

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University
The Role of Ellen White in the Development of Adventist Doctrines
Jerry Moon, 2006

Introduction. Many Adventists assume that Adventist beliefs had their origins in the visions of Ellen White. Typical of non-Adventist opinion in years past is that of G. H. Shriver, author of the article on “Seventh-day Adventism” in the *Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religions* (1981): “The source of authority for belief is the Bible, but the writings of Ellen White are held in such high esteem that for all practical purposes it is the Bible as interpreted by Ellen White” (p. 672).

Not all hold this view, however. Dr. Roger Nicole, eminent evangelical scholar and founder of the Evangelical Theological Society, remarked to an Andrews faculty member and student at the annual conventions in Atlanta, November 2003, “I appreciate Seventh-day Adventists so much. They have one of the highest views of Scripture of anybody I know. . . . Ellen White believes very strongly in Scripture.” According to one church growth study, Adventists who considered themselves “regular readers of the writings of Ellen White” were almost twice as likely to also have daily personal Bible study as compared to non-readers of the Spirit of prophecy (*Ministry*, October 1982, p. 11).

One of the clearest evidences of the priority of Scripture in the experience and teaching of Ellen White, is a series of seven conferences held by our spiritual ancestors 155 years ago, in 1848. I believe it is absolutely essential that we remember the history and especially the spiritual lessons of those conferences, because **those conferences laid the foundations for a church built on Scripture, the whole Scripture, and nothing contrary to Scripture.**

Of course, this ideal was *not* new; it is a classic formula of Reformation Protestantism. It is however, an ideal seldom realized for more than a brief period of time, because the mere passage of time tends to create traditions and customs that are easily assumed to represent Scripture, but which in fact can take the place of Scripture as a basis for making decisions in our daily lives. One corrective to the tendency to replace Scripture with tradition is to pause from time to time—as we are doing this weekend—to re-examine the foundations of our faith and to re-examine our own lives, in order to make sure that we are indeed building our lives on **Scripture, the whole Scripture, and nothing contrary to Scripture.**

One of the strongest defenders of the Scriptural foundation of the church was a young woman, present at all seven of the 1848 conferences, who was then just 21 years old. Note what she later wrote about the *sola Scriptura* principle:

“God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, . . . the voice of the majority---not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support” (Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy*, 595; **all emphasis added** unless otherwise noted).

She consistently maintained that the Bible alone is the ultimate standard by which all other standards are to be tested. Speaking of the relationship between Bible and the gift of prophecy, she wrote,

“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

[1 John 4:1, Isa 8:20 quoted]” (GC, viii).

This remains the foundational teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, enshrined in the very first of our Fundamental Beliefs. But that insight did not just “happen.” Nor will it remain the experience of the church today, just because it is written in the Fundamental Beliefs. The test of any belief is whether it is practiced, and how consistently it is practiced, and the Sabbatarian Conferences (1848-1850) became a benchmark example of the practice of this belief among Seventh-day Adventists.

So we turn to our history. To see the significance of 1848, we have to go back 4 years further, to 1844 and the Great Disappointment. The Disappointment, of course, was the day in October 1844 when the Millerite Adventists expected the Second Coming of Jesus. The Disappointment was a devastating example of the results of accepting non-Scriptural assumptions as truth. The Millerite Adventists had believed that the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 was the earth; so the “cleansing of the sanctuary” was thought to be the cleansing of the earth by fire at Christ’s second coming. You see how a single non-biblical idea—that the sanctuary was the earth—laid the foundation for the Disappointment.

Following the Disappointment, the Millerite movement splintered into many parts. Those who advocated the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath were considered fanatics, and were ostracized by their former Millerite brethren, referred to as “first-day Adventists” by those who were beginning to be known as “seventh-day Adventists.” The name “Seventh-day Adventist” would not become official until 1860, and the General Conference was not organized until 1863, but by 1848 the doctrinal shape of the church that would be born, was beginning to appear.

I. The Relationship between Visions and Bible Study in Pre-1850 Doctrinal Development

A. **Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences, 1848-1850:** The term “Sabbath Conferences” or “Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences” refers to a series of at least 23 meetings between April 1848 and December 1850, in the northeastern USA, that started a process of consensus formation among ex-Millerite Adventists that led in two years to an agreed doctrinal core, and culminated 15 years later in the organization of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The conferences included seven in 1848, six in 1849, and ten in 1850 (C. Mervyn Maxwell, “The 1848 Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences: What Actually Took Place?” in *Source Book for CHIS674 Development of SDA Theology*, ed. Gerard P. Damsteegt, Andrews University, 1994, pp. 325-327).

B. Historical Overview of the 1848 Conferences

1. Rocky Hill, Connecticut, April 20-24 (Thur. to Mon.), in the “large unfinished chamber” of a new house owned by Albert Belden. “This was the first general meeting of the Seventh-day Adventists.” (James White, *Life Incidents*, p. 271).
Topic: Sabbath. Main Presenter: Joseph Bates. Total attendance “about 50” (2SG, 93).
2. Bristol, Connecticut, June 1848. Source: James White to Brother [Stockbridge Howland], July 2, 1848.
3. Volney, New York, August 18, 19 (Fri., Sab.), in David Arnold’s barn. Ellen White recalled that “There were about 35 present, all that could be collected in that part of the State. There were hardly two agreed. Each was strenuous for his views, declaring that they were according to the Bible. All were anxious for an opportunity to advance their sentiments, or to preach to us. They were told that we had not come so great a distance to hear them, but had come to teach them the truth” (E. G. White, 2SG, 97-98).
David Arnold, the host of the meeting, held three “strange differences of opinion”: (1) that the Millennium of Rev. 20 was already past; (2) that the 144,000 were those raised at Christ’s resurrection; and (3) that the Lord’s Supper should be done only at the annual Passover (ibid.).
Bates preached about the Sabbath and James White expounded Christ in the sanctuary. Two visions given to Ellen White resolved the differences so that the meeting ended in unity.
4. Port Gibson, New York, August 27, 28 (Sun., Mon.), in Hiram Edson’s barn. Ellen White had another vision urging unity “upon Bible truth” (2SG, 99).
5. Rocky Hill, Connecticut, September 8, 9 (Fri, Sab.), at Albert Belden’s again.
6. Topsham, Maine, October 20-22 (Fri. to Sun.), home of Stockbridge Howland, civil engineer. Again Bates and James White spoke on the Sabbath and Sanctuary, respectively.
7. Dorchester (now part of Boston), Massachusetts, November 17-19 (Fri. to Sun.), home of Otis Nichols, printer. Question under discussion: What is the seal of God in Revelation 7:1-3? Ellen White was given a vision indicating that the seal was the Sabbath.

