
The Church and Its Future

Adventist Theology Today

by Fritz Guy

In spite of the painful theological tensions currently felt in the church, Adventist theology still has a transcendent vocation: it is challenged with a task that is full of potential good both for the church and for the contemporary world. For Adventist theology can speak to the present human situation with hope, and the world needs to hear what it has to say.

Ideologically the world is predominantly secular; its interest is concentrated in the here and now, and it lacks an ultimate point of

reference for meaning and value. Politically the world is idolatrous, worshipping substitute gods such as national power and material affluence. Economically the world is unjust and ecologically it is precarious, with the affluent minority worrying over energy to run its machines while the impoverished majority worries over food to maintain human bodies. It is for *this* world that Adventist theology has good news. In stressing God's transcendence and holiness, his work of eschatological judgment and ultimate renewal, his call to stewardship and service it has a message of relevance to the world's present needs.

Yet we cannot ignore the continuing theological discussions within the church. If Adventist theology is going to speak to the

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world with power, we must be sure that the various questions that currently agitate it are not potentially fatal. Once we are reassured about this, we can explore some of the elements of Adventist theology that enable it to respond to the problems and perplexities of the present world. Finally, we must consider the practical need of providing an appropriate context for Adventist theology as an activity within the community of faith.

Every theology, of course, faces the challenge of unanswered questions, loose ends, unfinished business; and Adventist theology is no exception. The questions that are involved here, however, are manageable and need not be felt as threatening to the validity and viability of Adventist theology as a whole. On the contrary, they can be regarded not merely as problems to be solved, but as occasions for theological growth.

In spite of the amount and variety of recent attention to the doctrine of the sanctuary, more work needs to be done¹ before a final answer can be given to a basic question: is the historic Adventist understanding of the sanctuary in heaven and its “cleansing” fully warranted by Scripture, interpreted according to generally accepted principles of exegesis? In response to this question at least four different preliminary answers have been offered. Each of them is logically possible and has its own distinctive values; but each one also carries its own theological difficulties.

The first answer is that the doctrine of the sanctuary is indeed warranted by Scripture, and should be maintained and proclaimed in the same form in which it was developed by J. N. Loughborough, Uriah Smith, and James White in the 1850s.² This has been the answer of traditional Adventism, but it has not yet been established to everyone’s satisfaction. Even the best discussions³ of the sanctuary symbolism in the prophecy of Daniel have not identified a clear biblical basis for the idea of a heavenly *investigative* judgment that scrutinizes the life record of every person in history who has claimed the promise of salvation in Christ.⁴ The recent tendency to refer to a pre-Advent judgment

rather than an investigative judgment⁵ may be a tacit recognition of the problem here.

The opposite answer, on the other hand, is that the doctrine of the sanctuary is not warranted by Scripture, and should be revised or rejected. This answer has been seriously suggested at various points in the history of Adventist thought up to and including the present; but it has never been widely accepted, and it has always been officially rejected whenever it has become the focus of attention.⁶ The reason for the strong reaction against this answer is probably the enormous importance of the doctrine of the sanctuary for the religious experience of the early Sabbath-observing Adventists. For it was crucial to their self-understanding, and we are their direct spiritual and theological descendants.⁷ Whatever the biblical evidence or theological reasoning involved, it would be extremely difficult for the community of faith as a whole to conclude that so central a historic affirmation is no longer tenable, because such a conclusion might well result in a traumatic crisis of identity for the total community as well as for individual members. Another problem with this answer is that it raises a difficult question regarding the theological function of the ministry of Ellen White, who explicitly affirmed the doctrine of the sanctuary in its midnineteenth-century form.

