



*"Watchman,  
what of the night?"*

*The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12*

# ADVENTISM IN CRISIS OVER AUTHORITY

## Questions Regarding Role of Ellen G. White Beset Hierarchy of the Church

The mere suggestion that would raise a question regarding the authority of Ellen G. White causes an emotional reaction often devoid of sound and sane judgment. What has been happening in America in reference to its heritage received from the founding Fathers of this Republic is now happening within the Church in regard to the role and ministry of Ellen G. White. The older generation of Americans were taught to respect the memory and service of the great men who gave their lives and sacred honor in order that the Republic might be realized, and that this nation might remain a united people. The heroes and leaders of the Revolutionary War and the Civil War era were held in esteem by the inheritors of their sacrifices. However, historical research - for weal of for woe - has altered this picture immeasurably. Documented research has revealed the earthy side of our heroes, and this with other factors has resulted in a loss of old-time patriotism. The same type of research into the life and ministry of Ellen G. White has had a similar effect on many in the Church. In the years since the death of Ellen G.

White, there has been a concerted effort on the part of the leadership of the Church and the White Estate to elevate the writings of Ellen G. White to a par with the Scriptures. The practical result has been that many sincere and devoted lay persons have placed her writings above the Sacred Scriptures. This is especially true in certain self-supporting and reform groups both within and without the Church. To even raise a suggestion there might be some basic problems in regard to the writings produces an hysteria because these folk feel that the very basis of their salvation is being threatened.

On the other hand, there has come into the Church a liberal element who have viewed the writings of Ellen G. White as a roadblock to their personal liberty and desire to live as they so choose. These would readily accept any supposed finding that would negate the authority and ministry of the Lord's delegated "messenger."

Besides these two groups, there is a third group within Adventism who recognize that the salvation by works program of the first described group does not meet the need of the human soul, but rather appeals to a self righteousness akin to the Pharisaism of Christ's day. But this third group also knows that license is not the "liberty" or the freedom that pure and unadulterated truth brings to the human heart as the righteousness of Christ by faith is received through the renunciation of self. How then can a true, genuine believer in the Third Angel's Message relate to the present crisis in Adventism?

This present crisis is not new to Adventism, but by far the most serious. Thus

it calls for a deeper analysis and a more serious evaluation free from emotionalism than the previous major crisis which took place at the turn of the Century. Involved in the previous crisis was Elder A. T. Jones. In a statement - The Final Word and A Confession - Jones quotes a letter with approval sent to him by a man described as moving "in General Conference circles," and as one who at the time had "the confidence of the General Conference Administration," in other words, Elder A. G. Daniells. In the letter dated, Dec. 18, 1905, this brother wrote to Elder Jones:

You know that the Testimonies of Sister White are from the Lord. You know, too, how to distinguish between men's manipulations of these Testimonies, and what these Testimonies themselves actually teach.  
(p. 24)

Here in a nutshell is the whole issue, and really the only issue. Sister White did possess the "spiritual gift" of prophecy. It was manifest in her writings and public ministry. BUT there were manipulations of the Testimonies - Letters and Manuscripts - and what some of her actual testimonies really said were blurred to serve the ends of the men in places of authority. How then shall we relate to the problem in a calm and forthright manner as free as possible from emotional hysteria?

Certain literature dealing with this present crisis in Adventism is already available, and another publication is to be expected in the bookstores shortly. In the extreme liberal bias is Evangelica with its special issue on "Ellen G. White Reconsidered." One of its lead articles is by Robert D. Brinsmead entitled, "The Legend of Ellen G. White." This can all be rejected with very little comment by every sincere believer in the Advent Movement. Brinsmead himself has rejected the Sabbath, and in so doing, the Law of God, also. Thus by the simple pronouncement of Scripture, there is no light in him. See Isa. 8:20. It is true he may cite certain historical data, but his analysis of this data is cloaked in deceptive darkness because his mind is no longer controlled by basic truth.