C. **Results of the Sabbatarian Conferences:** It was through this process that we came to the place where Ellen White could write: “We know that we have the truth” (Letter 30, Dec. 13, 1850).

D. Ellen White’s Retrospective Evaluation of the Process

“Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, “We can do nothing more,” the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me; with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me” (1 *Selected Messages*, 206-207).

“We would come together burdened in soul; praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine; for we knew that Christ is not divided. One point at a time was made the subject of investigation. The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth. After earnest prayer, if any point was not understood, it was discussed, and each one expressed his opinion freely; then we would again bow in prayer, and earnest supplications went up to heaven that God would help us to

see eye to eye, that we might be one as Christ and the Father are one. Many tears were shed.

“We spent many hours in this way. Sometimes the entire night was spent in solemn investigation of the Scriptures, that we might understand the truth for our time. On some occasions the Spirit of God would come upon me, and difficult portions were made clear through God’s appointed way, and then there was perfect harmony. We were all of one mind and one spirit” (*Testimonies to Ministers*, 24-25).

E. Analysis of the Theological Process: A Successful Search for Truth and Unity.

1. Sources: *Selected Messages*, 1:206-207; *Testimonies to Ministers*, 24-25; A. L. White, *Ellen G. White Biography*, 3:398-399.
 2. Historical Context: post-disappointment. “After the passing of the time in 1844 ...” (1SM, 206; TM, 24).
 3. Participants: persons who were “keen, noble, and true” (1SM, 206).
 4. Principal Presenters: Joseph Bates and James White.
 5. Attitude: “Searched for truth as for hidden treasure” (1SM, 206; TM, 24).
 6. Subject: The Bible. “The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe” (TM, 24).
 7. Motivation: A burden for unity, for “we knew that Christ is not divided” (TM, 24).
 8. Purposes:
 - a. To know the meaning of the Bible.
 - b. To “be prepared to teach it with power” (1SM, 206).
 9. Methods:
 - a. Source of efficiency: Union of prayer and study (1SM, 206-7; TM, 24-25).
 - b. One point at a time investigated (TM, 24).
 - c. Did not dwell on minor points of disagreement: “We tried to make our differences as slight as possible by not dwelling on points that were of minor importance, upon which there were varying opinions” (TM, 25).
 - d. Discussion, in which “each one expressed his opinion freely” (TM, 25).
 - e. “We sought most earnestly that the Scriptures should not be wrested to suit any man’s opinions” (TM, 25).
 - f. Response to deadlocked disagreement: individual prayer and study.

Sometimes one or two of the brethren would stubbornly set themselves against the view presented, and would act out the natural feelings of the heart; but when this disposition appeared, we suspended our investigations and adjourned our meeting, that each one might have an opportunity to go to God in prayer and, without conversation with others, study the point of difference, asking light from heaven. With expressions of friendliness we parted, to meet again as soon as possible for further investigation (TM, 25).
 10. Intensity:
 - a. “Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word” (1SM, 206).
 - b. “Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth” (TM, 24).
 1. Persistence: repeated meetings, at least seven weekends during 1848.
 2. Order of Study:
 - a. Studied the Scriptures until they reached the limits of their ability to understand the available evidence.
 - b. “When they came to the point in their study where they said, ‘We can do nothing more,’ the Spirit of the Lord would come upon [Ellen White, she] would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given” (1SM, 206-207).
 - c. Note: Direct revelation from the Holy Spirit through visions was not usually given until after they had thoroughly examined the biblical evidence.
 1. Results:
 - a. “Clear explanation of the passages” under investigation. “Difficult portions were made clear through God’s appointed way” (TM, 25).
 - b. Doctrinal system: “Light was given that helped us to understand the Scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain” (1SM, 207).
 - c. Unity of understanding provided a basis for unity of action. “Then there was perfect harmony. We were all of one mind and one spirit” (TM, 25).
- E. Doctrines on which there was consensus by 1850** (Memory device: 8S + 3AM)
1. Second Advent (assumes the whole eschatological hermeneutic of Millerism, particularly the year-day principle).

2. Sabbath
3. Spiritual Gifts
4. Sanctuary
5. Three Angels's Messages
- 6, 7. State of the Dead (soul sleep / conditional immortality) and the Second Death (annihilation of the wicked)
 - a. Expounded by George Storrs in two publications: *An Inquiry; Are the Souls of the Wicked Immortal? In Three Letters* (published anonymously, 1841). *An Inquiry: Are the Souls of the Wicked Immortal? In Six Sermons* (Albany, NY: 1842).
 - b. E. G. White's later comment:

"Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection . . . The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character. God . . . will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend" (MS 76, 1900 in 6 BC 1093, emphasis supplied).
8. Seven Last Plagues
9. Shut Door, gradually redefined. (See handout, "Steps in the Changing Usage of the Term 'Shut Door.'")
 - a. Sources: F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1951), 176-252; James White, *A Word to the Little Flock* (1847), 22; A. L. White, *Ellen G. White*, 1:256-270; also 60-61, 78, 96, 140, 160-161, 191-192; *SDA Encyclopedia*, "Open and Shut Door." Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 500-512, 549-569; E. G. White, *Great Controversy*, 428-431.
 - b. By 1850, the main doctrinal pillars were in place. The "Shut Door" of 1844 (Matt 25:10) was now seen as "open" (Rev 3:7-8) and through six years of theological progress the pioneers had developed well-grounded convictions of their message and mission.