A third answer, similar to the first, is that the doctrine of the sanctuary is warranted by Scripture when it is interpreted according to distinctive Adventist principles of exegesis. This answer has not (to my knowledge) been formally proposed; but it has been suggested in classroom discussion and private conversation. It is theologically plausible, and it is attractive to those who want to emphasize the unique elements of Adventist theology. Nevertheless, it presents a major problem; for it means that the validity of these distinctive principles of exegesis must be established *before* the doctrine of the sanctuary can be seen as biblically credible. That is, people would have to learn to read the Bible in a new, “Adventist,” way before they could recognize the scriptural basis of this doctrine.

Yet a fourth answer, which may be regarded as a combination of some aspects of

the second and the third, is that although the doctrine of the sanctuary is not warranted by Scripture itself, it is adequately warranted by the prophetic reinterpretation of Scripture by Ellen White. This answer has only recently been explicitly formulated,⁸ but it has often been implied by Adventist interpretations of the relevant biblical materials. It is also implied by the comment, often heard these days, that in the current discussions about the sanctuary and the investigative judgment, the bottom line is the authority of Ellen White. This answer seems, however, to conflict with the historic assertion of Adventist

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theology, paralleled by Ellen White’s own conviction, that the Bible alone is “the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.”⁹ Also, this answer makes an acknowledgment of the prophetic mission of Ellen White a logically necessary prerequisite to a recognition of the validity of the doctrine of the sanctuary.

Since each of these answers remains problematic in its own way, Adventist theology will no doubt continue its efforts to understand the scriptural witness more completely. It may be that a more satisfactory answer will come by means of careful reflection on the experiential and theological *meaning* of the ministry of Christ in the sanctuary in heaven and the work of judgment which that ministry involves.¹⁰

The prophetic role of Ellen White is as indispensable to Adventist theology as it is to Adventist history; to ignore it would be im-

possible, and even to try to do so would be irresponsible. So there is no question about taking Ellen White seriously; the question, rather, concerns the precise role her work should play in Adventist theology. More specifically, is her expressed understanding of the meaning of a particular biblical statement decisive in determining our exegesis of that statement?¹¹ Further, should her understanding of a particular theological issue determine our present understanding of that issue regardless of all other considerations? And is her authority alone sufficient to establish a doctrine of the church in the absence of a clear biblical witness to that doctrine?¹²

These questions emerge not only from the ongoing discussion of the doctrine of the sanctuary just cited, but also from the work of Adventist biblical scholars whose exegetical work may lead to an understanding of some part of Scripture that is different from the understanding expressed by Ellen White.

Two principle answers have been offered in this regard, but neither is without some difficulties.

The first answer is that the authority of Ellen White is equivalent to that of Scripture. This answer is confirmed by popular Adventist piety (as indicated, for example, in the material typically selected for devotional reading) and by the function of Ellen White materials in general religious discussion within the church (as published, for example, in the *Adventist Review*). But this answer has never been officially asserted by the church; on the contrary, it has often been publicly denied,¹³ and it runs counter to Ellen White’s own declarations regarding the relation of her work to the Bible.¹⁴ If this answer were taken seriously, it would require the church to define the function of Adventist exegesis as discovering and expounding biblical evidence to support Ellen White’s interpretation of the text.

The second answer is that the authority of Ellen White is subordinate to that of the Bible. But this answer presents the difficult challenge of defining the “subordinate authority” of a prophetic ministry. If the authority is in fact “subordinate,” then in principle it can be overruled by the higher authority to which one has a right to appeal; but if

prophetic authority can be thus overruled, in what sense is it indeed “authority”?

The considerations here must take into account the evidence that Ellen White made extensive use of the literary work of others, from whom she evidently derived both information and wording.¹⁵ But this evidence is not at all decisive either way, for literary and informational borrowing is a common phenomenon in Scripture too, as well as in many other kinds of writing both ancient and modern.

Like the question of the biblical basis of the doctrine of the sanctuary, the question of the theological authority of Ellen White deserves and demands continuing, constructive attention, not just because it is a subject of current interest in the church, but also because it has profound implications for the future shape of Adventist theology as a whole.