There is expected momentarily the book by

Elder Walter Rea entitled - The White Lie. Since this book is not yet available to this writer (January 1, 1982), we cannot comment in an objective manner on what it will document. However, the hierarchy have published an answer to Rea's book, and captioned it - The White Truth. There is also a publication of questions and answers issued by the White Estate covering not only the expected charges by Rea but also Ford's allegations in the doctrinal area of the sanctuary. It is called - One Hundred and One Questions and Answers on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White. While we hold no brief for Ford's heresy, and cannot comment on Rea's publication until we can examine it, the reliability of the publication from the White Estate comes into question from the answer to the very first question proposed in the booklet. It states that the GC Session in Dallas "formally reaffirmed the doctrinal positions that Adventists have held for more than one hundred years." (p. 6) This is simply not the truth as has been documented in various issues of thought paper - "Watchman, What of the Night?" since that Session. If the author is as loose and free with all his answers in the book as he is in this statement, serious doubt is cast on the whole publication. But in reality he can say little else and still maintain the authority of the General Conference as the "guardians of the spiritual interests of the people." (See 5T:211) To admit the truth about the Dallas Statement of Beliefs would be to admit that the hierarchy betrayed the sacred trust committed to them. Besides these published and to be published works on the Ellen G. White problem is a manuscript prepared by Dr. D. R. McAdams, President of Southwestern Adventist College at Keene, Texas. No analysis can be complete without the documentation as found in this unpublished manuscript entitled - Ellen G. White and the Protestant Historians: The Evidence From an Unpublished Manuscript on John Huss.

In this issue of the thought paper, we shall seek to get down to the hard-core issue which is basic to any solution of the present crisis, and leave to future issues an analysis of other areas if the situation demands it. But where shall we begin? Before we can understand the thrust

of the defense projected by the hierarchy or the rationale behind that defense in the publication of The White Truth, we must know beyond a shadow of a doubt what was taught by the Church which was contemporary with Ellen G. White in contrast to what is now the official position. And this can only be done by comparing such pronouncements with the parallel statements regarding the Bible.

The first formulation of what Seventh-day Adventists believed was in 1872 in the form of a tract in which James White himself "had a large part in its composition" as evidenced by the fact that he published it as an editorial in the first issue of the Signs of the Times two years later. (The Living Witness, p. 1) This tract and the editorial stated that while these beliefs were not being published "to secure uniformity among [SDA's] as a system of faith" it was however, "a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity held by them." In regard to the Bible, these statements read:

**The Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of His will to man, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice.**

Note the phrase - "the only infallible rule of faith and practice." This phrase or one synonymous to it - "the only unerring standard of faith and practice" has occurred in every statement of belief issued by the Church until the 1980 Voted Statement at Dallas. It was included in even the Statement voted by the Annual Conference in 1979 to be recommended to the Dallas session, and was in the altered Statement given to the Delegates for their consideration. The only exception to this pattern was a Statement of Beliefs issued by the local church in Battle Creek as a part of their Church Directory in 1894. This statement omits the word, "only," and declares the Scriptures to be "a revelation of [God's] will to man." The 1980 Voted Statement at Dallas also does not contain the word, "only." While it declares the Scriptures to be "the infallible revelation of His will" and "the standard of character and the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines," it does not set forth the

Scriptures as the "only infallible standard of faith." The reason is simple - the position in regard to the writings of Ellen G. White assumes them to be "a continuing and authoritative source of truth." There is no way that you could have the Bible as the "only" standard of faith and practice, and have another body of writings as "a continuing source of truth." Thus the Statement of Beliefs as promulgated at Dallas while consistent within itself, is at variance with the historic position held by the spiritual leaders of Church including James White himself.

In all previous Statements of Belief prior to 1950, there is no mention of the writings of Ellen G. White - not even her name - nor the phrase - "spirit of prophecy," save in the local statement of the Battle Creek Church where the latter phrase is to be found. All the other statements - even the original 1931 Statement speak of "the gifts of the Holy Spirit" and their place in the Church and their relationship to the Bible. The position is unanimous that "these gifts are not designated to supercede, or to take the place of, the Bible," but that through these gifts the "Spirit has simply made provision for its own existence and presence with the people of God to the end of time, to lead to an understanding of that word which it had inspired, to convince of sin, and work a transformation in the heart and life." (1872 Tract; 1874 Signs of the Times editorial; 1889, 1905, 1907-1914 Yearbook) The gifts which these statements had in mind were "certain gifts, enumerated in 1 Corinthians 14 and Ephesians 4." (Ibid.) These include apostles, pastors, teachers, as well as prophets (plural) See Eph. 4: 11. The import of this is simply that the "understanding of the word which [the Holy Spirit] inspired" is not limited nor circumscribed by an inspired commentary on the Scriptures. There is also unity of doctrine by which ever gift the Spirit desires to speak, be it prophet or teacher. But in the departure from the historic faith at Dallas, Adventism has been thrown into a crisis. Because we have now voted the corpus of the writings of Ellen G. White to be "a continuing and authoritative source of truth" we have created by Church decree a third canon of Scripture. This brings the crisis in Adventism down to the very bottom line - the authority

of Ellen G. White. This is what the new book - The White Truth - seeks primarily to address, and in setting forth this issue, all the facts are not told. Some of the historical data is covered up for "cover up" is the way of life for the hierarchy of the Church.