II. An Example of Post-1850 Doctrinal Development:

The "Time to Commence the Sabbath" (1855)

- A. Sources: [James White], "The Conference," *Review and Herald*, 4 December 1855, 75.
 J. N. Andrews, "Time for Commencing the Sabbath," *Review and Herald*, 4 Dec. 1855, 76-78.
 James White, "Time of the Sabbath," *Review and Herald*, 4 December 1855, 78.
 James White, "Time to Commence the Sabbath," *Review and Herald*, 25 February 1868.
- B. Historical Background of the Controversy (Source: A. L. White, 1 Bio, 322-325).
 1. Joseph Bates, a retired sea captain, held that "even" in Lev. 23:32 meant equatorial time, 6:00 p.m.
 2. Since he was the leading advocate of the Sabbath among Adventists, his opinion was respected, and followed by the majority (1 Bio, 200).
 3. Some Maine Sabbathkeepers in 1847-48 cited the KJV of Matt. 28:1 in support of beginning the Sabbath at sunrise, but a vision of Ellen White in 1848 refuted this.
 4. A tongues-speaking incident in June 1848 supporting the 6:00 p.m. time was accepted as confirming that the Sabbath begins at 6:00 p.m.
 5. As a result, from 1847 to 1855, a few began the Sabbath at sundown, but the majority followed the 6:00 p.m. time.
 6. James White, concerned about this difference of opinion, in June 1854 asked D. P. Hall of Wisconsin to study into the matter, but nothing came of it because Hall, preoccupied with the "age-to-come" theory, joined the *Messenger* party, the first offshoot from Sabbatarian Adventists. In the summer of 1855 James White repeated the request to J. N. Andrews, who prepared a 4,500-word study adducing many scriptural and other proofs that the Sabbath begins at sundown. This study was presented to the conference in Battle Creek, Nov. 17, 1855, and published in the *Review* of December 4, 1855.
 7. The majority of the attendees found Andrews' arguments convincing. In fact the response was unanimous with two exceptions--Joseph Bates and Ellen White. All the rest closed the Sabbath at sundown.
 8. On Tuesday, Nov. 20, Ellen White received a vision endorsing the sundown view (1T 113, 116).
- C. Analysis of the Investigative Process, in Comparison and Contrast to that of 1848.
 1. Superficial Bible study plus interpretive assumptions by Joseph Bates. (Compare William Miller's assumptions regarding the sanctuary.)
 2. Practice led to the beginnings of a tradition (nine years).
 3. Vision *against* the sunrise view was *assumed* to *support* 6:00 p.m. (Skewed interpretation because of interpretative assumptions.)

4. The lack of clear Scripture evidence, plus interpretative assumptions, led to uncritical acceptance of supposed confirming evidence (the tongues-speaking in favor of the 6:00 p.m. view [1 Bio, 199-200]).
5. More comprehensive study disproved the interpretive assumptions.
6. Two persons reasoned that the church's past practice had been blessed by God, hence must be correct.
7. Graciously, the Holy Spirit sent additional evidence in the form of a vision that confirmed the results of the comprehensive Bible study.
8. Result: unity on one of the most salient aspects of SDA lifestyle, the observance of the Sabbath from sundown to sundown.

III. Four Insights Concerning the Relationship between Bible Study and the Visions in the Formation of SDA Doctrine

A. The Visions *Settled Doctrinal Disagreements, Not by Asserting Superior Authority, But by Calling Attention to Relevant Scriptures*

1. **Example: The Volney Conference, August 1848.** At this conference, mentioned above, David Arnold, whose barn was the venue for the meeting, held three "strange differences of opinion"—
 - a. that the Millennium of Revelation 20 was past;
 - b. that the 144,000 were those raised at Christ's resurrection;
 - c. that the Lord's Supper should be done only at the annual Passover (ibid.).
2. As Arnold "spoke of the 1000 years being in the past," Ellen White "knew he was in error" (2SG 98), but did not know how to refute the error (1SM 207).
3. There was a notable reason why she did not know how to refute his error.

a. Later she wrote that

"During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. **My mind was locked,** as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the Scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God. The brethren knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given.

"For two or three years my mind continued to be locked to an understanding of the Scriptures.

In the course of our labors, my husband and I visited Father Andrews [J. N. Andrews' father], who was suffering intensely with inflammatory rheumatism. We prayed for him. I laid my hands on his head, and said, 'Father Andrews, the Lord Jesus maketh thee whole.' He was healed instantly. He got up, and walked about the room, praising God and saying, 'I never saw it on this wise before. Angels of God are in this room.' The glory of the Lord was revealed. Light seemed to shine all through the house, and an angel's hand was laid upon my head. From that time to this I have been able to understand the Word of God" (1 SM 207, emphasis added).

- b. The healing of Father Andrews took place in December 1850, so the "two or three years" she referred to above correspond almost exactly to the period of the conferences of 1848-1850 (see 1SM 207).
- c. That's why, at the Volney conference, she was unable to refute Brother Arnold's error, even though she recognized that his belief was wrong. "Great grief pressed my spirits," she recalled, "for it seemed to me that God was dishonored" (2SG 98). Under this anxiety she fainted. Immediately, five of the men present—Joseph Bates, E.L.H. Chamberlain, H. S. Gurney, Hiram Edson, and James White---formed a prayer circle and interceded for her.
4. A vision gave Scriptural answers to the "strange differences of opinion."
 - a. As the elders prayed, she revived---but not to normal consciousness. In vision, unaware of what was going on around her, she took up a Bible and began to turn the pages, pointing out texts relevant to the issues under discussion. At the same time her eyes were turned "upward and in an opposite direction from the Bible," as if looking at something distant (J. N. Loughborough, *RH*, Mar. 3, 1885, in 1Bio 142).
 - b. While those around her were curiously documenting her outward behavior, she herself was "lost to earthly things." When the vision was over and she again became aware of her surroundings, she told the group that her "accompanying angel" had explained "some of the errors of those present, and also the truth in contrast with their errors."
5. The **method** by which the visions resolved doctrinal disagreements was by **calling attention to specific Scripture passages** relevant to their study. As Loughborough noted, "**The reason these persons gave up**

their differences was not simply because Sister White said they must give them up, but because in the same vision they were pointed to plain statements of Scripture that refuted their false theories, and had presented before them in contrast a straight and harmonious track of Bible truth” (1Bio 142).