Until it was eclipsed by the recent discussions of the sanctuary and Ellen White’s use of literary sources, the subject that evoked the most spirited theological debate, and was allegedly responsible for “the shaking of Adventism,”¹⁶ was the proper understanding of righteousness by faith. It could easily be argued that this subject is just as crucial theologically as either of the others, and even more important experientially. For the question here is, “What is the Adventist understanding of the heart of the gospel?”

Two main alternative answers have been given. One is that the heart of the gospel is justification, the new status of the Christian; and the other is that the heart of the gospel is sanctification, the new life of the Christian. But since these answers do not seem to be mutually exclusive, it might be supposed that they could be combined into a third, better answer — namely, that the heart of the gospel is union with Christ, the new creation that includes both the new status and the new life. But on further consideration, this third appears not to be a genuine alternative to the other two after all; for each of them already includes the other as a secondary element, and it is not clear that the two elements could be given actually equal emphasis. So the question can be reformulated: “Is the essen-

tial message of the gospel a matter of justification, of which sanctification is the inevitable behavioral consequence; or is it a matter of sanctification, for which justification is the necessary prerequisite experience?”

The broader theological implications of this question become evident with the introduction of important related questions. In the area of Christology the corollary question is, “Did Jesus have exactly the same human nature as the rest of humanity?” “Was he just like us?” In anthropology the question is, “What are the effects of Adam’s sin, and how are they transmitted?” In eschatology, the question is, “Has the Second Coming been delayed by the failure of God’s people (in proclamation, in spiritual maturity, or in some other way)?” Because of the inter-relatedness of all these questions, one can speak broadly of two “families” of Adventist theology: one “family” emphasizes justification, the uniqueness of Christ’s nature, and the radical character of human depravity; the other “family” emphasizes sanctification, the similarity of Christ’s nature to that of redeemed humanity, and the possibility of overcoming sin as Christ did.

In regard to the question concerning the essential meaning of the gospel, both answers can arise from genuine pastoral concern. The one that emphasizes justification reflects a sensitivity to the need for liberation, assurance, and joy of experienced forgiveness; the one that emphasizes sanctification reflects a recognition of the need for the behavioral consequences of spiritual growth and practical religion. Besides, each of these two answers can claim the virtue of its special relation to the Christian tradition: the emphasis on justification is a reaffirmation of the Reformation (and Pauline) insight of *sola fide*;¹⁷ and the emphasis on sanctification can be given a uniquely Adventist dimension in relation to the so-called “harvest principle.”¹⁸ But it should be recognized by everyone concerned with this question that neither the pastoral concern nor the historical relationship is theologically decisive, so the choice between the alternative answers must be made on other grounds.

The continuing discussion of this question may be facilitated by a recognition of two

distinctions. The first is the difference between a commitment to God's will (which is involved in justification and the relationship to Christ as Lord), and a *behavioral actualization* of God's will (which is the meaning of sanctification). Thus justification includes a will, but a different kind of interest from that involved in sanctification. The second useful distinction is the difference between sanctifi-

comparing chronological data?" Here again a range of answers is theoretically possible.

One answer is a strict literalism, maintaining a seven-day creation process that occurred no more than 6,000 years ago. Many (if not most) Adventists are entirely comfortable with this answer, although the available historical and archaeological data seem to require more time than 6,000 years.

A second answer is a less-strict literalism, maintaining a seven-day process of creation that occurred perhaps 8,000 to 12,000 years ago. Many Adventists who are professionally involved in biblical or theological studies are more inclined to this answer than the first one; this takes account of the historical and archaeological evidence, but there remains the problem of the great amount and diversity of geological and paleontological evidence that seems to suggest an extremely long span of time.¹⁹