### The White Truth

This book was written by Dr. John J. Robertson, who was a fellow minister with Elder Walter Rea in Southern California. While it deals with Rea's charge of plagiarism, it admits one of Rea's main contentions - "It appears that in the Conflict of the Ages series, her selective use of other authors has been more extensive than many had heretofore realized." (The White Truth, p. 17) It is at this point that McAdams' research would serve a very useful purpose in explaining why this is so, but the hierarchy is keeping this research from reaching the laity. While Robertson is seeking to set forth the authority of Sister White, as we shall note in detail, he also gives some excellent caution in regard to one's relationship to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. He writes:

Due caution is necessary, however, in making sure that our eyes remain on Scripture. One purpose of the spirit of prophecy is to point us to Scripture and increase our appreciation for it. The prophetic gift can provide insights, correctives, and incentives to biblical study. It can "correct specious errors" and "specify what is truth. . . saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.'" But from the Bible itself we must be able to give reasons for the hope that is in us. The gift of prophecy fails in its objective if we become giants in the spirit of prophecy and pygmies in Scripture. (Ibid., p. 71, emphasis mine.)

These "pygmy-giants" described by Robertson are the ones who have helped produce the crisis in Adventism today. Because they have not based their fundamental faith in the Bible and the Bible only, and have not studied the Bible in depth sufficiently to be able to defend the faith against the pseudo-intellectual assault of the Ford-van Rooyen axis, they have now resorted to the establishment of a third

canon of Scripture to buttress their cracking structure. The reason for this whole mess is really very simple. It is the rejection of the 1888 Message, and the desire to maintain the authority of man in place of the authority of the Holy Spirit. It matters not, whether in the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement, or among the Self-supporting Institutions of the Wild-wood philosophy, the power and authority of man is predominate. The same is likewise true of the Takoma Park based church. To maintain their human structure, they must have authority, and thus they seek to manipulate the writings of Ellen G. White in such a way as to support their man-created dominance over their fellow man. Let the work and ministry of Sister White take its proper place as assigned to "spiritual gifts" by the Bible, and the whole super-structure of man's manipulations would come tumbling down. The Bible and the authority as set forth in the Word would bind God's true people together in a oneness not seen since apostolic times. It would also destroy the anarchy presently creeping into the ranks of concerned Adventists through pet theories and "hobby horses." It would be the authority for which the minority of the Constitutional Committee, and their supporters pled for at the 1903 General Conference Session. However, Robertson in his book seeks to keep the authority of the hierarchy intact by addressing the issue under the question as to whether Ellen G. White was a prophet in the same sense as were the prophets of the Bible, in contrast to the role assigned to "spiritual gifts" in both the Bible and our historic Statements of Belief. Robertson seeks to establish the "prophet role" yet come short of admitting to a third canon of Scripture.

Dr. Robertson interjects Elder A. T. Jones into this question by reviewing - only in part - some of the controversy that ensued between Jones and the General Conference administration under Elder A. G. Daniells. Robertson writes that "the colorful, blunt A. T. Jones, exploited and distorted" a statement in which Ellen G. White supposedly stated, "I am not a prophet, I never made any such claim." (The White Truth, p. 55) His summation of this incident is "The fact is that nowhere, at any time, did Mrs White use Jones' words, 'I am not

a prophet." (Ibid., p. 55) Now what are the facts? Robertson, whether in ignorance of all the documents, or willfully, bases his case on a 100 page paper issued by the Daniells' administration seeking to refute this assertion by Jones. (Ibid., p. 56) The General Conference Committee based its case against Jones on verbatim shorthand notes of a talk Ellen G. White gave in the Battle Creek Tabernacle, Oct. 1, 1904. This report as given in the Statement reads:

"I want to tell you the light has been given me, and many know what my work is. They say, She is a prophetess. I claim to be no such thing. I tell you all what I want you all to know, that I am a messenger.