B. The Visions *Convicted Individuals of their Personal Duty, Not by Asserting Authority over Them, But by Pointing Them to Scripture*

1. **Example: The Hannibal Stopover** (between Volney and Port Gibson, August 1848). On the way from Volney to Port Gibson, Joseph Bates, the Whites, Brother and Sister Edson, and Brother Simmons stayed overnight with the Snow family in Hannibal, New York, where there were 8 or 10 believers. James reported in a letter to Leonard and Elvira Hastings that

“In the morning, Ellen was taken off in vision and while she was in vision, all the brethren [and sisters] came in. It was a powerful time. One of the number was not on the Sabbath but was humble and good. Ellen rose up in vision and took the large Bible, held it up before the Lord, talked from it, then carried it to this humble brother who was not on the Sabbath and put it in his arms. He took it while tears were rolling down . . . Then Ellen came and sat down by me. She was in vision 1½ hours in which time she did not breathe at all. It was an affecting time. All wept much for joy” (James White to Brother and Sister Hastings, Aug. 26, 1848).

1. Question: Why all these instances in which while in vision she took up Bibles, carried them, uplifted them, quoted from them, and handed them in the most impressive ways to people for whom the gesture was highly significant? (This happened at least five times in the early days—see Appendix A.) In the accounts of her actions in vision, one of her most frequently noted activities was to open, carry, and quote from a Bible. The question has a clear and simple answer: **Because it was the essence of her mission to exalt the Bible.**

C. Usually the Visions Gave Further Light Only *After Believers Had Done Major Bible Study on the Topic*

1. **Example: The Dorchester Conference** (November 17-19, 1848).
2. Dorchester (now part of Boston), Massachusetts, was the home of Otis Nichols, a printer. The previous conferences had followed more the pattern of an “evangelistic” seminar, with James White and Joseph Bates making evangelistic presentations on Sabbath and the developing understanding of the sanctuary. The Dorchester conference was more of a leaders’ council. Bates presented some material that was pretty much “new light” at the time, which the others studied.
3. Question under discussion: What is the seal of God in Revelation 7:1-3? Joseph Bates had just published in January 1848, a book *The Vindication of the Sabbath*, setting forth his understanding that **the seal represented character developed through obedience to God’s law**, but the group wanted further light.
4. After Bates’s initial presentation, Ellen White was given a vision indicating that **one particular point of God’s law—the Sabbath—was especially the “sealing truth.”** Thus the vision expanded and sharpened Bates’s conclusions (but did not contradict them).
5. The group then tested the new concept by further Bible study.
6. In the same vision, Ellen was given messages both for Bates and for her husband, James White.
- a. The message for Bates was that he should now write what he had seen and heard and that God’s blessing would attend it. Evidently the reason he was restrained from writing after the Topsham Conference, was because he had not yet come to a full understanding of the sealing. Now he was urged to write it, including what he had seen and heard through Ellen’s vision at Dorchester.
- b. She also had a message for her husband, James.

“You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world” (LS 125).

A few months later (in 1849), James began a paper called *The Present Truth*, that especially emphasized the Sabbath. In 1850 he began another named *The Advent Review*, which was a review of Millerite Adventist teaching on Bible prophecy, emphasizing the more recently developed sanctuary insights. The two papers soon merged under the title *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*—and the streams of light from that paper have certainly gone “clear round the world.”

**D. Even Mistakes of the Whole Adventist Body Were Not Corrected by Vision until
—after They Did Serious Bible Study on the Disputed Issues,
—and Especially If There Was Serious Threat of Disunity**

1. **Example: The 1855 Conference on the Time to Begin the Sabbath** (see section II above).
2. James White's Retrospective Question: "If the visions are given to correct the erring," why did God allow the believers to keep Sabbath from 6 p.m. to 6 p.m. for nine years before correcting them?

3. James White's answer:

"The work of the Lord upon this point is in perfect harmony with His manifestations to us on others, and in harmony with the correct position on spiritual gifts.

"It does not appear to be the desire of the Lord to teach His people by the gifts of the Spirit on the Bible questions until His servants have diligently searched His word. When this was done upon the subject of time to commence the Sabbath, and most [Adventists] were established [convinced], and some were in danger of being out of harmony with the body on this subject, then, yes, *then* [italics in original] was the very time for God to magnify His goodness in the manifestation of the gift of His Spirit in the accomplishment of its proper work.

"**The sacred Scriptures are given us as the rule of faith and duty**, and we are commanded to search them. If we fail to understand and fully obey the truths in consequence of not searching the Scriptures as we should, or a want of consecration and spiritual discernment, and God in mercy in His own time corrects us by some manifestation of the gifts of His Holy Spirit, instead of murmuring that He did not do it before, let us humbly acknowledge His mercy, and praise Him for His infinite goodness in condescending to correct us at all. . .

"**Let the gifts have their proper place in the church. God has never set them in the very front, and commanded us to look to them to lead us in the path of truth, and the way to heaven. His word He has magnified. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are man's lamp to light up his path to the kingdom.** Follow that. But if you err from Bible truth, and are in danger of being lost, it may be that God will in the time of His choice correct you, and **bring you back to the Bible**, and save you" (James White, "Time to Commence the Sabbath," *Review and Herald*, Feb. 25, 1868).

1. James White saw two reasons why God intervened when He did regarding the time to begin the Sabbath:
 - a. God waited until *after* the believers had seriously searched the Scriptures attempting to resolve the issue.
 - b. God acted (in this case) *before* the disagreement widened into actual schism in the church.

