

# Not a Single Drop of Martyr Blood?

## The Crisis of Confidence Threatening

### Ellen White's Devotees

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a revision of my "Not One Drop of Blood in the  
Time of Trouble? Ellen White's Catastrophic Time Bomb  
Awaiting her Hapless Devotees", December, 2000

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### Quotations

#### Sacred Scripture

Unless otherwise specified, throughout my entire assessment I utilise the *New International Version* (NIV) – 1990 *British* edition – for all such quotations, with all emphases supplied. To all intents and purposes, this diverges in spelling alone from the North American editions which the majority of my readers use. Even then, such differences are sporadic.

#### Ellen White Corpus

With very rare exceptions, I likewise adopt the standard abbreviations for the Ellen White writings listed @ [www.whiteestate.org/cdrom/bib-stan](http://www.whiteestate.org/cdrom/bib-stan). In particular, my chief exception, entrenched following several decades of writing before cyberspace, entails her 1946 compilation, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*. I always utilise the abbreviation *CWE* instead of *CW*.

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## *Not a Single Drop of Martyr Blood? The Crisis of Confidence Threatening Ellen White's Devotees*

Countless are life's sobering reminders that the end of any journey depends upon its beginning. For example, North America's simmering social tensions owe a great deal to its pioneers' short term expedient of the cruel slave trade. And Australia's creeping horror of much of its arable soil poisoned by salt is the legacy of the universal practice of clearing all trees for farming, allowing the water table to rise to the surface.

Seventh-day Adventism can never be fully fathomed, either, apart from its brief ecclesial history. A striking illustration is its paramount distinguishing dogma, a heavenly judgment, individual by individual, of all who have ever professed faith in God and/or Christ, beginning with Adam in 1844, to determine their fitness for his eternal Kingdom. It may never have buried itself under such utter folly if, heresy by wretched heresy, it had not begun midway, twisting Dan. 8:14 to echo William Miller's faulty forecasts, then gazed backwards and forwards, hammering the Books of Leviticus and Hebrews into its mold of settled, sectarian dogma.<sup>1</sup>

Just as crucial to Seventh-day Adventism's very existence as a separate Christian denomination is its constant assertion, *instructively shared with both the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons*,<sup>2</sup> that its paramount, **unique** mission is to preach the Three Angels' Messages of Rev. 14:6-12. In the words of Ellen White, in whose prophetic call Seventh-day Adventism equally sees itself as God's **one** authentic Church:<sup>3</sup>

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted *the last warning for a perishing world*... They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. *There is no other work of so great importance*. They are to allow **nothing else** to absorb their attention.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, she is quite adamant that, while these messages still have more to teach her people,<sup>5</sup> they are free from error. To amend them would be to deny God's utterly **unmistakable** guidance in their discovery:

I was shown three steps—the first, second, and third angels' messages. *Said my accompanying angel*, "Woe to him who shall move a **block** or stir a **pin** of these messages. *The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received*." I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. *God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform*. I saw individuals approach the platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect... Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it to be laid wrong. But I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform and exhorted those who had stepped off to cease their complaints; for *God was the Master Builder, and they were fighting against Him*. They recounted *the wonderful work of God, which had led them to the firm platform*, and in union raised their eyes to heaven and with a loud voice glorified God. This affected some of those who had complained and left the platform, and they with humble look again stepped upon it.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, she and her fellow pioneers were called from their Churches and assembled together during this very process of discovery.<sup>7</sup> No wonder, then, precisely which power it is directing his attacks on this truth:

... **Satan** is at work to undermine the faith of the people of God at this time. There are persons ready to catch up every new idea. The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation are misinterpreted. These persons do not consider that *the truth has been set forth at the appointed time by the very men whom God was leading to do this special work*. These men followed on step by step in the very **fulfillment of prophecy**, and those who have not had a personal experience in this work, [sic] are to take the Word of God and believe on "their word" who have been **led by the Lord** in the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages...

