

Authority and Identity

New edition of Seeking a Sanctuary shows latest trends in Adventist Study | BY MALCOLM BULL AND KEITH LOCKHART

Born in 1827, the daughter of a hatter from Gorham, Maine, Ellen Gould Harmon had an uneventful childhood. At the age of nine, however, she was accidentally hit on the head by a stone, and her injuries prevented further formal education. She first heard about the imminent end of the world at twelve, when her parents took her to a meeting that William Miller was holding in her neighborhood. She waited until she was fifteen before fully committing herself to his movement, but when she did, she was expelled from the Methodist Church, into which she had been born, along with other members of her family.¹

Her first vision occurred when she was still only seventeen, two months after the débâcle of October 22, 1844. This was a comforting revelation in which she saw that the saints would ascend from the earth to the Holy City after all. She continued to have such visions until 1878, although the frequency declined markedly in the 1860s, and she probably did not have more than about two hundred altogether. In 1846 she married James White, formerly a minister of the Christian Connection and a fellow disappointed Millerite.² Together they worked for the Seventh-

day Adventist denomination until James's death in 1881. After this, Willie, one of Ellen White's two surviving sons, became her closest confidant. She spent most of her life in the northeastern United States, but she visited Europe from 1885 to 1887 and lived in Australia between 1891 and 1900. On her return to America she settled near St. Helena, California, where she died in 1915. She never accepted formal office, thereby establishing a distinction between her charismatic role and the bureaucracy of the church. But throughout her long career, Ellen White wrote and spoke to Adventist audiences, who received her in the belief that she was the "spirit of prophecy" identified in the book of Revelation.³

In the beginning, her religious experience followed a pattern similar to that of many previous mystics. In 1842 she went through a typical "dark night of the soul" occasioned by her fear of praying in public: "I remained for three weeks with not one ray of light to pierce the thick clouds of darkness around me," White related later. "I then had two dreams which gave me a faint ray of light and hope."⁴ In one of these, she ascended a stairway. At the top she was brought to Jesus. Like other female mystics, such as St. Teresa, she was immediately attracted by his beauty, but she had to be reassured before being able to experience the full joy of his presence.⁵ Shortly after this dream, she uttered her first public prayer, during which she experienced an overwhelming sense of love for Jesus: "Wave after wave of glory rolled over me, until my body grew stiff."⁶ Just as St. Teresa had written

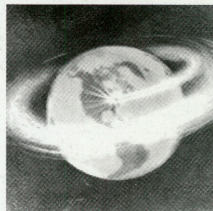
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**Seeking a Sanctuary, Seventh-day Adventism
and the American Dream**

By Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart

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of her transverberation that her soul could not "be content with anything less than God," so White wrote, "I could not be satisfied till I was filled with the fullness of God."⁷ This intense desire for experience of the divine presence is an aspect of White's development that is often overlooked. Her exceptional religious propensities originated, not from a search for doctrinal or ethical information, but from a simple desire to feel the love of Jesus.

Such experiences were accompanied by striking physical manifestations, and these were fundamental to her acceptance as a source of authority within the emergent denomination. At the onset of vision, she usually uttered the words "Glory! Glory! Glory!" She would enter a trance-like state, stop breathing, and because of this apparent cessation of normal bodily functions, seem "lost to the world." This phenomenon was very important to her contemporaries, who made a concerted effort to establish her indifference to earthly things. They covered her nose and mouth, held a mirror up to her face, pinched her, felt her chest, pretended to hit her, and shone bright lights in her eyes, all in an effort to see if she would breathe, flinch, or blink.⁸

The attempt to establish that Ellen White was lost to this world was based on the implicit understanding that if she were, she would be more open to the spiritual world.⁹ In her first vision, she had experienced it so directly that afterwards she wept and felt homesick for the better land she had seen.¹⁰ This ability to see the heavenly world was vital to the early Adventists, who, after the Great Disappointment, had begun to doubt that what was visible on earth revealed eternal truth. Thus, through her revelations of heaven, Ellen White could inform the faithful of what ought to be believed on earth. The most literal example of how this worked was White's vision of the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone in the heavenly sanctuary. Reading them, she observed that God had not changed the wording of the

fourth commandment in favor of Sunday, the first day of the week. Therefore, she concluded that God required the observance of Saturday, the seventh-day Sabbath, on earth.¹¹

This approach attracted criticism from the church's early opponents. In 1866, in *The Visions of Mrs. White Not of God*, two disaffected Adventists, B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff, alleged that many of the things Ellen White claimed to see in heaven were false, or not in accord with descriptions in Scripture.¹² Their critique was taken up by the Sunday-keeping Advent Christians, who, like the Adventists, were previously followers of William Miller. They pointed out that Ellen White had never had the revelation about the Ten Commandments while she was a Sunday observer herself. It was only after she received "the theory of the seventh-day Sabbath at the hand of a man," one Advent Christian wrote in 1867, that her visions came into "harmony with her new feature of theology."¹³ Such objections, and the accusations of Snook and Brinkerhoff, were answered by the church writer and editor Uriah Smith in a booklet issued in the following year. He maintained that what White saw in heaven was accurate, in harmony with Scripture, and the basis of sound Adventist doctrine.¹⁴

Even so, it was some time before the "Testimonies," as her writings became known, led rather than followed the group to which they were addressed. For the first ten years, she tended to confirm belief rather than admonish believers. Indeed, the quantity of her output was regulated by the attitude of the community. As she herself noted in 1855: "The reasons why visions had not been more frequent of late, is, they have not been appreciated by the church."¹⁵ In practice, the extent to which the visions could be appreciated by Adventists was dependent on the frequency of their publication. As the church expanded, its chief means of communication became the press. Ellen White's religious experience, once validated to the scientific satisfaction of her

peers, became the raw material on which a publishing industry was based. The financial and technological development of Adventist publishing may not have influenced White's experience, but it certainly determined the extent and form in which that experience could be communicated.

The nineteenth century witnessed a revolution in American publishing, and the Adventist press followed the general trend.¹⁶ As technology improved, it became easier to produce longer books. This advance also necessitated a constant flow of copy, an example of which can be seen in the books dealing with the "great controversy" theme—White's classic exposition of the ongoing battle between good and evil. The central idea of the great controversy is a cosmic struggle between Christ and Satan, which the prophetess traced from its origins in heaven to its final resolution at the close of the millennium. The great controversy theme first appeared in the first volume of *Spiritual Gifts* in 1858. Material from the *Spiritual Gifts* series was expanded to form the four-volume *Spirit of Prophecy* series in 1870–1884. Between 1888 and 1917, this series was transformed into the *Conflict of the Ages* series that comprised five books: *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *Prophets and Kings* (accounts of Old Testament history), *The Desire of Ages* (a biography of Christ), *Acts of the Apostles* (a history of early Christianity), and *The Great Controversy* (which related the battle between Christ and Satan from the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 to the millennium at the end of time).

