

provide a welcome relief to the Eurocentric view, but do not make up for this lack of attention to the churches of the East and the South.

Nevertheless, this book is well worth reading and owning, for it provides an uncommonly good panorama of its broad and long-hidden subject matter. It is bound to provide an "I didn't know" response from curious amateurs and seasoned scholars alike and will make an important contribution to progress in this field.

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Knight, George R. *Ellen White's World*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 1998. 144 pp. Paperback, \$8.99.

Ellen White's World is the third of four recent books by George Knight written to acquaint the general reader with Ellen White and her writings. The first in the series was *Meeting Ellen White*, a compact biography that also introduces seven major themes that characterize her writings. The second was *Reading Ellen White*, a popular hermeneutic for her writings, and the fourth was *Walking with Ellen White*, a more intimate glimpse of her relationships as a wife, mother, and friend. The current work, *Ellen White's World*, is unlike the other three in that it does not focus on Ellen White, but rather on the world in which she lived. This well-written and entertaining book is useful not only for the casual reader, but for the serious student of history. It should sell well due to its compact size and the utility of the information brought together. Overall, Knight's book does two things for the reader. First and foremost it brings the reader an awareness of history through the use of pictures as well as broad descriptive strokes of the time period from contemporary literature of the mid- to late nineteenth century. Second, for those of us 100 years removed, the book helps to better understand Ellen White by putting her in the context of the problems and circumstances she faced and thereby demystifying her history. Finally, the average person can now grasp the uniqueness of her gift and her role in the shaping of Sabbatarian Adventist doctrine and practices, and how the society in which she lived influenced her writings.

The book is divided into two basic parts, "Ellen White's World Before the Civil War" and "Ellen White's World After the Civil War," although individual chapters are not rigidly divided between those time periods. Each of the two parts is further broken into chapters using such major historical indicators as social, religious, health, and technological issues.

Much of the first part of the book is devoted to the religious forces that drove the citizens of the pre-Civil War era. Its chapters are labeled "Millennial Visions," "The Great Revival," "The Era of Reform," "Religious Impulses," and "Technological Advances." The second half focuses on the social and intellectual changes after the Civil War and briefly looks at the role of entertainment during the rise of major cities. These chapter titles are: "A Changing World," "Millennial Visions," "Religious Impulses," "Social Issues," and "The New Leisure." One aspect that seems to be omitted is the political issues of the day. The one exception is a section in chap. 3 titled, "The movement to free the slaves." Here

Knight deals with women's rights and abolitionism as social issues rather than political issues. This is a minor historical criticism, and due to the nature of the book and its page limitations, it was probably not feasible to go further into the political arena.

Another aspect that would have been helpful to the serious student of history would have been to include a bibliography with further readings, and footnotes. For the reader interested in researching more in depth about the nineteenth century as related to Ellen White, another useful volume is *The World of Ellen White*, edited by Gary Land (Review and Herald, 1987). This publication brought together fourteen scholars (one of whom was George R. Knight). Knight's book shows the connection between Ellen White's world and her views more frequently and closely than does the earlier work.

Ellen White is introduced on p. 16. From that point on, one valuable feature of the book is that Knight ends each section by comparing Ellen White's views to those of the thinkers and movers of her day. The author shows where Ellen White was influenced by her contemporaries as well as where she disagreed with them. For example, she agreed with other reformers of health when they advocated clean living and natural remedies, but disagreed with their view that these reforms would bring about an earthly millennial kingdom (36). In fact, as Seventh-day Adventists hold, yet she did believe that these reforms were an aid to individuals to prepare heart and mind for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This borrowing of good ideas, and rejecting harmful practices of the day, helped to characterize her gift. This also gave guidance to the early Sabbatarian Adventists and contributed to the formation of doctrines and practices still held today.

Knight paints a broad picture of life in the late 1880s, using popular literature and carefully placed pictures to make that world come alive to the reader. In citing many contemporary works from the day, Knight discusses their contents, popular influence, and impact on leading thinkers of the day. For instance, when speaking about nativism and the anti-Catholic feeling that pervaded much of the nineteenth century, Knight cites the work of Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West* and explains in two sentences what the book was about (64).

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Kyle, Richard. *The Last Days Are Here Again*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. 255 pp. Paperback, \$14.99.

Richard Kyle, professor of history and religion at Tabor College, and author of *The Religious Fringe* and *The New Age Movement in American Culture*, begins by telling how what he believed to be a "sign" of the imminent end, the Suez Crisis of 1956, frightened him as a youth. If this book is any indication, that early experience gave him a healthy skepticism about alarmist predictions, and an enduring interest in eschatology and apocalyptic.

Some may find the ironic tone of the title annoying, but it accurately reflects the tone of the entire book, so be warned. This reviewer finds it part of a refreshing and balanced attitude, eminently suited to the author's purpose, "to