"I want to tell you that Mrs White does not call herself a prophetess or a leader of this people. She calls herself simply a messenger. You have listened to Mrs White, and you know what my testimony has been, and the same testimony has been borne to the people. I have not gone back on one sentence." (A Statement Refuting Charges Made by A. T. Jones Against the Spirit of Prophecy and the Plan of Organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination, p. 83)

Then the GC Committee Report exultantly stated:

Elder Jones says he heard her say the words: "I am not a prophet, I never made any such claim." Those words cannot be found in consecutive order at any place in her talk, and four of the eleven words which he quotes cannot be found at any place whatsoever in all her talk upon this matter. (Ibid., Emphasis theirs)

Apparently Robertson did not have access to Jones' reply, or else he purposely does a "cover up" job. [The brethren in Washington have to know about the existence of this reply. Did they withhold it from Robertson?] Jones' answer was in the tract - The Final Word and A Confession. He quotes the remarks of Ellen G. White on October 1, 1904, unedited, as follows:

"I want to tell you that the light God has given me, and many know what

my work is; they say she is a prophetess, they say she is this, that and the other thing. I claim to be no such thing. I will tell you what I want you all to know - that I am a messenger that God has taken from a feeble, a very feeble child, and in my girlhood gave me a message. . [What is omitted here is several lines concerning an accident in her girlhood]. Now I want to tell you this, that Mrs White don't call herself a prophetess, nor a leader of this people. She calls herself simply a messenger." (pp. 7-8)

Then Jones quotes what Sister White said the next day in the same place. It was also taken down verbatim. Here are these remarks as quoted in Jones' reply with his emphasis to show that he had quoted her correctly. They read:

I know that those that have got the books that God has bidden me to write, when that hand trembled so that it seemed an impossibility - I want you to read the books - Patriarchs and Prophets (I expected to have them here on the stand before us). Great Controversy, Desire of Ages, - Ministry of Healing is nearly done; and a great many other books. I am not, as I said yesterday, a prophet. I do not claim to be a leader. I claim to be simply a messenger of God. And that is all I have ever claimed. (Ibid., p. 8)

In simple language, the Robertson conclusion - "The fact is that nowhere, at any time, did Mrs White use Jones' words, 'I am not a prophet.'" - does not square with the facts of history. But this is not the end of the story.

Naturally such a pronouncement sent shock waves through the Daniells' General Conference administration. Four months later a letter was received by O. A. Olsen - why Olsen and not Daniells? - in which there was an explanation of Ellen G. White's remarks at Battle Creek. The letter bore her signature. It states that she said - "During the discourse I said, I did not claim to be a prophetess." (Statement, Op. Cit., p. 84) This is consistent with her statement on October 1 which the GC Committee used. Did she not have the text

of the October 2 message, and at 78 did she not recall what she had said? Or is here some of the "manipulation" which one year later the unknown correspondent whom Jones quoted was referring to? (See p. 2) Ellen G. White's consistent testimony up to the year, 1903, had been -

"From the year 1846 until the present time, I have received messages from the Lord, and have communicated them to His people. This is my work - to give to the people the light that God gives to me. I am commissioned to receive and communicate His messages. I am not to appear before the people as holding any other position than that of a messenger with a message." (Quoted by Jones, op. cit., p.10)

Placing this self-evaluation of her work and ministry with other statements given by Robertson, the picture comes into focus. He quotes her as saying (circa, 1888) - "If the Testimonies speak not according to this word of God [The Bible], reject them." (Robertson, op. cit., p. 64) And again, "In regard to infallibility, I have never claimed it; God alone is infallible." (Ibid., p. 74) The pioneer workers in the Cause understood well this position of Sr. White. They recognized the proper relationship between the Bible and the Gifts of the Spirit. George I. Butler stated:

We do not hold them [The Visions] to be superior to the Bible, or in one sense equal to it. The Scriptures are our rule to test everything by, the visions as well as other things. That rule, therefore, is the highest authority; the standard is higher than the thing tested by it. If the Bible would show the visions were not in harmony with it, the Bible would stand, and the visions would be given up. (Review, Aug. 14, 1883, Emphasis Robertson's, Ibid.)