A third answer is a nonliteral interpretation, maintaining an evolutionary development that was divinely directed and that included the emergence of hominid forms of life approximately 1.5 million years ago. Only a very small minority of Adventists seems to be attracted to this answer, which is beset by a major theological obstacle: it is extremely difficult to incorporate the notion of an evolutionary process of some 2 billion years into an Adventist understanding of the Sabbath (which is explicitly related to a seven-day creation in Genesis 2:2-3 and Exodus 20:11; 31:17), of the relation of sin and death (especially human death), and of a catastrophic, supernatural end of history (which seems to presuppose a similarly sudden, supernatural origin of history). Furthermore, the witness of Ellen White is explicitly and emphatically against this third answer.²⁰

While this question does not loom as large on the Adventist theological horizon as it did a few years ago, it raises the fundamental issue of the relevance of "secular" (that is, nonrevelatory) knowledge for religious belief and theological understanding. In the modern Western world, for example, it seems impossible to deny or ignore any significant body of scientific evidence and still be credible to others

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cation as a *possibility of grace* and as a *requirement for salvation* (or for translation into heaven, or for the occurrence of the Eschaton). Sanctification may thus be understood in terms of a gift rather than a demand. It is not to be expected that a recognition of these distinctions will solve the tensions between the two ways of understanding the meaning of the gospel, and thus obviate further discussion; but such a recognition may make the ongoing discussion more constructive.

Of less general interest to the church as a whole, but of great importance to some within its academic community, is the question of origins: “When and how did God bring the world to its present condition and establish life (especially human life)?” Because the theological issue here is first of all a matter of the proper interpretation of Scripture, the question may be rewritten this way: “How literally should we understand the Genesis narratives of creation and the ac-

(and perhaps even to oneself). Thus if evolutionary theory is not tolerable in the context of Adventist theology, some alternative theory must be developed to make sense of the mass of available evidence. Although interest in the question of the process of creation and the age of the earth has temporarily receded, it has not disappeared completely; and it will surely be revived sooner or later, either by internal concerns within the community of faith or by our relationship to the culture in which we live and to which we are called to proclaim the Advent message.

Two other questions deserve serious theological consideration in the near future, even though they have not yet attracted any widespread or sustained attention.

The first of these additional questions concerns the meaning of the continuation of human history because of the nonoccurrence of the Eschaton. Does the fact that Christ has not yet returned call for a reexamination of Adventist eschatology? Can the church believe and proclaim an “imminent” Second Advent for an indefinite length of time? If so, what is the meaning of the idea of “imminence”? But if not, is there any way to continue an authentic (and not merely nostalgic or cultural) Adventist theology?²¹

The second issue is the relationship of Adventism to the larger Christian community. Is Adventism called to be the consummation, the quintessence of Christianity? If so, is it to try to become, religiously speaking, all things to all people everywhere? And how then is one to understand the role of other Christians in the world? Are they in some sense second-class Christians? Or is Adventism a kind of theological “family,” different from other “families” (Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, and so on) but sustaining a similar relation to the whole? Is Adventism, in other words, merely a distinctive color in the Christian rainbow?

So there is plenty of work for Adventist theology to do in coming to a clearer understanding of eternal truth. Yet neither of these last two questions, nor any of the preceding four, nor all of them together, threaten the

soundness and viability of Adventist theology as a whole. Rather, they can contribute to its excitement and vitality.

Besides the clarification of answers to the various questions of current and potential interest within the church, the Adventist theological agenda also includes the articulation of a powerful message to a world that, as suggested earlier, is ideologically secular, politically idolatrous, economically unjust, and ecologically precarious. This latter task is just as important as the former, and just as urgent; so our attention to it must not be postponed until we have answered all our internal questions.

The most pervasive motif in Adventist theology is the affirmation of transcendence, a recognition of the “otherness” that constitutes the holiness of God. This theme is evident in the meaning of the Sabbath, a recurring acknowledgment and experience of the Ultimate Reality which is the source and ground of our own reality, and which therefore gives meaning to our reality and at the same time relativises it. Thus the Sabbath is both a refutation of secularism and rejection of idolatry; it is both a recognition of a transcendent point of reference for our existence in the world and a protest against the deification of anything in the world. In a context of economic affluence it is a protest against the seduction of materialism, and in the presence of political power it is a protest against every form of tyranny.