... [V]ery erroneous work has been done again and again... by those who seek to find **new light** in the prophecies, and who begin by turning away from *the light that God has already given*. *The messages of Revelation 14 are those by which the world is to be tested*... [T]he Lord does not lay upon those who have not had an experience in His work the burden of making a new exposition of *those prophecies which He has, by His Holy Spirit, moved upon His chosen servants to explain*<sup>8</sup>

Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study, and *testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord*. But the waymarks... are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, *as God has signified through His Word and the testimony of His Spirit*. He calls upon us to hold firmly... to *the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority*<sup>9</sup>

Little wonder, then, that devotees of prime Seventh-day Adventist dogma resist even any *suggestion*, let alone credible *evidence*, that they are clasping **heresy** to their grateful breasts, just like any pious Mormon whenever Joseph Smith's credentials are queried! Indeed, their prophet forbids them to receive those who

come with a message that contradicts the **special** points of our faith... [W]hile the Scriptures are God's word..., the application of them, if such application moves one pillar from *the foundation that God has sustained* these fifty years, is a great mistake. He... knows not *the wonderful demonstration of the Holy Spirit that gave power and force to the past messages*...<sup>10</sup>

## *Distinctive Dogma Developed on the Run, From the Very Outset*

### *The First Angel's Message*

Repeatedly in her citations above, Ellen White has implied that Seventh-day Adventism's distinctive dogma of the Three Angels' Messages developed hand in hand with it. Most readers are familiar enough with the nineteenth century Millerite Movement in North America,<sup>11</sup> out of whose repeatedly erroneous forecasts of Christ's Return, founded largely upon Dan. 8:14, her Church was born.<sup>12</sup> Equally important, though, was its interpretation of the first angel's message of Rev. 14:6f. God granted William Miller great light concerning John of Patmos' prophecy.<sup>13</sup> So he employed this message to warn his nation, from 1840 to 1844,<sup>14</sup> of God's judgment at Jesus' looming Return.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the very Millerite Movement was forecast in this first warning!<sup>16</sup>

However, the group of its successors which Ellen White favoured rationalised its errors by deciding that, while Rev. 14:6f. certainly bespeaks divine judgment,<sup>17</sup> it **definitely does not predict Christ's Return**.<sup>18</sup> Rather, John's angel emphasises that the specific judgment in view "**has come**".<sup>19</sup> It refers, therefore, to the **second** phase of Christ's High Priestly ministry in heaven, that is, his **pre-Advent** judgment of individuals, beginning with Adam in 1844.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, its strident admonition to worship God as Creator in view of this evaluation stresses the seventh-day Sabbath at the heart of his sacred Decalogue, which is his very standard in that judgment.<sup>21</sup> It follows that John's first angel, symbolising God's loyal human envoys,<sup>22</sup> preaches the Pauline gospel in its larger sense of exacting obedience to God's law, *as its fruitage*, as his judgment proceeds.<sup>23</sup>

A brief deviation is fully warranted here to clarify Ellen White's own crucial rôle in such doctrinal revision:

Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband... and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word... When they came to the point in their study where they said, "We can do nothing more," *the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me...* Thus **light was given** that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was **made plain** to me...

During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren... I could not comprehend the... scriptures we were studying... I was in this condition of mind until **all the principal points of our faith** were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God. The brethren knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as **light direct from heaven** the revelations given.<sup>24</sup>

### *The Second Angel's Message*

The message of John's second angel, Rev. 14:8, was shared by the Millerites throughout the summer of 1844<sup>25</sup> because their Churches spurned his first angel's message and forced them out.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, all their former companions were left in spiritual darkness,<sup>27</sup> if not rejected by God's Holy Spirit.<sup>28</sup> Although even the Millerites' revised expectation of Jesus' Return was futile, their message was right on time in God's eyes.<sup>29</sup>