IV. Further Confirmation that the Scriptures Are to Have Priority In

Relation to the Spirit of Prophecy. The conclusions above, about Bible study taking the first place and the Spirit of Prophecy the second place, are confirmed by what Ellen White wrote about the "greater light and the lesser light" and her advice to a prominent pastor about his use of her writings in preparation for preaching.

A. The "Lesser Light" and the "Greater Light." Ellen White wrote in 1902, "Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light" (Ev 257). This underlines her insistence that the Bible was always to be placed in the forefront as the standard of doctrine and practice. See also Ev 256; GC vii; 2T 604-608; 5T 665-666.

B. Ellen White's Advice to H. M. J. Richards (father of H.M.S. Richards Sr). When H. M. J. Richards was vice-president of the Colorado Conference and pastor of a church in Denver (1900 or 1901), Ellen White visited his church one Sabbath morning and listened to him preach. Afterward he asked her advice about how to use her writings in preaching. She replied, "When you choose a subject, go to the Bible and study it from the Bible thoroughly. Learn it thoroughly from the Holy Scriptures, learn everything the Scriptures have to say on that subject, so that you are complete master of the topic as far as the Scriptures are concerned. After this, go to these writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. See what they say on the subject for sidelights and true emphasis, and to be sure that you are absolutely right in your interpretation. Then go to the people and preach that subject to the people out of the Bible" (Letter from H.M.S. Richards to C. Mervyn Maxwell, see Appendix B).

Conclusions

1. Seventh-day Adventist doctrine was not based on the visions of Ellen White, but on Scripture. Ellen White's writings were given in the context of Bible study and against the background of all God's previous revelation in Scripture. God's regular pattern in dealing with the Adventist pioneers was that He did not usually send direct revelation to guide

them in doctrinal matters until they had first searched the Scriptures to learn what God had previously given on the subject.

2. Visions played a major part in the 1848 conferences, as well as in the aftermath of the 1855 conference. There is a consistent pattern, however, with few exceptions, that Bible study preceded the visions. Seldom did God give light by vision until the believers had done their best to master the biblical evidence first. After they had learned all that they could by studying the Bible, God might graciously give them some extra help through a vision. So today, the inestimable treasure of the Spirit of Prophecy must not lead us to use it as a substitute for Bible study. It is to be a stimulus to Bible study, not a substitute for Bible study.

3. Illustration: Some arithmetic books provide in the back of the book, answers to the exercises. The answers were given so that the student could check her own work after doing the exercises. But if the student turns to the answers first, before doing the problem, and never masters the method, he can never solve problems outside the book, for which no ready answers are provided. So the one who makes EGW a crutch to avoid serious wrestling with Scripture, will not be well equipped to solve problems on which EGW makes no statement.

4. The way in which God led the pioneers of this movement teaches a basic hermeneutical principle, drawn from the relationship between the Spirit of Prophecy and the canonical Scriptures. That rule is: in order to avoid distorting God's counsel through Ellen White, first trace the subject through the OT and NT Scriptures.

5. In previous lectures we have considered hermeneutical principles to help us rightly interpret the writings of Ellen G. White. A priority among those principles (implicit in "Theological Context"), is the need (especially in questions of "faith and doctrine") to ground our study of Ellen White in a careful study of what the Scriptures have to say on the topic.

6. The results of the use of this method by the Adventist pioneers testify to its value. Though their numbers were few, their financial resources and educational credentials virtually nonexistent by the standards of the world, they laid the foundations for a church:

- a. Based on Scripture, the whole Scripture, and nothing contrary to Scripture;
- b. Confirmed by supernatural visions;
- c. Leading to individual freedom of conscience, because authority was vested not in human leaders, but in Scripture. Leaders as well as hearers were ready to change their views if their views were shown from the Bible to be defective.
- d. Characterized by unity, because God's word does not contradict itself, and all had pledged themselves to conform to God's word.

Appendix A: Reported Instances Where Ellen White Held a Large Bible in Vision

Roger W. Coon, "Ellen G. White and SDA Doctrine—Part I:
God's FIRST Priority in the First 20 Years," April 18, 1995

1. Winter, 1844-1845 (probably Dec. 1844 or Jan. 1845), Harmon home, Portland, Maine. Believed to be her third vision. (Source: J. N. Loughborough, *Great Second Advent Movement*, 236-37. *Life Sketches*, 70-71 mentions the vision, but does not mention the Bible).
2. Winter, 1844-1845 (probably Jan. 1845 after third vision), Curtiss home, Topsham, Maine. (Source: *GSAM*, 237-39).
3. Winter, 1845-1846 (probably Nov./Dec. 1845), Thayer home, Randolph, Massachusetts. Sargent and Robbins were unexpectedly confronted by EGW at a Sunday meeting in a private home. They had previously made an appointment with EGW to meet that same day in Boston. When they switched locations to avoid her, an angel divulged this ruse to EGW and told her where they could be found so that the unbiblical nature of their teachings could be exposed. (Sources: Otis Nichols' personal [handwritten] eyewitness testimony account in White Estate vault; 2SG 75-79 quotes Nichols about the "heavy, large, quarto, family Bible"; J. N. Loughborough, *GSAM* 240-44).
4. April 3, 1847 (first Sabbath of the month), Stockbridge Howland home, Topsham, Maine. (Source: *GSAM* 244-45).
5. August, 1848, Snow home, Hannibal, NY, during a 1½ hour vision. EGW and JW were en route from Volney to Port Gibson, NY, between conferences in those places. (Source: LS 110-12 [ExV 118-20]; in JW letter from Port Gibson, NY to Bro. and Sr. Hastings, Aug. 26, 1848, JW spoke of her taking "the large Bible" which she "held . . . up before

the Lord.” See Section III, B, pp. 8-9 above).