The eschatological motif in Adventist theology is closely related to that of transcendence; it could indeed be seen as any element of the transcendence motif. To look for a kingdom of God beyond history is to declare the provisional and ambiguous character of every human structure, and the fragmentary character of every human plan and program.²² This is not to say that all human structures and programs are equally bad (or good), but that none is purely good and therefore worthy of absolute allegiance. While it is not the business of Adventist theology to propose specific political or economic reforms, its responsibility does include a witness and warning against the

human pretension to absolute goodness.

A third motif in Adventist theology is the idea of stewardship and service. Because the Creator is Lord of the whole of human existence and because all human existence is interrelated, every personal resource is intended to be a means of actualizing the Creator's generous love. This is the potential of grace in human existence. Thus the use of one's time, the care of one's body, and the spreading of one's money are all part of a person's religious vocation and experience — not, to be sure, in order to earn divine favor

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or to qualify for eternal life, but in order to be an agency of gracious love in the world, to relieve the pain and reduce the suffering of one's brothers and sisters. Similarly, the world's natural resources are gifts of grace. While again it is not the business of Adventist theology to propose specific responses to the problems of poverty and ecological crisis, its responsibility surely includes a call to awareness, concern, and constructive action.

So it can be seen that Adventist theology is broadly relevant to the contemporary human situation. It can speak both critically and creatively to many of the present needs of the world, and it is called to do so.

If Adventist theology is not fundamentally threatened by the questions that currently confront it, and if it is existentially relevant to the contemporary world, then our one remaining concern is whether constructive theological activity can now be carried on within the community of faith. Can the church as a whole accept and encourage theological development? If not, Adventist

theology has a dim future, in spite of its scriptural validity and contemporary relevance. For if the community of faith does not support the activity of theology, those who are best prepared by education and experience to engage in it will decline to do so, and the activity itself will become minimal and haphazard.

The end of serious, vigorous theological activity would not, of course, signal the end of Adventism as a sociocultural phenomenon, maintaining its distinctive lifestyle and perpetuating its traditional understandings. But an Adventism without constructive theology would be incapable of fulfilling the mission to the world that the very self-understanding of Adventism entails. For the community would have lost the possibility of discovering “present truth”; it could only remember and proclaim its “former truth.”

Thus the prospect for ongoing theological activity — which is the future of Adventist theology — depends on an atmosphere of openness in the church. There must be an openness to questions — questions that most members of the community of faith are not asking, either because they have not yet thought of them, or are not sufficiently interested in them, or are afraid to ask them. The questions may sometimes seem “radical” in the sense that they probe the roots of the community's beliefs; but they must not be ruled out of order on that account. A church cannot say to its theologians and biblical scholars, any more than a teacher can say to his students, “You must not ask *that* question. You must ask only *safe* questions, the ones to which we already know the answers.” Nor can the church regard the asking of such questions as a mark of disloyalty. The truth to which the church is committed is clarified, not diminished, by investigation.²³ Openness is the opposite of insecurity.

There must be openness to new evidence — a willingness to acknowledge it, to take it seriously, and to consider its possible implications for the improvement of our theological understanding. On the one hand, this evidence may be biblical. It may, for example, be the result of a more careful exegesis of a particular text, and therefore a clearer expression of its meaning (as in the case of the

expression "within the veil" in the letter to the Hebrews).²⁴ It may be a newly recognized pattern among several parts of the Bible, a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts (such as the total biblical understanding of womanhood). It may be a phenomenon of biblical revelation that discloses some aspect of the revelatory process (as do the similarities and differences of the synoptic gospels). On the other hand, the new evidence may be some secular knowledge that assists us in the application of biblical principles and norms to the particularities of our life in the twentieth century (such as the recognition of the nonvolitional nature of some instances of homosexual orientation).²⁵ Whatever the evidence, it must always be welcome; for truth is always preferable to error, and truth is discovered by taking account of all evidence. Openness is the opposite of obscurantism.