In the course of this process, the content and style of the books underwent significant alteration. Some idea of the stylistic changes may be gained by comparing the account of the fall of man given in volume one of *Spiritual Gifts* (1858) with the accounts found in volume one of the *Spirit of Prophecy* (1870) and in volume one of the *Conflict of the Ages* series, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890). Ellen White's writing in 1858 reveals both the deficiencies in her education and the intensity of her



experience. The narrative style is simple but compelling. The account is given in the past tense, not so much because the events described happened in the past as because the visions were in the past. By 1870 White had acquired many of the techniques of contemporary religious novelists.¹⁷ Making much use of the vivid present, she emphasizes narrative detail and the emotional state of the characters involved. The short sentences found in *Spiritual Gifts* are filled out by abundant adjectives and adverbs and expanded by additional clauses. Thus the angels that in 1858 "gave instruction to Adam and Eve," in 1870 "graciously and lovingly gave them the information they desired."¹⁸ While in 1858 Eve simply "offered the fruit to her husband," in 1870 "she was in a strange and unnatural excitement as she sought her husband, with her hands filled with the forbidden fruit."¹⁹

In 1890 a much more sophisticated writer appears, concerned not with narrative details but with moral exhortation. The vivid present is replaced by past or future tenses, depending on when the events described took place. The

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simple connectives used in 1870 give way to dependent clauses of time and purpose. Abstract nouns make an increasing appearance, along with the passive voice and impersonal constructions. The statement that "Satan assumes the form of a serpent and enters Eden" gives way to the observation that "in order to accomplish his work unperceived, Satan chose to employ as his medium the serpent—a disguise well adapted for his purpose of deception."²⁰ White also cuts back on the superfluous use of adverbs in favor of a richer vocabulary. So the serpent that in 1870 "commenced leisurely eating" is in 1890 "regaling itself" with the same fruit.²¹

While there is no doubt that these developments indicate an increase in the literacy of the prophetic, Ellen White's earliest work shows an intuitive awareness of the dramatic potential of narrative that is obscured by the sentimental and moralizing tone of her later books. This diminution in the power of her language is, however, partly explained by the fact that her books decreasingly represented her unique

experience. As the demands on her time increased, she relied on assistants to do research and prepare copy. Moreover, the outlines of her narratives were frequently supplemented by material drawn from other writers. This is particularly true of the *Conflict of the Ages* series. *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *Prophets and Kings* owe something to Daniel March's *Night Scenes of the Bible* and to books by Alfred Ederheim. *The Desire of Ages* is indebted to both of these authors and to William Hanna's *Life of Christ*. *The Acts of the Apostles* borrows from William Conybeare and John Howson's *The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul*, as well as from two of White's favorite writers, John Harris and Daniel March. *The Great Controversy* contains substantial sections from the historians J. A. Wylie and Merle D'Aubigne.²²

None of this was generally known until it was exposed by a former Adventist, Dudley M. Canright, in his *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, of 1889. Accusing White of "stealing her ideas" from other authors, Canright calculated that up to a quarter of all her writings had been plagiarized up to this point.²³ This revelation cast renewed doubt on White's claim to heavenly inspiration. But it was a question of production as well of inspiration. As one historian has noted, nineteenth-century publishers "encouraged high productivity in their authors," since they felt that "to keep up demand, the public must be constantly reminded that a particular writer existed."²⁴ Adventist publishing was no exception, and White's increasing use of sources enabled the press to engage in the almost continuous publication of "new" material. This, in turn, enabled the church to disseminate her somewhat diluted influence more widely. Thus, the authority accorded to White by the small circle familiar with her visions expanded to encompass a much wider audience. Since many of these people had no contact with White as an individual, her writings were the focus of their recognition of her as God's messenger.

By acknowledging Ellen White's statements as divinely inspired, the church thereby

understood God as having two authorized channels of revelation: the Bible and the Testimonies. The human intellect was not considered by most Adventists to be a reliable source of knowledge. Unsurprisingly, White was the strongest proponent of this view. She maintained that "to man's unaided reason, nature's teaching cannot but be contradictory and disappointing. Only in the light of revelation can it be read aright."²⁵ In taking this position, she distanced the church from the Millerites, who had placed great faith in "unaided reason" and placed "no reliance whatever upon any visions or dreams, mere impressions, or private revelations."²⁶

It was, after all, William Miller's sense of obligation to the requirements of rationality that prompted his study of the Bible. He had had an emotional conversion in which he had said he felt the loveliness of a Savior. "But the question arose How can it be proved that such a being does exist?" Considering that "to believe in such a Savior without evidence would be visionary in the extreme," he turned to the Bible as the only source of information. Miller reasoned that since the Bible "must have been given for man's instruction," it "must be adapted to his understanding." And he resolved to remain a deist if he could not harmonize all the apparent contradictions.²⁷

This deference to reason was not just the legacy of the Enlightenment skeptics Miller had read twelve years previously. It is better understood in the context of the Common-Sense philosophy that was becoming popular in nineteenth-century New England. The Scottish philosophy, as it was also known, was a form of realism, and its reliance on individual common sense appealed to American Protestants as a bulwark against doubt. Although the philosophy derived from the work of Thomas Reid, the seventeenth-century philosopher Francis Bacon was seen as the founder of the school. The Scottish philosophy denied that anything intervenes between the mind and its apprehension of external

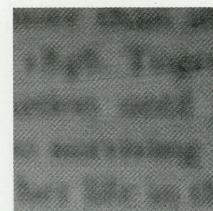
facts. If the systematic study of these facts was undertaken by a mind unprejudiced by theory, it was believed that knowledge of a limited certainty would be obtained. In a religious context, Baconianism became identified with the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, or the Bible alone, and it was later influential in the dispensationalist school of prophetic interpretation that divided past and future biblical events into distinct eras.²⁸

Baconianism was not alien to the Millerite world. The Disciples of Christ, who founded Bacon College in Kentucky in 1836, disseminated a popularized version of the philosophy for every level of society. Their leader, Alexander Campbell, in arguing that faith was grounded in "Experience," as opposed to skepticism that was based on "Assumption," cited Bacon as having laid "the foundation of correct reasonings."²⁹ Campbell, who took a close interest in the prophecies in the book of Daniel, had been introduced to Boston audiences by Miller's publisher Joshua Himes and was one of the Millerites' most sympathetic critics.³⁰

This was because Miller followed the Baconian injunction "to proceed regularly and gradually from one axiom to another."³¹ As he recalled, "I determined to lay aside all my prepossessions, to thoroughly compare Scripture with Scripture, and to pursue its study in a regular and methodical manner."³² The result of this endeavor was Miller's conclusion that the Second Advent would occur around 1843. Adopting the motto, "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good," Miller accumulated scriptural and historical facts to support his conclusion. Like the contemporary revivalist Charles Finney, Miller spoke to audiences as if to a jury, gradually building up the evidence for his case.³³ This approach appealed to exponents of the Common-Sense philosophy. As Alexander Campbell noted, Miller benefited from his critics' un-Baconian arguments, which far transcended "the oracles of reason and the canons of common sense."³⁴