Did, therefore, the pioneer understanding of the Gifts negate the messages which she brought as the Lord's messenger? By no means! Would that same understanding today, invalidate her as a messenger? No! The tragedy is that those who would exalt her status as a prophet equal to the Bible prophets are not willing to hear her messages for this hour as the voice of the

Lord's messenger. She has declared clearly what the "last work" is to be, and what message those who receive "the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost" will be giving (3T:266-67) yet the hierarchy propose a program to baptize 1,000 people each day for 1,000 days. The servant of the Lord tells us how God views the "guardians of the spiritual interests of the people" who have betrayed their trust, and what will happen to those who continue to support them (5T:211); yet we heed not the warning. The Lord's messenger quotes the heavenly "Instructor" as asking the question - referring to the Seventh-day Adventist Church - "How is the faithful city become a harlot?" - yet we do not seek to find the answer so we might take the appropriate action. (8T:247, 250) The humble servant under God tells us to study Luke 21, and note carefully what Jesus had to say about events connected with Jerusalem which mark the final scenes of this earth's history. And the only event in Luke concerning Jerusalem not found in Matthew and Mark is "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24); yet we ignore what that message is saying to us today. (C to W&E, p. 24) Ellen G. White tells us what the Alpha of apostasy was, and what could be expected in the Omega, but we publish a paperback which distorts history, and not even produce in our publishing houses the messages which describe these past and present events. Check and see if the Review and Herald Publishing Association, or the Pacific Press print Special Testimonies, Series B, #2 & #7. Yet we want to give - and have given through the Dallas Statement of Beliefs - canonical authority to the writings of Ellen G. White. Why? For one reason, and one reason only - to shore up the authority of men - men who have betrayed their trust of truth committed to the Advent Movement; let alone the betrayal of trust funds - and tithe funds - given to the work of God.

\*\*\*\*\*

**TO OUR CANADIAN READERS** There has been established a Canadian Foundation and it has now received a number from the Bureau of Revenue so that tax deductible receipts can be issued. Concerned Adventists in Canada can now remit, if they desire, their tithes and/or offerings to the Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Ontario, P. O. Box 117, Thorne, Ont. POH 2J0.

## PSYCHIATRIC TORTURE

Newsweek (Jan. 11, 1982, pp. 31-32) describes the latest Soviet tactics to suppress dissent. Quoting a letter from a Russian psychiatrist, Dr. Annatoly Koryagin, the article revealed that he had been "sentenced last June to twelve years in labor camps and internal exile for publicizing the imprisonment of sane dissidents in insane asylums." The tortures through drug injections and the sadistic attitudes of the psychiatrists used by the atheistic Soviet regime as revealed in Newsweek produces a shudder. Yet among those who have been sent to these asylums are some of our brothers and sisters of the True and Free Seventh-day Adventists.

From documents available, we cite the case of one sister who is still confined:

During a 10-month internment in the Kaunas Psychiatric Hospital in 1971, Zita Kirsnaukaite was treated forcible with drugs that had a harmful effect on her kidneys. She had been sent to the hospital when it was discovered she was an Adventist. On 5/8/78 she was hospitalized in Riga Hospital #3 with a chronic kidney complaint, but due to KGB pressure on medical staff, she was diagnosed as psychopathic and discharged while running a high temperature (31/8/78) She was forced to go to another hospital for treatment. A complaint to the Ministry of Health about her treatment (5/10/78) resulted in her forcible internment in Riga Psychiatric Hospital, where she was taken after being summoned to the Ministry

of Health building. She has suffered for her faith for many years. How long will the state atheistic inquisition continue? (Adventist Samizdat Documents, Keston College Files)

There are three others known to be in these asylums; but the most heart rending case is that of a child. "The child Mihail Kozak was kidnapped by the Communists from his parents because they taught him the Adventist faith. When the child, interned in an atheistic boarding school, insisted on going back to his parents, he was put in a psychiatric asylum, 'to be healed' of his disire." (Voice of Martyrs, Dec. 1978) Yet in the light of all these atrocities the hierarchy in Washington refuse to act except as approved by the atheistically controlled SDA Church in Russia. The president of CREED (Christian Rescue Effort for the Emancipation of Dissidents) visited the headquarters at Takoma Park over a month ago to present the work of this organization whose Board of Directors include members of Congress. Dr Ernest Gordon's report of this visit was very concise - "The response was negative."

Some day - no too far distant - the Judge of all the earth, will say to these men of the hierarchy - God forbid that it will include any who read this Thought Paper - "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, . . . For I was . . . in prison, and ye visited Me not." (Matt. 25: 41-43) We can visit Jesus in the person of these True and Free SDA's by writing letters, securing petitions, and by praying daily in their behalf. Indicate how you wish to respond, and send to the Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 178 Lamar, AR 72846 USA.

---

\_\_\_\_\_ I will write to prisoners and their families in Russia. (Names and addresses will be sent to you.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I will get signatures for a petition to free Elder Galetsky. (We will send you a typewritten petition, and all you will need to do is to obtain the signatures, and put it in the mail.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I will pray for fellow believers in Russia.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_