Appendix B: Ellen White's Own Advice on How to Use Her Books in Preaching

H.M.S. Richards Sr. to C. Mervyn Maxwell

Voice of Prophecy
P. O. Box 55
Los Angeles 53, California
[ca. 1956-1959]

Pastor C. Mervyn Maxwell
5555 S. Ingleside
Chicago 37, Illinois

Dear Brother Maxwell:

My father tells me his experience with Sister White was as follows: She came unexpectedly to Denver when he was ready to preach one Sabbath morning. He tried to get her to speak, and she insisted that he speak, since he had asked God for a message and believed that God had given him one. She was not willing to take the place of a man who was to speak under such conditions.

She listened to him, and at the close told him that his sermon had been a blessing to her, but she also told him that if he kept talking as he did, straining his voice, that he would soon die. In about fifteen minutes she gave him more instruction, he said, on how to use his voice and how to speak in public, than he had learned from his whole course in Battle Creek College. To my father's dying day he had a sweet voice, as everyone testifies who heard him, both in the pulpit and over the radio.

Then my father asked Sister White how to use her writings in his preaching ministry. Here was her reply in brief: "When you choose a subject, go to the Bible and study it from the Bible thoroughly. Learn it thoroughly from the Holy Scriptures, learn everything the Scriptures have to say on that subject, so that you are complete master of the topic as far as the Scriptures are concerned. After this, go to these writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. See what they say on the subject for sidelights and true emphasis, and to be sure that you are absolutely right in your interpretation. Then go to the people and preach that subject to the people out of the Bible." This was her definite instruction to him.

I suppose this would not preclude a reference now and then to some phrase or sentence or brief quotation. Certainly it does not mean that we should take a pile of books into the pulpit and read the wonderful things in the Spirit of Prophecy and call it a sermon.

In one of her books she says, ["The words of] "the Bible, and the Bible alone, should be heard [from] the pulpit" [See *PK* 626]. I am sure that you are acquainted with that quotation.

May God bless you there in your ministry. Don't forget us in your prayers.

Most sincerely yours in the message of Christ,

H. M. S. Richards

Note: Distributed by CMM with permission of Elder Richards.

See also: H. M. Richards Sr. with N. R. Dower, "The Editor Interviews H. M. S. Richards," *Ministry* 49 (October 1976): 5-7.

Appendix C:
The “Lesser Light” and the “Greater Light”
Quotations from Ellen G. White, underlining by Jerry Moon

Not to Take Place of the Bible.—“The testimonies of Sister White should not be carried to the front. God’s Word is the unerring standard. The Testimonies are not to take the place of the Word. Great care should be exercised by all believers to advance these questions carefully, and always stop when you have said enough. Let all prove their positions from the Scriptures and substantiate every point they claim as truth from the revealed Word of God.”--Letter 12, 1890. (Ev 256.2)

Testimonies Not Ahead of Bible.—“The more we look at the promises of the Word of God, the brighter they grow. The more we practice them, the deeper will be our understanding of them. Our position and faith is in the Bible. And never do we want any soul to bring in the Testimonies ahead of the Bible.” --Manuscript 7, 1894. (Ev 256.3)

Purpose of the Testimonies.—“The Word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind, and [257] 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, vol. 5, pp. 663, 664. (1889) (Ev 256.4)

“Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.”-- Colporteur Evangelist, 37. (1902) (Ev 257.1)

“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 Timothy 3:16, 17, R.V. (GC vii.1)

“Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, 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.” (GC vii.2)

“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.” (GC vii.3)

Testimonies, vol. 2 (Reprinted in *Life Sketches*, 197-202)
Chapter 75 - "A Solemn Dream"

"On the night of April 30, 1871, I retired to rest much depressed in spirits. For three months I had been in a state of great discouragement. I had frequently prayed in anguish of spirit for relief. I had implored help and strength from God, that I might rise above the heavy discouragements that were paralyzing my faith and hope, and unfitting me for usefulness. That night I had a dream which made a very happy impression upon my mind. I dreamed that I was attending an important meeting at which a large company were assembled. Many were bowed before God in earnest prayer, and they seemed to be burdened. They were importuning the Lord for special light. A few seemed to be in agony of spirit; their feelings were intense; with tears they were crying aloud for help and light. Our most prominent brethren were engaged in this most impressive scene. Brother A was prostrated upon the floor, apparently in deep distress. His wife was sitting among a company of indifferent scorers. She looked as though she desired all to understand that she scorned those who were thus humiliating themselves. (2T 604.1)

"I dreamed that the Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and I arose amid cries and prayers, and said: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. I feel urged to say to you that you must commence to work individually for yourselves. You are looking to God and desiring Him to do the work for you which He has left for you to do. If you will do the work for yourselves which you know that you ought to do, then God will help you when you need help. You have left undone the very things which God has left for you to do. You have been calling upon God to do your work. Had you followed the light which He has given you, then He would cause more light to shine upon you; but while you neglect the counsels, warnings, and reproofs that have been given, how can you expect God to give you more light and blessings to neglect and despise? God is not as man; He will not be trifled with. (2T 604.2)

"I took the precious Bible and surrounded it with the several Testimonies for the Church, given for the people of God. Here, said I, the cases of nearly all are met. The sins they are to shun are pointed out. The counsel that they desire can be found here, given for other cases situated similarly to themselves. God has been pleased to give you line upon line and precept upon precept. But there are not many of you that really know what is contained in the Testimonies. You are not familiar with the Scriptures. If you had made God's word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies. It is because you have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God's inspired Book that He has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies, calling your attention to the words of inspiration which you had neglected to obey, and urging you to fashion your lives in accordance with its pure and elevated teachings. (2T 605.1)

"The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His word. The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's word; yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse. (2T 605.2)

"Pride, self-love, selfishness, hatred, envy, and jealousy have beclouded the perceptive powers, and the truth, which would make you wise unto salvation, has lost its power to charm and control the mind. The very essential principles of godliness are not understood because there is not a hungering and thirsting for Bible knowledge, purity of heart, and holiness of life. The Testimonies are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all. (2T 605.3)