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disappointed in both 1843 and 1844. For Miller, there was nothing to do but add this rather disconcerting fact to all the others and to reassess his conclusions. However, the Baconian doctrine of “restraint,” which asserted that no belief should transcend observable facts, was not followed by all in the Millerite movement. Some in the radical wing could not tolerate the prospect of revising their calculations. For them, it proved easier to renounce Miller’s Baconianism than to abandon the specific date for which they had suffered. The Great Disappointment was a watershed in the thinking of this group. October 22, 1844, was to have been the ultimate conclusion to which all the carefully assembled facts of Scripture and history pointed; instead, it became an unassailable premise to which all future knowledge must conform.³⁵

The implicit conclusion of the radicals was that since no extraordinary phenomena had been observed on October 22, observation was not the best way to monitor such events. Reassurance came in the form of direct, and often ecstatic, religious experience. When these groups, which included the future founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, held meetings, they fell on the floor, groaned, shouted, and sang. It was in this atmosphere that Ellen White rose to prominence.³⁶ Her ability to receive direct communications from God was of particular value because the Great Disappointment had shown more established channels—such as human reason—to be flawed.

Yet the acceptance of Ellen White’s visions was also facilitated by two aspects of the Common-Sense philosophy that underlay the early Adventist view of the world. First, the realist theory of perception emphasized that the apprehension of objects was direct and not influenced by mental constructs. So it was quite possible to believe, for example, that Ellen White literally saw what was written on the Ten Commandments. Second, it was presumed that language was perspicuous, that it

was the servant rather than the master of thought, and that words corresponded directly to objects. Language could be trusted. (When White had a vision of heathens and Christians gathered under their respective banners, the Christian banner bore words; the banner of the heathens, symbols.) Accordingly, when White related her visions, it was assumed that what she had seen determined the words she used. Her accounts were as authoritative as what she had experienced.³⁷

Thus the process by which the mystical proclivities of a teenage girl were recognized as the revelations of an authoritative prophet was aided at every step by the underlying philosophical assumptions of the Adventist community. Unlike the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, Ellen White did not proclaim her revelation and gather a following; rather, she had a particular kind of religious experience that came to be accepted as authoritative within an existing group. The prophetic ministry of Ellen White was an aspect of Adventist social experience, not just the psychological experience of a single individual.

Throughout the process in which Miller’s original emphasis on the priority of reason was overturned, the one constant was the Bible. From 1844 onward, Adventist publications are replete with statements to the effect that the Bible is God’s word and is the only rule of faith and practice. Similarly, the priority of the Bible over any other revelation was reiterated in church publications on countless occasions. The statement made by the church president G. I. Butler in 1883 was typically categorical: “The Scriptures are our rule to test everything by, the visions as well as all other things. That rule, therefore, is of the highest authority; the standard is higher than the thing tested by it. If the Bible should show the visions were not in harmony with it, the Bible would stand and the visions would be given up.”³⁸ It would be difficult to find an official statement from any period that contradicted this one.

But this undeviating line on the Bible often

concealed important shifts in the balance of authority. For Miller, the Bible had been completely perspicuous to reason. It was "a system of revealed truths so clearly and simply given that the 'wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.'"³⁹ For the Adventist pioneers, biblical interpretation proved a great deal more problematic. As Ellen White recalled, "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."⁴⁰ Although they sometimes spent the entire night searching the Scriptures, there were in 1848 "hardly two agreed. Each was strenuous for his views, declaring that they were according to the Bible." Understandably, these frustrated students came to the point where they said, "We can do nothing more."⁴¹

Ellen White, meanwhile, found all these discussions somewhat above her head. "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."⁴² Fortunately for her and the Adventist community, aid came from another source. She would be taken off in vision and given clear explanation of the passages under consideration. Her accompanying angel would indicate who was right and who was wrong, explaining "that these discordant views, which they claimed to be according to the Bible, were only according to their opinion of the Bible, and that their errors must be yielded."⁴³

William Miller, for whom the Bible was "a feast of reason," would have found this conflict unwarranted and its supernatural resolution distasteful. Among the early Adventists, however, such guidance was obviously a practical necessity. Without it, the fledgling church would have been stranded in the disintegrating nest of Millerism. In later years, things appeared rather differently. The reason given in 1871 for the existence of the Testimonies was the neglect of the Bible rather than the inability of its



students to agree on the correct interpretation.⁴⁴ But the principle remained the same. When the church needed doctrinal or practical guidance, it could, during her lifetime, turn to Ellen White for advice specifically related to the question at issue. The Bible contained truths of eternal validity, but it was not always clear how they applied in a particular case. The Bible might set the agenda for discussion, but White usually had the last word. The reason for this was not that the Bible was deemed incomprehensible but that Adventists, as a group, were unable to reach complete agreement on its meaning. The significance of this distinction proved difficult to convey to the church's membership. As the Adventist president A. G. Daniells remembered, it was not long before some preached that "the only way we could understand the Bible was through the writings of the spirit of prophecy." Daniells denounced this view as "heathenish," although the president would not have been far from the truth if he had replaced his "could" with a "did."⁴⁵

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She might not be considered as infallible, but most Adventists preferred to suspend judgment rather than admit her error on any specific point. The relative importance of reason, the Bible, and visionary authority was now the reverse of what it had been for the Millerites. Reason had once tested and expounded the Bible and discounted individual revelation; it was now considered unfit to test or expound either Scripture or the spirit of prophecy. The authority of White's visions, however, could define the meaning of the Bible and the status of reason. Certainly, the Bible was supposed to test the prophet, but if it could not be understood without the prophet, such an investigation was hard to initiate.

Thus, although Ellen White was never accorded theological primacy, her methodological priority made her position inviolable. Indeed, many Adventists believed that her actual words had been dictated by the Holy Spirit through the process known as "verbal inspiration." Again, the church leadership was not entirely comfortable with this idea, especially as members did not always appear to hold the biblical writers in the same esteem. At a Bible conference the church convened in 1919 to assess the legacy of White's writings, an Adventist educator, W. W. Prescott, observed that the denomination had reached the point where "if a man does not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, he is still in good standing; but if he says he does not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies, he is discounted right away"⁴⁶ Participants at the conference were well aware that far from being verbally inspired, many of the prophetess's words were copied from other authors. But they chose to look the other way. "Adventist leaders affirmed their belief in Ellen White's prophetic gift," Adventist historian Gary Land commented, "and placed increasing emphasis on her writings."⁴⁷