And there must be openness to the possibility of alternative views within the basic consensus of the community of faith — a determination to interpret the consensus broadly rather than narrowly. In other words, there must be an ability to handle a certain amount of ambiguity. For sometimes the evidence is capable of varying interpretation, either because the evidence itself is not decisive, or because different persons look at the same evidence through different eyes. Openness, however, is by no means a refusal to come to a definite conclusion; it is instead the ability to come to a conclusion of one's own without insisting that everyone else

come to the same conclusion. Openness is the opposite of dogmatism.

The encouragement of openness within the church is the responsibility of the whole community of faith, not least of all the administrators and theologians in that community. The role of administrative leadership includes the communication of a sense of assurance regarding the stability of the community's fundamental beliefs, and a sense of confidence regarding the loyalty of its scholars. For their part, the scholars can initiate responsible theological discussion, and also provide for the church an example of listening to and learning from those whose views differ from their own. And those who are neither administrators nor theologians, but who make up the great majority in the community of faith, can encourage openness by participating in the ongoing discussions whenever there is an opportunity, recognizing that the future of Adventist theology is part of their future too.

In the light of the challenging but manageable questions currently being discussed, and of the relevance of Adventist theology to the problems and perplexities of our world, the theological task of the church is worth everyone's best efforts. Fulfilling it is for the good of those who need to hear the Advent message in clarity and power, for our own maturity in the understanding and experience of truth, and for the glory of God who is the source and goal of all truth and all theology.²⁶

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Cf. "Christ and the Heavenly Sanctuary," *Adventist Review*, September 4, 1980, p. 15; *Ministry*, October 1980, p. 18; and *SPECTRUM*, vol. 11, no. 2 (November 1980), p. 71: "But while we believe that our historic interpretation of Daniel 8:14 is valid, we wish to encourage ongoing study of this important prophecy."

2. Cf. Don F. Neufeld, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, revised edition (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1976), s.v. "Investigative Judgment," pp. 671-72.

3. E.g., Gerhard F. Hasel, "Christ's Atoning Ministry in Heaven," *Ministry*, January 1976, supplement; and "The 'Little Horn,' the Saints, and the Sanctuary in Daniel 8," Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshner, eds., *The Sanctuary and the Atonement* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute,

1981), pp. 177-227; William H. Shea, "Daniel and the Judgment," unpublished manuscript prepared for the Sanctuary Review Committee, Glacier View, Colorado, August 1980; Arthur J. Ferch, "The Pre-Advent Judgment," *Adventist Review*, October 30, 1980, pp. 4-7.

4. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1911), pp. 486-90.

5. E.g., Hasel, "Christ's Atoning Ministry in Heaven," p. 25c; Ferch, "The Pre-Advent Judgment."

6. The most prominent cases are those of A. F. Ballenger (1905), W. W. Fletcher (1930), and Desmond Ford (1980).

7. Cf. Ellen G. White, letter to John A. Burden, December 11, 1905, in *Selected Messages*, book 1 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1958) pp. 160-162.

8. Raymond F. Cottrell, "A Hermeneutic for Daniel 8:14," unpublished manuscript prepared for the Sanctuary Review Committee, Glacier View, Colorado, August 1980.

9. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. vii.

10. Cf. William G. Johnsson, "What the Sanctuary Doctrine Means Today," *Adventist Review*, May 14, p. 13; May 28, pp. 13-14; June 11, pp. 11-12; June 25, p. 17; July 9, pp. 13-14; July 23, pp. 14-15.