"I said further: As the word of God is walled in with these books and pamphlets, so has God walled you in with reproofs, counsel, warnings, and encouragements. Here you are crying before God, in the anguish of your souls, for more light. I am authorized from God to tell you that not another ray of light through the Testimonies will shine upon your pathway until you make a practical use of the light already

given. The Lord has walled you about with light; but you have not appreciated the light; you have trampled upon it. While some have despised the light, others have neglected it, or followed it but indifferently. A few have set their hearts to obey the light which God has been pleased to give them. (2T 606.1)

“Some that have received special warnings through testimony have forgotten in a few weeks the reproof given. The testimonies to some have been several times repeated, but they have not thought them of sufficient importance to be carefully heeded. They have been to them like idle tales. Had they regarded the light given they would have avoided losses and trials which they think are hard and severe. They have only themselves to censure. They have placed upon their own necks a yoke which they find grievous to be borne. It is not the yoke which Christ has bound upon them. God's care and love were exercised in their behalf; but their selfish, evil, unbelieving souls could not discern His goodness and mercy. They rush on in their own wisdom until, overwhelmed with trials and confused with perplexity, they are ensnared by Satan. When you gather up the rays of light which God has given in the past, then will He give an increase of light. (2T 606.2)

“I referred them to ancient Israel. God gave them His law, but they would not obey it. He then gave them ceremonies and ordinances, that, in the performance of these, God might be kept in remembrance. They were so prone to forget Him and His claims upon them that it was necessary to keep their minds stirred up to realize their obligations to obey and honor their Creator. Had they been obedient, and loved to keep God's commandments, the multitude of ceremonies and ordinances would not have been required. (2T 607.1)

“If the people who now profess to be God's peculiar treasure would obey His requirements, as specified in His word, special testimonies would not be given to awaken them to their duty and impress upon them their sinfulness and their fearful danger in neglecting to obey the word of God. Consciences have been blunted because light has been set aside, neglected, and despised. And God will remove these testimonies from the people, and will deprive them of strength, and humble them. (2T 607.2)

“I dreamed that, as I was speaking, the power of God fell upon me in a most remarkable manner, and I was deprived of all strength, yet I had no vision. I thought that my husband stood up before the people and exclaimed: "This is the wonderful power of God. He has made the testimonies a powerful means of reaching souls, and He will work yet more mightily through them than He has hitherto done. Who will be on the Lord's side?" (2T 607.3)

“I dreamed that quite a number instantly sprang to their feet and responded to the call. Others sat sullen, some manifested scorn and derision, and a few seemed wholly unmoved. One stood by my side and said: "God has raised you up and has given you words to speak to the people and to reach hearts as He has given to no other one. He has shaped your testimonies to meet cases that are in need of help. You must be unmoved by scorn, derision, reproach, and censure. In order to be God's special instrument, you should lean to no one, but hang upon Him alone, and, like the clinging vine, let your tendrils entwine about Him. He will make you a means through which to communicate His light to the people. You must daily gather strength from God in order to be fortified, that your surroundings may not dim or eclipse the light that He has permitted to shine upon His people through you. It is Satan's special object to prevent this light from coming to the people of God, who so greatly need it amid the perils of these last days. (2T 607.4)

“Your success is in your simplicity. As soon as you depart from this, and fashion your testimony to meet the minds of any, your power is gone. Almost everything in this age is glossed and unreal. The world abounds in testimonies given to please and charm for the moment, and to exalt self. Your testimony is of a different character. It is to come down to the minutiae of life, keeping the feeble faith from dying, and pressing home upon believers the necessity of shining as lights in the world. (2T 608.1)

“God has given you your testimony, to set before the backslider and the sinner his true condition and the immense loss he is sustaining by continuing a life of sin. God has impressed this upon you by opening it before your vision as He has to no other one now living, and according to the light He has given you

will He hold you responsible. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' Lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins." (2T 608.2)

"This dream had a powerful influence upon me. When I awoke, my depression was gone, my spirits were cheerful, and I realized great peace. Infirmities that had unfitted me for labor were removed, and I realized a strength and vigor to which I had for months been a stranger. It seemed to me that angels of God had been commissioned to bring me relief. Unspeakable gratitude filled my heart for this great change from despondency to light and happiness. I knew that help had come from God. This manifestation appeared to me like a miracle of God's mercy, and I will not be ungrateful for His loving-kindness." (2T 608.3)

Testimonies, vol. 5

"Pride, self-love, selfishness, hatred, envy, and jealousy have beclouded the perceptive powers, and the truth, which would make you wise unto salvation, has lost its power to charm and control the mind. The very essential principles of godliness are not understood because there is not a hungering and thirsting for Bible knowledge, purity of heart, and holiness of life. The Testimonies are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all. [666] "I said further: As the word of God is walled in with these books and pamphlets, so has God walled you in with reproofs, counsel, warnings, and encouragements. Here you are crying before God, in the anguish of your souls, for more light. I am authorized from God to tell you that not another ray of light through the Testimonies will shine upon your pathway until you make a practical use of the light already given. The Lord has walled you about with light; but you have not appreciated the light; you have trampled upon it. While some have despised the light, others have neglected it or followed it but indifferently. A few have set their hearts to obey the light which God has been pleased give them." (5T 665-666).

Appendix D: Ellen White's Relationship to the Six "Pillar" Doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

From Roger W. Coon, "Ellen G. White and SDA Doctrine—Part I: God's FIRST Priority in the First 20 Years," April 18, 1995, pp. 6-9.

A. EGW identified the fundamental ("foundation") doctrines of the SDA Church as:

1. The Second Coming of Christ
2. The Heavenly Sanctuary (including Christ's high-priestly ministry in it)
3. "Soul Sleep" (conditional immortality; the non-immortality of the wicked)
4. The Seventh-day Sabbath
5. The Three Angels' Messages
6. The Spirit of Prophecy (See CW 28-32)

B. The Second Advent of Christ:

EGW heard William Miller preach this doctrine in Portland, Maine, in 1840 and 1842. With her parents, she accepted this doctrine and were subsequently disfellowshipped from the Methodist Church because of their stand. EGW's role as a "special messenger" in relationship to the doctrine was that of validating the prior Biblical teaching of Miller, Joshua V. Himes, Charles Fitch, Josiah Litch, Joseph Bates, and others who promulgated it.