For nearly a century the Bible had seemed securely fixed at the center of the seesaw of reason and prophecy. In the 1920s, however, events in the wider world threatened to dislodge the Scriptures from the pivotal position they had enjoyed in the worldview of most nineteenth-century Protestants. Higher criticism, which introduced a scientific approach to the study of the Bible, had been influencing academic circles since the turn of the century. But during World War I the proponents of this new method, the "modernists," became more vocal. In particular, they resented the wartime spread of the premillenni-

alist view that Christ would soon return to inaugurate a thousand years of peace and happiness. The modernists attacked the millenarian fundamentalists for lacking both patriotism and theological sophistication. While Adventists were not directly accused, their views were similar to the ideas of those who were. Understandably, when the millenarians counterattacked in the early 1920s, Adventists, who had been divided on such questions as the verbal inspiration of the Bible, aligned themselves firmly with the fundamentalist cause.⁴⁸

In 1924 William G. Wirth, an Adventist Bible teacher, published *The Battle of the Churches: Modernism or Fundamentalism*, a book designed to "help the reader, if he be inclined to favor Modernism, to see the weakness of its claims."⁴⁹ The same year, the popular Adventist writer Carlyle B. Haynes echoed the conservative Baptist E. Y. Mullins in the title of his pamphlet *Christianity at the Crossroads*. Its cover depicted a man faced with signs labeled "fundamentalism" and "modernism" pointing in opposite directions. The tone of the book left little doubt as to which route was considered preferable.⁵⁰ At the same time, an Adventist creationist, George McCready Price, published a series of detailed geological books refuting Darwinism that soon became required reading for anti-evolutionists beyond the denomination.⁵¹

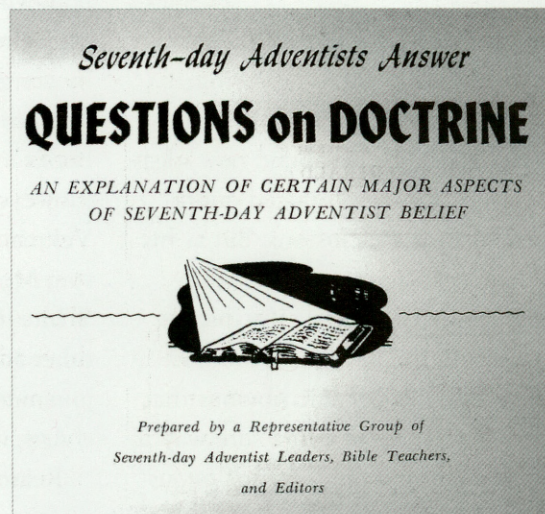
Involvement in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy had far-reaching consequences. Although the question of Ellen White's authority was not involved, the defense of the Bible resulted in greater insistence on its inspiration and inerrancy. Alongside this concentration on the Bible came a revival in the rhetoric of Baconianism. It was once again emphasized that the Bible was a collection of readily comprehensible facts. Similarly, it was argued that unless confused by the hypotheses of the liberals and evolutionists, the evidence of nature was clear. It was, as Price had written in 1913, because "the current geology has never used a trace of sound Baconian science" that it had fallen into evolutionary thinking.⁵² But the Baconianism of the 1920s differed from that popular a century earlier. In the 1820s Baconianism had been directed against the skeptics who felt they could know nothing. In the 1920s it was directed against the scientists who claimed to know too much.⁵³ The basic thrust of the new Baconianism was anti-intellectual. It was to an audience of Seventh-day Adventists in 1924 that William Jennings Bryan, the former secretary of state and anti-evolution crusader,

proclaimed: "All the ills from which America suffers can be traced back to the teaching of evolution. It would be better to destroy every other book ever written, and save just the first three verses of Genesis."⁵⁴

From the 1920s to the 1950s, the attitude toward authority found within Adventism was more or less static. The Bible and Ellen White existed in symbiosis. White's writings clarified and elaborated the Scriptures; the Scriptures confirmed and clarified her prophetic role. In keeping with this understanding, F. D. Nichol, the editor of the Seventh-day Adventist *Bible Commentary*, made it a policy that no interpretation given in the commentary should appear to conflict with a statement by Ellen White.⁵⁵ Also in line with this understanding was the universal adoption of the "proof-text" method, in which church members used isolated passages from the Scriptures or the spirit of prophecy to "prove" their distinctive doctrines. To Adventists there was hardly a single human experience on which some sentence from the Bible or Ellen White did not have bearing. The need to use human reason thus rarely arose.

The stability afforded by this structure of authority obviated the necessity of engaging in any major doctrinal discussions between the Bible Conference of 1919 and the church's next Bible Conference held in 1952. However, this stable era came to an end, largely because the church felt the need to impress a new configuration within America's Protestant community that was becoming known as evangelicalism. This movement was associated with the emergence of Billy Graham as a national figure in the 1940s and with Graham's friend, Donald Grey Barnhouse, editor of *Eternity* magazine. The evangelicals placed all their emphasis on the Bible but were attempting to free themselves from the negative image of fundamentalism.⁵⁶ In 1949 an Adventist administrator, T. E. Unruh, sent Barnhouse a copy of Ellen White's book *Steps to Christ*, but he was unreceptive and reported that the Adventist publication was littered with unscriptural doctrine.⁵⁷

The 1952 conference was the first chance to correct outside impressions, but the opportunity passed, largely because the deliberations of the gathering as a whole, which were published under the rubric of *Our Firm Foundation*, amounted to a statement of Adventist thought as it had developed since the alignment with fundamentalism.⁵⁸ However, a second chance to remedy the situation occurred in 1955 when the Baptist researcher Walter Martin, in an initial attempt to classify the denomination, placed Adventism in the same category as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons, partly because of "Mrs. White's strange interpretation" of certain passages of Scripture.⁵⁹ Ac-



ording to Martin, it was again Unruh who contacted him, strongly objecting to his categorization and suggesting that they open a dialogue. Martin approached Barnhouse, who agreed to meet Unruh, Froom, and a few other trusted Adventist officials, in the hope of finally establishing whether Adventism was a Christian church or a heretical cult.⁶⁰

In *Questions on Doctrine*, the book published as a result of these discussions, the Adventist representatives sought to restrict the scope of the prophetess's authority. They declared that she was not in the same category as the biblical writers, that the Bible, not Ellen White, was the "source of our expositions," and that her influence was limited to matters of "personal religion" and "the conduct of our denom-

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inational work."⁶¹ It was one of the few times in the denomination's history when the Bible was given unambiguous precedence over Ellen White, and it helped to convince Martin and Barnhouse that Adventism was indeed a part of the evangelical family.⁶² But it shocked the church's older workers like M. L. Andreasen, who believed that Ellen White's purpose was to prevent the church's "departure from sound doctrine."⁶³ The idea that she never "initially contributed any doctrinal truth or prophetic interpretation will not be believed by her thousands and millions of readers who all have been benefited by her works," he commented bitterly, and warned that "the present attempt to lessen and destroy confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy may deceive . . . many, but the foundation upon which we have built these many years, still stands."⁶⁴

Despite Andreasen's convictions, Ellen White's authority was further undermined in the following decade. The leader of a dissident movement in Australia, Robert Brinsmead, started to propound new ideas on the doctrine of salvation, and he produced quotations from White to support his conclusions. But as his Adventist critics also found passages from the Testimonies to confirm their conflicting views, the dispute exposed the problem of using the proof-text method with the statements of White.⁶⁵ It became obvious that an appeal to the prophetess was no longer a sure way to resolve doctrinal conflict. The situation was analogous to that of the 1840s, except that on this occasion the disputants were searching the Testimonies rather than the Bible. While in 1848 the supernatural authority of visions had settled discussion, in the 1960s there seemed to be no court of appeal. It was clear that the Bible and the Testimonies were by themselves incapable of producing answers that would satisfy more than one section of the church.