11. Cf. "The Role of the Ellen G. White Writings in Doctrinal Matters," *Adventist Review*, September, 1980, p. 15; *Ministry*, October 1980, p. 19; and *SPECTRUM*, vol. 11, no. 2 (November 1980), p. 72: "These writings also confirm Biblical truth, without in the least intending to inhibit serious research built upon sound principles of interpretation."

12. Cf. *ibid.*: "While the fundamental doctrines of the church are structured on the authority of Biblical writers, expanded understanding and insight toward their full development may be found in Ellen G. White's writings."

Cf. also *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1957), p. 93: "While Adventists hold the writings of Ellen G. White in highest esteem, yet these are not the source of our expositions. We base our teachings on the Scriptures, the only foundation of all true Christian doctrine."

13. E.g., *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 90: "We have never considered Ellen G. White to be in the same category as the writers of the canon of Scripture."

Cf. Neufeld, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Spirit of Prophecy," p. 1413: "In accord with the historic Protestant position, SDA's accept the Bible and the Bible only as the Christian's rule of faith and practice. . . . [They] affirm that the canonical Scriptures constitute the norm by which all other prophetic messages are to be tested."

14. E.g., Ellen G. White, *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1953), p. 125: "The Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light."

15. Cf. Douglas Hackleman, "GC Committee Studies Ellen White's Sources," *SPECTRUM*, vol. 10, no. 4 (March 1980), pp. 9-15; Donald R. McAdams, "Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen G. White Studies in the 1970's," *ibid.*, pp. 27-41; Arthur L. White, "Ellen G. White and Her Writings," *Adventist Review*, November 27, 1980, pp. 7-9; William G. Johnsson, "Reflections on Ellen White's Inspiration," *ibid.*, pp. 12-13; W. C. White and D. E. Robinson, "Brief Statements Regarding the Writings of Ellen G.

White," *Adventist Review*, June 4, 1980, insert.

16. Geoffrey J. Paxton, *The Shaking of Adventism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977).

17. E.g., Paxton, pp. 35-49.

18. E.g., Herbert E. Douglass, "The Unique Contribution of Adventist Eschatology," in Gordon M. Hyde, ed., *North American Bible Conference 1974* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1974); *The End: Unique Voice of Adventists About the Return of Jesus* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1979), pp. 13-20.

19. Cf. Molleurus Couperus, "Tensions Between Religion and Science," *SPECTRUM*, vol. 10, no. 4 (March 1980), pp. 74-78.

20. E.g., Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1903), pp. 128-30; *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1958), pp. 45, 111-116; *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3 (Battle Creek, Michigan: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), pp. 90-96.

21. Among the few considerations of the question, cf. Roy Branson, "Adventist Between the Times: The Shift in the Church's Eschatology," *SPECTRUM*, vol. 8, no. 1 (September 1976), pp. 15-26; Tom Dybdahl, "How to Wait for the Second Coming," *ibid.*, pp. 32-35; Jonathan Butler, "When Prophecy Fails: The Validity of Apocalypticism," *ibid.*, pp. 7-14.

22. Cf. Langdon Gilkey, *Reaping the Whirlwind: A Christian Interpretation of History* (New York: Seabury, 1976), pp. 233-238.

23. Cf. Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1946), pp. 33, 44: "Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation." "If the pillars of our faith will not stand the test of close investigation, it is time we knew it. There must be no spirit of pharisaism cherished among us."

24. "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," *Adventist Review*, September 4, 1980, p. 14; *Ministry*, October 1980, pp. 16-18; *SPECTRUM*, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 70: "The symbolic language of the Most Holy Place, 'Within the veil,' is used to assure us of our full, direct, and free access of God."

25. Cf. Robert K. Johnston, *Evangelicals at an Impasse: Biblical Authority in Practice* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), pp. 117-20, 133-38.

26. Much of the material in this article appeared in a somewhat different form in a paper entitled "The Future of Adventist Theology" and was presented to the Andrews Society for Religious Studies at a meeting in Dallas, Texas, November 5, 1980.