. Indeed, she herself frankly admits that fact. Prof. M. L. Andreasen, general field secretary of the General

Conference, contributes under date of January 17, 1933, this word confirming the statement made by B. J. Canright: 'I was one of the guards of honor when the body of Mrs. E. G. White lay in state in the Tabernacle in Battle Creek, Michigan, and was on duty at the time Mr. Canright approached the casket. I heard the above words uttered by Mr. D. M. Canright, and testify to their correctness. (Signed) "M. L. ANDREASEN."

In the troubled period that immediately followed 1844, when they were endeavoring to understand the prophecies more fully in order to discover where their mistake was, various views were set forth by different leaders of the former Advent body. A full knowledge of God's truth did not come in a day, nor even in a year. But gradually, as they continued to study the Bible, mistakes of interpretation were discovered. It was seen that while Christ's coming is indeed near, "even at the doors," the day and the hour of that coming are not revealed in the Scriptures, and that the task before them was a worldwide one of preaching that soon-coming Advent to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

Their view concerning those who could still be saved was broadened as God's plan for these last days became clear to their minds. God did not see fit to make them incapable of any error in their early endeavors to learn what the Bible taught regarding the Advent. God has never seen fit to do that. The disciples of Christ had to pass through a period of sadly mistaken ideas regarding Christ's first advent and the number who were to be afforded opportunity for salvation. They thought that Christ would set up His kingdom on the earth at that time. They held this view even after the resurrection, so wrongly had they interpreted the prophecies regarding the Savior. And when they began to preach the gospel they so definitely held that it was only for Israel that they took Peter to task for preaching to the Gentiles. Peter himself had gone to preach to them only after the Lord had specifically instructed him to go.

And when Peter related how the Holy Ghost had fallen upon the Gentiles, the apostles exclaimed with mingled surprise and joy, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:18. According to the chronology in the margin of the Bible, this particular preaching by Peter occurred about eight years after the apostles began to proclaim the gospel message of a risen Christ! We may regret that they, the pioneers of the Christian religion, were so "slow of heart" to understand God's purposes regarding the first advent of Christ and the founding of the Christian religion; we may even marvel that those men who had been tutored by Christ Himself for three years did not more quickly learn, yet we find in all this no reason for doubt as to the divine origin of Christianity or the divine guidance of the apostles. Then why should anyone attempt to frame a charge against the Second Advent Movement simply because the pioneers of that movement held at first a faulty and limited view of the Second Advent of Christ?

"But," someone will say, "we will grant that no charge should be brought against the Seventh-day Adventist denomination because the pioneers in general held, for a time, the belief that their message was only for a limited number, and that the probation of the world at large was closed. But Mr. Canright brings the more serious charge that Mrs. E. G. White, whom you declare had the prophetic gift, also believed and taught for a time those same faulty views regarding the close of probation. How do you answer this?"

We would answer by dividing the inquiry into two parts: First, did Mrs. White believe, in common with other pioneers, the faulty view of the Second Advent doctrine regarding the close of probation and the salvation of sinners? We answer, Yes, even as the apostles, whom God used to write much of the New Testament, held, for a time, faulty ideas regarding the first advent and the salvation of sinners; second, did Mrs. White, in those writings that she declared were revelations from God given in vision, set forth a wrong view of the close of probation, or the "shut door," as it was called? To this last question, which is

the only one that has any proper bearing on the claim of divine leadership in the Seventh day Adventist movement, we answer emphatically, No.

Away back in 1874 Mrs. White wrote in a letter an answer to the very charge we are examining. The portion of her letter dealing with this matter is here reproduced: "BATTLE CREEK, MICH., Aug. 24, 1874.

"DEAR BRO. LOUGHBOROUGH:

"I hereby testify in the fear of God that the charges of Miles Grant, of Mrs. Burdick, and others published in the Crisis is not true. The statements in reference to my course in forty-four [1844] is false.

"With my brethren and sisters, after the time passed in forty-four I did believe no more sinners would be converted. But I never had a vision that no more sinners would be converted. And am clear and free to state no one has ever heard me say or has read from my pen statements which will justify them in the charges they have made against me upon this point.

"It was on my first journey east to relate my visions that the precious light in regard to the heavenly sanctuary was opened before me and I was shown the open and shut door. We believed that the Lord was soon to come in the clouds of heaven. I was shown that there was a great work to be done in the world for those who had not had the light and rejected it. Our brethren could not understand this with our faith in the immediate appearing of Christ. Some accused me of saying my Lord delays His coming, especially the fanatical ones. I saw that in '44 God had opened a door and no man could shut it and shut a door and no man could open it. Those who rejected the light which was brought to the world by the message of the second angel went into darkness, and how great was that darkness.

"I never have stated or written that the world was doomed or damned. I never have under any circumstances used this language to any one, however sinful. I have ever had messages of reproof for those who used these harsh expressions."

Turning to a more detailed statement concerning Mrs. White's teachings in the early days of the movement, we find these facts, as set forth by A. G. Daniells, who has made an exhaustive study of her writings: "So far as I can learn from the documents in our possession, I have given the correct citation to everything that came from the pen of Mrs. White from 1844 to the close of 1851, and I have given every line of her statements regarding the shut door and the close of probation questions. Here is what we find:

"1. That during that period of six years there were printed in various forms twenty-five separate messages, articles, and letters from the pen of Mrs. E. G. White.

"2. That in only five articles or letters of this number is there any reference made to the shut door and the close of probation.

"3. That in not one of the five references to the shut door does Mrs. White state that the door of the second apartment of the sanctuary in which Christ ministers as High Priest or Mediator for a lost world, was closed in 1844. Nor does she once state that there was no salvation for any sinners after 1844.

"4. That in all that was printed from the pen of Mrs. White during the eight years - 1844 to 1851 we find three statements so worded that two different and conflicting interpretations can be placed upon them. But this is not to be counted as strange, for we find the same perplexity in certain passages of Scripture. The views here maintained make the statements harmonious with the general tenor of the messages of which they are parts, and with all the rest of her printed messages.

"The writer believes that any one who will study this subject impartially, with only the desire to arrive at the truth, must come to the conclusion that while the early Adventists - i.e., those who were

disappointed in 1844 believed for a time that probation closed on the tenth day of the seventh month, and even if Mrs. E. G. White for a time shared personally this view in common with those with whom she associated, there is no evidence to show that she ever put it forth as revealed to her from the Lord. The statements relied upon by some to show this, do not prove it. And it is certain that other things she wrote between 1844 and 1851 are entirely inconsistent with such a view.”

We would call the reader’s particular attention to the last sentence of this quotation. During the very years that she wrote certain statements which opponents have insisted must be understood as teaching a false view of probation, she also wrote certain other statements that are entirely inconsistent with this false view.

But to her opponents this can mean simply that her writings contain not only errors but contradictions. Yet those very opponents, in meeting the Bible skeptic’s charge of errors and contradictions, would contend that if the skeptic was only willing to place another interpretation on certain Bible statements, the supposed errors would vanish and also the contradictions. And their contention would be just. On this very principle that a writer’s statements should, if possible, be interpreted so as to be harmonious one with the other, we remove the majority of the so-called contradictions and difficulties of the Bible. And this principle is a sound one to employ, not simply on the Bible, but on any literary work. Is there any just reason why we should not invoke it in examining the writings of Mrs. White? When we do, the charges against her collapse.