It was in this climate that two Adventist academics, Roy Branson and Herold Weiss, published an appeal to make Ellen White "a subject for Adventist scholarship."⁶⁶ The motivation for this plea was to find a means of solving the confusion generated by the indiscriminate use of the proof-text method and to "recapture Ellen White's original intentions," and "the absolute truth of what she meant."⁶⁷ So now reason, shaped by the tools of historical scholarship, was called to clarify White's pronouncements just as she had once clarified the Bible. As it

turned out, the only thing that was clarified was the difficulty of using Ellen White as an authority at all. The research of the 1970s did little to establish what she meant. Rather, it confirmed that not everything she had written was of her own invention, let alone of God's direct revelation. It was evident that she changed her mind on various questions and that she held a number of beliefs about history and science with which no contemporary scholar would agree.

The key figures in establishing these facts were William S. Peterson, Donald McAdams, and Walter Rea, who between them documented the sources of the *Conflict of Ages* series; and Ronald Numbers, whose findings on the sources of White's health visions shook the denomination when they were first published in 1976.⁶⁸ Following these independent studies, the church attempted in 1980 to regain control over the information by commissioning an Adventist professor, Fred Veltman, to examine the unacknowledged references in one of the books in the *Conflict of the Ages* series, the *Desire of Ages*. However, after an extensive eight-year investigation, Veltman's study corroborated much of the work of Peterson, McAdams, and Rea. Veltman emphasized that White, rather than her assistants, selected material from other authors, and concluded that the prophetess used a minimum of twenty-three sources in compiling the *Desire of Ages*, including works of fiction.⁶⁹

Reason was now allowed to judge the Testimonies on questions of history, but the Bible was still the only rule for judging White's theology. In the early 1980s, the work of the Adventist theologian Desmond Ford on the significance of the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, was to reveal the potential for conflicts in this area as well.⁷⁰ In 1985, Herold Weiss looked back on fifteen years of Ellen White scholarship and concluded: "Mrs. White's formal authority—the readiness of her readers, that is, to accept what she said as true just because a prophet said it—has in fact been shattered. From now on no one should be able to end a theological dialogue by giving a quotation from Mrs. White."⁷¹

In the event, Weiss spoke too soon. Scholars, like prophets, live and think within a particular historical framework. When the framework changes, their own prophecies are not always fulfilled. The history of modern biblical scholarship is itself an example of how academic fashions can change. Higher criticism dominated the aca-

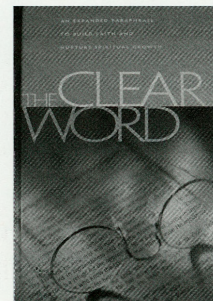
ademic study of the Bible until the last quarter of the twentieth century. Its tools, like the historical-critical method, employed the analysis of forms and sources to break up the biblical text into numerous competing traditions.⁷² This often undermined traditional beliefs about the date, authorship, and historicity of biblical books, which is why Adventists, like other conservative Christians, reacted defensively. Specific doctrines anchored Adventists in particular to a conservative position: the Sabbath demanded the historicity of the Pentateuch; prophetic interpretation required a sixth-century (rather than the customary second-century) date for the book of Daniel. Similarly, the habitual reliance on proof texts led Adventists to be wary of any doctrine of inspiration that suggested that the Bible was not a compendium of revealed propositions but simply an expression of its authors' encounters with God.⁷³ Thus in Old Testament studies, Adventist scholars traditionally concerned themselves with archaeology and chronology, and in the New Testament, with linguistic and textual criticism.⁷⁴ In neither area was it possible for them to do substantial theological or literary work, since their conservative presuppositions were not shared by most of the academic world.

Nonetheless, in the 1960s Adventists accepted the general case for an academic approach to the Bible and began to differentiate themselves from fundamentalists on this account. In 1966, the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* complained that "fundamentalists have ignored or rejected valid findings of Biblical scholarship."⁷⁵ After this, the church's more adventurous theologians pushed things further. Weiss, for example, argued that to "equate God's word with a book is the work of a corrupted faith which sets for itself an idol."⁷⁶ The theologian Jerry Gladson suggested in 1985 that the Bible was a book of only "limited inerrancy," and in 1991 Alden Thompson, professor of biblical studies at the denomination's Walla Walla College in Washington, found in Scripture "a generous

sprinkling of human 'imperfections.'"⁷⁷ Six years later another Walla Walla professor, John Brunt, spelled out the philosophy that informed these critical approaches to the Bible, which was that "without reason, there can be no understanding of Scripture."⁷⁸

But no sooner had these attitudes gained footholds in the denomination than church leaders took steps to restore the traditional authority of the Bible in the Adventist community. In 1986, in what became known as the "Rio Document," the church formally banned the use of the historical-critical method.⁷⁹ And in 1996, the statement criticizing fundamentalists for ignoring the findings of biblical scholarship was quietly, but tellingly, dropped from the third edition of the *SDA Encyclopedia*.⁸⁰ Church scholars, too, felt they needed to do something to bridge the widening chasm between themselves and the laity. This sentiment produced the *Bible Amplifier* series, in which they endeavored to write readable commentaries on all sixty-six books of the Bible for the man or woman in the pew. They published fourteen volumes between 1994 and 1997, but the initiative was aborted due to lack of interest among Adventist members.⁸¹

However, there were two notably more successful efforts to return to a "plain reading" of the Bible. One was *The Clear Word Bible*, a paraphrase of the entire Scriptures by Jack J. Blanco, chair of the religion department at the denomination's Southern College, in 1994.⁸² It was written in chapter and verse form, like a traditional Bible but incorporated Ellen White's interpretations in the text. It was viewed as distorted by some, and the "Bible" part of the title was dropped in subsequent editions. Nonetheless, this was a highly popular first attempt at writing an "Adventist" Bible.⁸³ The other initiative was made by an Adventist doctoral student, Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, who published the book *Receiving the Word* in 1996. Aimed particularly at Alden Thompson, the author argued that in "study-



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ing the Scriptures, reason must be humble enough to accept and obey what it finds in those sacred pages.⁸⁴ Like *The Clear Word Bible*, Pipim's book sold in large numbers. But Brunt's feeling was that the Bible did not fare well in the church in the 1990s.⁸⁵ While Pipim blamed Thompson for this state of affairs, Brunt blamed Pipim.⁸⁶