C. The Heavenly Sanctuary:

1. EGW's first written statement upon this subject came about a year after the conclusions of Hiram Edson, O. R. I. Crosier, and Dr. Frederick Hahn had been written out by Crosier and

published in the *Day-Star and Day-Dawn*. Her role was largely to validate the conclusions of these brethren.

2. Although EGW received 11 visions on the subject of the heavenly sanctuary between 1845-51, she always urged the members to read articles on this subject written by the pioneers of the Advent Movement. Not one of the pioneers had appealed to the 11 visions as proof of the validity of this doctrine. Their evidence and arguments were drawn solely from the Scriptures. Uriah Smith referred to the same articles to refute critics and to prove from the Bible the validity of this doctrine, not to EGW.

D. “Soul Sleep” (Conditional Immortality; the Non-Immortality of the Wicked):

George Storrs (1796-1879), a Methodist minister who became a Millerite preacher in 1842, was the first to advocate the unconscious state of humans in death and coined the expression “soul sleep” to describe it. In 1841, he wrote *An Enquiry: Are the Souls of the Wicked Immortal? In Three Letters*, later revised to *Now It Would Be In Six Sermons*. EGW, who initially showed strong disapproval when introduced to it at the age of 15, accepted it after a careful study of the Bible (1T 39, 40). After entering her prophetic ministry, EGW became a strong advocate of Storrs’ “Soul-Sleep” doctrine and considered it to be one of the “pillar” doctrines of the SDA Church (Ms 13, 1889, cited in CW 30, 31). Her role was largely endorsing Storrs’ views.

E. The Sabbath:

1. **Doctrine of:** This doctrine was introduced by Joseph Bates, .
2. **Observance of:** James and Ellen White initially observed the Sabbath on the basis of their study of the Bible, not because she had a vision on the subject. The first vision dealing with the sacredness of the seventh-day Sabbath was given on April 3, 1847, seven months after the Whites had commenced its observance. (cf. Lt 2, 1874; cited in EW 32-35)
3. **Time to Begin Observance of:**
 - a. This issue was not settled among Sabbatarian Adventists until Nov., 1855.
 - b. Four views were held during the 1840s and early 1850s:
 - (i) The Sabbath begins at sunrise, Saturday morning (based upon a misinterpretation of Matt. 18:1, which they interpreted to mean that Sunday begins at sunrise, Sunday morning).
 - (ii) The Sabbath begins at midnight, Friday night (legal time)
 - (iii) The Sabbath begins at 6 p.m., Friday (equatorial time), a position favored by Joseph Bates, who knew that the sun rises daily at 6 a.m. and sets at 6 p.m., at the equator.
 - (iv) The Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday--the Seventh-day Baptist position
 - c. John Nevis Andrews, who could read the original Hebrew of the OT and the Greek NT, was commissioned by church leaders to study the subject from the Scriptures and to present his research findings at the General Conference gathering in Battle Creek, Nov, 1855. On the basis of 11 OT texts and 2 NT texts, he concluded that the proper time to begin the Sabbath was sunset on Friday.
 - d. Bates and EGW initially held out for “equatorial time,” but that night, EGW received a vision correcting her position. She shared her vision with the other believers at the early morning service the following day. (Arthur L. White, *Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 36; 1T 116)

F. The Spirit of Prophecy: EGW was God’s third choice for the office of prophet among the remnant people in the 1840s. She was “the weakest of the weak” (Loughborough). Before her, God had chosen William Ellis Foy, a man of color, and Hazen Foss, EGW’s brother-in-law

through marriage.

G. The Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14:

1. Miller and his clergy preached only the First Angel's Message (1839-44)
2. Charles Fitch seems to have been the first to preach the Second Angel's Message, on July 26, 1843. Previously, Protestants tended to identify the Church of Rome with Spiritual Babylon described in Revelation. Fitch broadened this to include contemporary Protestants who had turned from the doctrine of the imminent Second Advent. E.G.W. incorrectly dated the first preaching of this message to the summer of 1844. (GC 389)
3. James White was probably the first SDA minister to preach the 3rd Angel's Message. (*Present Truth*, I: 69, April, 1850; see "Three Angels' Messages," SDAE [1976]; 1483, 1484)
4. EGW's role, basically, was to endorse the preaching of all three messages as presented by other speakers and writers previously.

Conclusion:

1. O. R. L. Crosier did not appeal to Hiram Edson's illumination in the corn field on October 23, 1844, in writing his article for *Day-Dawn* and *Day-Star* to prove the existence of the heavenly sanctuary; neither did EGW refer to her visions to prove the validity of the SDA doctrines which she espoused and taught.
2. The following were her comments on the foundational doctrines:
 - a. The past fifty years have not dimmed one jot or principle of our faith as we received the great and wonderful evidences that were made certain to us in 1844, after the passing of the time. The languishing souls are to be confirmed and quickened according to His Word . . . Not a word is to be changed or denied. That which the Holy Spirit testified to as truth after the passing of the time, in our great disappointment, is the solid foundation of truth. [The] pillars of truth were revealed, and we accepted the foundation principles that have made us what we are--Seventh-day Adventists, keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus. (Letter 326, Dec. 4, 1905, cited in UL 352:3)
 - b. We are to stand firm as a rock to the principles of the Word of God, remembering that God is with us to give us strength to meet each new experience. Let us ever maintain the principles of righteousness in our lives, that we may go forward from strength to strength in the name of the Lord. We are to hold as very sacred the faith that has been substantiated by the instruction and approval of the Spirit of God from our earliest experience until the present time. (Letter 66, Aug. 28, 1911; cited in UL 254:3)