These squabbles were soon overtaken, however, by new developments in biblical studies that came to fruition in the 1990s. Drawing on postmodernist literary theories like poststructuralism, narratology, and reader-response criticism, new academic approaches to the Bible stopped trying to take the text apart and accepted it at face value.⁸⁷ Such trends were resisted by some Adventists, such as Norman R. Gulley, who perceived a threat to the church's propositional understanding of inspiration in his mammoth *Systematic Theology*.⁸⁸ But other Adventist theologians recognized that such an approach permitted the re-colonization of biblical studies by conservative evangelicals. Fernando L. Canale (pictured, left), a professor at the Adventist seminary at Andrews University, considered that postmodern criticism provided "an opportunity to show how the interpretation of the epistemological origin of theological knowledge could be attempted on the basis of faithfulness to the *sola Scriptura* principle rather than to a philosophical or scientific teaching."⁸⁹ For the first time an Adventist Old Testament scholar, Laurence Turner, was able to write a volume in a well-known academic commentary series without fearing for his job. Instead of looking for things that were "inconsistent, redundantly repetitious or contradictory," Turner approached Genesis from a "holistic final form perspective" focusing on intertextuality, plot, characterization, and ambiguity. As a consequence, he did not have to discuss the book's date or sources, and the text was "allowed to display its integrity as a cohesive composition," almost as though (as Adventists had always argued) Moses had written it himself.⁹⁰

It was due to a similar maneuver that Ellen White started to emerge from the cloud she had been under since *Questions on Doctrine*. After Fred Veltman's exhaustive report appeared in 1988, Adventist writers on Ellen White wiped the slate clean and started again. In 1996 the historian George Knight, in the first of a four-volume series on the prophetess, began with the question "Who is Ellen White?" and proceeded to reintroduce her to the Adventist public with barely an acknowledgment of recent controversies.⁹¹ The effect of more than three decades of Ellen White scholarship was more obvious on Herbert Douglass's *Messenger of the Lord*, published in 1998. But his conclusion, like Knight's, was that "Ellen White's writings speak pointedly to our day, and are increasingly relevant in this end-time."⁹²

Nevertheless, *Messenger of the Lord* was a significant publication. Like the new generation of biblical scholars for whom sources were not an issue since all texts are "intertextual" rewritings of other texts, Douglass simultaneously accepted that Ellen White used unacknowledged sources and cleared her of all charges of plagiarism. He quoted a sympathetic investigator who argued: "The critics have missed the boat badly by focusing upon Mrs. White's writings, instead of focusing upon the messages in Mrs. White's writings. . . . where the words come from is really not that important."⁹³ This process of rehabilitation was completed two years later by the denomination's *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*. This work reverted to Andersen's idea that White's purpose was to "protect from doctrinal error."⁹⁴ More liberal voices obviously disagreed with this view.⁹⁵ But by indicating that she had the final say on doctrine, the *Handbook* once more gave Ellen White methodical priority above human reason and, despite the usual caveats to the contrary, above the Bible as well. At the same time, the numbers of younger Adventists believing that Ellen White was a true prophet rose from 53 percent in 1991 to 73 percent in 1997.⁹⁶

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The structure of authority within Adventism has, from the time of William Miller, gone through numerous permutations. For Miller, reason came first; it expounded the Bible, and visions were disregarded. The Great Disappointment inverted this order; visions expounded the Bible, and reason was disregarded. The spread of Ellen White's published work then allowed this order to stabilize, with the Testimonies clarifying the Scriptures. The modernist challenge to the Bible aligned Adventism with fundamentalism and made the Bible and the Testimonies mutually explanatory. The Adventist encounter with evangelicalism, both outside and inside the denomination, created embarrassment and frustration about the way the spirit of prophecy was used. The open season on Ellen White research that followed made reason and the Bible her two judges. And after the church accepted the legitimacy of biblical scholarship, reason became the arbiter of the Scriptures as well, provoking an angry reaction from conservative Adventists. At the turn of the century, these tensions were fading, thanks to new approaches to literary texts. This also allowed White to shake off her critics, to win new support among the membership, and to reclaim her place as the church's final source of authority.

These developments were all prompted by specific historical events, but it is possible to observe several patterns. A major restructuring of authority usually takes place when existing sources of authority fail to generate clear-cut answers, as was the case in the 1840s, 1960s, and the 1990s. The rise of an alternative source of authority is usually facilitated by appeal to the one that is being disregarded. Thus, the early Adventists subjected Ellen White to empirical investigation, the scholars in the 1960s and 70s quoted White about the need for "new light" in the church, and recent commentators have used secular theory to free themselves from higher criticism.⁹⁷ This dependence of new authorities on the old

builds instability into the system. If one source fails to provide the answers, it can always be undermined by the source that gave it authority in the first place.

In other words, Adventist ideology is defined by a process in which reason, prophecy, and Scripture are constantly battling each other for priority. Today it would seem that the visions of Ellen White have prevailed over the competing imperatives of the other two sources. But this is not to say that the demands of human reason or the appeals of the Bible may not become dominant once more. The church's sources of authority are always interchanging, and it is this phenomenon, as much as anything else, that allows Adventism constantly to redefine itself without undermining its own identity. ■

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Notes

1. The chronology here is drawn from the account in the *SDA Encyclopedia*, 11:873.
2. For biographical information, see Gerald Wheeler, *James White: Innovator and Overcomer* (Hagerstown: RHPA, 2003).
3. See Rev. 19:10. There is no adequate biography of Ellen White, but for a critical review of her life, see Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: Ellen G. White and the Origins of Seventh-day Adventist Health Reform*, rev. ed., with an introduction by Jonathan M. Butler (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992). The authorized account of her career is by her grandson, Arthur L. White, in the six-volume *Ellen G. White* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1981–1986).
4. EGW, EW, 12. The classic exposition of the dark night of the soul is given by St. John of the Cross, in *The Complete Works*, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers, vol. 1 (London: Burns Oates and Washburne, Ltd., 1948), esp. p. 10. See also Ingemar Linden, *The Last Trump: An Historico-Genetical Study of Some Important Chapters in the Making and Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1978), 153–62.
5. EGW, EW, 79–81. See St. Teresa of Jesus, *The Com-*

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plete Works, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (London: Sheed and Ward, 1946), 1:170.

6. EGW, *EW*, 12.

7. St. Teresa of Jesus, *Complete Works*, 1:193, and EGW, *EW*, 12.

8. See J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Nashville: SPA, 1905), 203-11, for a collection of eyewitness testimonies. See also James White, *Life Incidents in Connection with the Great Advent Movement* (Battle Creek: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1868), 272-73.

9. See Ronald L. Numbers and Janet S. Numbers, "The Psychological World of Ellen G. White," *Spectrum* 14:1 (1983): 25.

10. EGW, *EW*, 20.

11. *Ibid.*, 33.

12. For example, Snook and Brinkerhoff alleged that Ellen White saw Satan in heaven in 1844, when he had not been there since his fall; that she saw a temple in the Holy City, which contradicted Rev. 21:22; that she claimed she could not see the "Father's person" and then said that she had; and that her view of the tree of life astride the river of life was "more fanciful than true." See *The Visions of E. G. White, Not of God* (Cedar Rapids: Cedar Valley Times Book and Job Print, 1866), 5-6, 16.

13. William Sheldon, *The Visions and Theories of the Prophetess Ellen G. White in Conflict With the Bible* (Buchanan: W.A.C.P. Association, 1867), 4.

14. Significantly perhaps, Smith did not answer the Sabbath point directly, but for his general response to the idea that the revelations were merely confirmations of theories with which the prophetess was already acquainted, see *The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White: A Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts According to the Scriptures* (Battle Creek: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1868), 86. On his more specific answers to Snook and Brinkerhoff on the devil in heaven, the temple in the Holy City, the Father's person, and the tree of life, see,

respectively, 47-49, 75-77, 78-79, and 79-80.

15. EGW, *1T*, 119.

16. For a description of the spread of print in mid-nineteenth century America, see Carl Bode, *The Anatomy of American Popular Culture, 1840-1861* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 109-16.

17. *Ibid.*, 145-48.

18. EGW, *1SG*, 20, and *1SP*, 33.

19. EGW, *1SG*, 21, and *1SP*, 38.

20. EGW, *1SP*, 35, and *PP*, 53.

21. *Ibid.*

22. See, for example, Daniel March, *Night Scenes in the Bible* (Philadelphia: Zeigler and McCurdy, 1868-1907), and *Walks and Homes of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publishing Committee, 1856); Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testaments*, 4 vols. (1876-1880), repr. ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1949); William Hanna, *The Life of Christ* (New York: American Tract Society, 1863); John Harris, *The Great Teacher*, 17th ed. (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1870); W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul* (New York: Crowell, 1852); J. H. Merle D'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation*, vol. 4, bk. 9 (Glasgow, Scotland: Collins, 1841); J. W. Wylie, *History of the Waldenses* (London: Cassell, Pelter and Galpin, n.d.). Comparisons of these and other sources with Ellen White's writings may be found in Walter Rea, *The White Lie* (Turlock: M & R Publications, 1982). For a review of the literature on Mrs. White's borrowing, see Donald McAdams, "Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen White Studies in the 1970s," *Spectrum* 10:4 (1980): 27-41.

23. Dudley Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, 4th ed. (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1889), 141.

24. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 83.

25. EGW, *Ed*, 134.

26. "Address to the Public," *Midnight Cry*, 21 November 1844, 166.

27. Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853), 66-67, 68. For an account of Miller's deist phase, see 24-26.

28. For a parallel account of Millerism and Baconianism, see Ruth Alden Doan, *The Miller Heresy, Millennialism, and American Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 98-102. On Scottish realism and American religion, see Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), esp. 3-31 and 132-59. See also Herbert Hovenkamp, *Science and Religion in America 1800-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978); and Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," *Church History* 24:3 (1955): 257-72. For the importance of Baconianism to dispensationalism, see George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 55-62.

29. Robert Frederick West, *Alexander Campbell and Natural Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 91. On the Disciples and Bacon, see David Edwin Harrell Jr., *Quest for a Christian America: The Disciples of Christ and American Society to 1866* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966), 28.

30. David T. Arthur, "Joshua V. Himes and the Cause of Adventism, 1839-1845" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1961), 12.

31. Francis Bacon, *The Great Instauration and New Atlantis*, ed. J. Weinberger (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1980), 22.

32. Bliss, *Memoirs*, 69.

33. See Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Knopf, 1963), 92-95; and David Arnold Dean, "Echoes of the Midnight Cry: The Millerite Heritage in the Apologetics of the Advent Christian Denomination, 1860-1960" (Th.D. dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1976), 171-77.

34. Alexander Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger*, 1843; quoted in Bliss, *Memoirs*, 240.

35. For a discussion of the psychological

- consequences of the Great Disappointment, see Leon Festinger et al., *When Prophecy Fails* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), 12–28.
36. Ronald Graybill, "The Power of Prophecy: Ellen G. White and the Women Religious Founders of the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1983), 88–90.
37. See Hovenkamp, *Science and Religion*, 52, on the Scottish realist understanding of language; cf. EGW, *EW*, 211–12.
38. George I. Butler, *Review* supplement, 14 August 1883, 12.
39. Bliss, *Memoirs*, 70.
40. EGW, *1SM*, 206.
41. EGW, *2SG*, 97–98, and *1SM*, 206.
42. EGW, *1SM*, 207.
43. EGW, *2SG*, 98–99.
44. EGW, *2T*, 605.
45. A. G. Daniells, quoted in "The Use of the Spirit of Prophecy in Our Teaching of Bible and History," transcript of the 1919 Bible Conference, July 30, 1919, in *Spectrum* 10:1 (1979): 30, 31.
46. W. W. Prescott, quoted in *ibid.*, 39.
47. See Gary Land, "Shaping the Modern Church, 1906-1930," in *Adventism in America: A History*, rev. ed., ed. Gary Land (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1998), 130.
48. See Steven G. Daily, "How Readest Thou: The Higher Criticism Debate in Prophetic America and Its Relationship to Seventh-day Adventism and the Writings of Ellen White, 1885–1925" (M.A. thesis, Loma Linda University, 1982). See also Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, esp. 141–70; and Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 233–69.
49. William G. Wirth, *The Battle of the Churches: Modernism or Fundamentalism, Which?* (Mountain View: PPPA, 1924), 5.
50. Carlyle B. Haynes, *Christianity at the Crossroads* (Nashville: SPA, 1924).
51. For example, George McCready Price, *The New Geology* (Mountain View: PPPA, 1923). For more on this, see ch. 18.
52. George McCready Price, *The Fundamentals of Geology* (Mountain View: PPPA, 1913), 240.
53. See ch. 18.
54. William Jennings Bryan, quoted in Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 125.
55. Raymond F. Cottrell, "The Untold Story of the Bible Commentary," *Spectrum* 16:3 (1985): 44.
56. See Billy Graham's autobiography, *Just As I Am* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), 46, 284–94. Graham mentions his "friend" Barnhouse several times, e.g., 284. See also Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), particularly 18–20, 44–54.
57. Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Spiritual Discernment, or How to Read Religious Books," *Eternity*, June 1950, 9, 42–44. For Unruh's account, see, "The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955–1956," *Adventist Heritage* 4:2 (1977): 35–36.
58. *Our Firm Foundation: A Report of the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Conference held September 1–3, 1952*, was published in two volumes in 1953 by RHPA in Washington, D.C.
59. See Walter Martin, *The Rise of the Cults* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955), 15.
60. See Walter Martin, "Currents Interview," *Adventist Currents* 1:1 (1983): 16. Unruh, however, suggests that Martin made contact with him, rather than the other way around. See Unruh, "Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences," 36–37.
61. *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: An Explanation of Certain Major Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1957), 89–98. Quotations from 93, 92.
62. For more on this, see chapter 5.
63. See M. L. Andreasen, "Downgrading Mrs. White," *Letters to the Churches* (1959), repr. ed. (Payson: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, 1980), 44.
64. *Ibid.*, 43, 48.
65. See, for example, the discussion in General Conference Defense Literature Committee, *The History and Teaching of Robert Brinsmead* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1961). See also chapter 5.
66. Roy Branson and Herold Weiss, "Ellen White: A Subject for Adventist Scholarship," *Spectrum* 2:4 (1970): 30.
67. *Ibid.*, 32.
68. See William S. Peterson, "A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen G. White's Account of the French Revolution," *Spectrum* 2:4 (1970): 57–68; Donald McAdams, "Ellen G. White and the Protestant Historians: The Evidence From an Unpublished Manuscript on John Huss" (circulated by the author, 1974); Rea, *White Lie*, 45–56, 66–100, 106–187; Numbers' book was originally published by Harper & Row as *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*. See also McAdams, "Shifting Views of Inspiration," 27–41, where all of this is recounted; and Gary Land, who provides a summary of the issues in "Coping with Change, 1961–1980," in *Land, Adventism in America*, 180–81.
69. Fred Veltman, *Full Report of the Life of Christ Research Project* (n.p. 1988), 911–12, 934, 938–39.
70. Desmond Ford, "Daniel 8:14, The Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.). See also chapter 5.
71. Herold Weiss, "Formative Authority, Yes; Canonization, No," *Spectrum* 16:3 (1985): 10.
72. A brief overview of the historical-critical method, its related disciplines, and its place in biblical studies can be found in J. Maxwell Miller, "Reading the Bible Historically: The Historian's Approach," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*, rev. and exp. ed., ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 17–34.
73. See, for example, Raoul Dederen, "Revelation, Inspiration and Hermeneutics," in *A Symposium of Biblical Hermeneutics*,

ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington, D.C.: RHPA, 1974), 4–5 and 10–11.

74. On Adventism's interest in archaeology, see, for example, Siegfried Horn, *The Spade Confirms the Book* (Washington, D.C.: RHPA 1957). On chronology, see Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings: A Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1951), which was very influential in its time and has been regularly reissued since. On linguistic criticism, see Steven Thompson, *The Apocalypse and Semitic Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

75. *SDA Encyclopedia*, 1966 ed., 428–29.

76. Herold Weiss, "Revelation and the Bible Beyond Verbal Inspiration," *Spectrum* 7:3 (1975): 53.

77. Jerry Gladson, "The Bible Is Inspired," *College People* 5:2 (1985): 18–20; and Alden Thompson, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* (Hagerstown: RHPA, 1991), 70.

78. John C. Brunt, "The Bible and the Church," *Spectrum* 27:1 (1999): 19. Essentially the same message was given in Richard Rice's *Reason and the Contours of Faith* (Riverside: La Sierra University Press, 1991).

79. "Methods of Bible Study," *Review*, 22 January 1987, 18.

80. See *SDA Encyclopedia*, 10:578, and compare the 1976 ed., p. 488, and the 1966 ed., pp. 428–29.

81. The series was published by PPPA. The volumes were: *Exodus* by Jon Dybdahl (1994); *Matthew* by George Knight (1994); *Timothy & Titus* by Charles Bradford (1994); *Hebrews* by William Johnsson (1994); *John* by Jon Paulien (1995); *Peter & Jude* by Robert M. Johnston (1995); *Samuel* by Alden Thompson (1995); *Daniel 1–7* and *Daniel 7–12* by William Shea (1996); *Romans* by John Brunt (1996); *Hosea-Micah* by Jon Dybdahl (1996); *James* by Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid (1996); *Ezekiel* by Robert McIver (1997); *1 Corinthians* by W. Larry Richards (1997). See also Brunt's thoughts on this enterprise and regret over its failure, in

"The Bible and the Church," 18.

82. See Jack J. Blanco, *The Clear Word Bible: A Paraphrase to Nurture Faith and Growth* (Hagerstown: RHPA, 1994).

83. See Martin Weber's review, *Ministry*, December 1994, 27.

84. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word: How New Approaches to the Bible Impact Our Biblical Faith and Lifestyle* (Berrien Springs: Berean Books, 1996), 177. Thompson replied to Pipim in "En Route to a 'Plain Reading' of Scripture," *Spectrum* 26:4 (1998): 50–52.

85. Brunt, "The Bible and the Church," 18.

86. *Ibid.*

87. For a general introduction to these approaches, see David M. Gunn, "Narrative Criticism"; Edgar V. McKnight, "Reader-Response Criticism"; and William A. Beardslee, "Poststructuralist Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning*, ed. McKenzie and Haynes, 201–29, 230–52, and 253–67 respectively. Readers interested in exploring these methods in further depth can consult the Reader-Response, Structuralist and Narratological, and Poststructuralist criticism chapters in *The Bible and Culture Collective* (George Aichele et al.), *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 20–148. See also two other standard works, *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992); and *Judges & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), in which some of these theories are explained using Mark and Judges as case studies.

88. Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2003), 491.

89. Fernando L. Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2001), 11.

90. Laurence A. Turner, *Genesis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 11, 12,

13–15, 18. The volume was part of *Readings: A New Biblical Commentary*, edited by John Jarick. Turner was head of the theology department at the denomination's Newbold College in Britain.

91. George R. Knight, *Meeting Ellen White: A Fresh Look at her Life, Writings and Major Themes* (Hagerstown: RHPA, 1996), 7. The other titles in Knight's series were: *Reading Ellen White: How to Apply Her Writings* (1997); *Ellen White's World: A Fascinating Look at the Times in Which She Lived* (1998); *Walking With Ellen White: Her Everyday Life as a Wife, Mother and Friend* (1999).

92. Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Nampa: PPPA, 1998), xvii.

93. *Ibid.*, 459. Italics in original.

94. *SDA Handbook*, 628.

95. Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically: Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1999), 123–26.

96. Figures from the surveys in Roger L. Dudley and V. Bailey Gillespie, *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance* (Riverside: La Sierra University Press, 1992), 84, and Roger L. Dudley, *Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church: Personal Stories from a 10-year Study* (Hagerstown: RHPA, 2000), 39. Additional signs of returning confidence in Ellen White was another defense of her career, *Prophets Are Human*, by Graeme Bradford (Victoria: Signs Publishing Company, 2004), and a very late reply to Numbers, *The Prophet and Her Critics: A Striking New Analysis Refutes the Charges that Ellen G. White "Borrowed" the Health Message*, by Leonard Brand and Don McMahon (Nampa: PPPA, 2005).

97. Quotation from EGW, CSW, 34.