"Babylon"'s *moral* fall at the heart of their warning was incomplete at that time. So it will sound a second time, Rev. 18:13,<sup>30</sup> together with a call for God's people in "Babylon" to flee from the doomed city, 4-8.<sup>31</sup> Ellen White has no doubt whatever regarding the precise identity of John's symbolic Babylon: "the various forms of false or apostate religion";<sup>32</sup> that is, "the world-loving churches of the last days",<sup>33</sup> especially those professing to be Protestant.<sup>34</sup> However, Roman Catholicism should not be totally excluded, for it is certainly "drunk with the *blood* of the saints," Rev. 17:6.<sup>35</sup> And Protestantism is most definitely depicted as her *daughters*, 5.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the "wine" which "Babylon" increasingly forces all nations to drink, 14:8; 17:2; 18:3, is gross heresy such as the eternal torment of the wicked in hell, the natural immortality of the soul and Sunday sanctity.<sup>37</sup>

### *The Third Angel's Message*

Although they had only a limited grasp at first of this message,<sup>38</sup> Rev. 14:9-11, John's third angel represents God's saints<sup>39</sup> proclaiming his ultimate,<sup>40</sup> infallible<sup>41</sup> warning to the world during the Investigative Judgment.<sup>42</sup> Through the Loud Cry<sup>43</sup> of the angel of 18:1, and the Latter Rain,<sup>44</sup> the final outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, it swells at last to exceed the power even of the momentous Protestant Reformation!<sup>45</sup> Ellen White definitely has the seventh-day Sabbath in focus here.<sup>46</sup> However, she is at considerable pains repeatedly to emphasise that this angel's message really consists in righteousness by faith through Jesus' gospel of salvation.<sup>47</sup>

Through the restrained persecution which its proclamation world-wide spawns,<sup>48</sup> this message both prepares Seventh-day Adventists for the climactic close of probation, when they must stand before their holy God without Christ's mediation,<sup>49</sup> and shakes out those who are not fully committed to his cause.<sup>50</sup> Then the only limit on persecution will be that *God will not allow even a single drop of martyr blood to be spilt*:

When the rain descended and the flood came, Noah and his family had entered the ark, and God had shut them in. Noah had faithfully warned the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, while they had mocked and derided him. And as the waters descended upon the earth, and one after another was drowning, they beheld that ark, of which they had made so much sport, riding safely upon the waters, preserving the faithful Noah and His *[sic]* family. So I **saw** that the people of God, who had faithfully warned the world of His coming wrath, *would be delivered. God would not suffer the wicked to destroy those who were expecting translation... I saw that if the wicked were permitted to slay the saints, Satan and all his evil host, and all who hate God, would be gratified.* And oh, *what a triumph it would be for his satanic majesty to have power, in the last closing struggle, over those who had so long waited to behold Him whom they loved!* Those who have mocked at the idea of the saints' going up will witness the care of God for His people and behold *their glorious deliverance!*<sup>51</sup>

The eye of God... was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, *[sic]* will manifest His mighty power and *turn their captivity... If the blood of Christ's faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God.* Their fidelity would not be a testimony to convince others of the truth; for the obdurate heart has beaten back the waves of mercy until they return no more. *If the righteous were now left to fall a prey to their enemies, it would be a triumph for the prince of darkness... Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming...*<sup>52</sup>

Ellen White is quite certain, too, about the precise intent of the striking symbols in the third angel's fearful warning. First, the beast is the sea creature of Rev. 13:1-8,<sup>53</sup> the papacy,<sup>54</sup> which flourished for 1,260 years (the 42 months)<sup>55</sup> until it suffered its mortal wound, when Napoleonic forces imprisoned the Pope in 1798.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, the image of this beast "represents that form of apostate Protestantism (especially in the United States<sup>57</sup>) which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas",<sup>58</sup> worst of all Sunday observance,<sup>59</sup> upon "pain of persecution and death".<sup>60</sup>

That is, the earth beast of 11:7 – the United States of America<sup>61</sup> – fashions a close replica of the papacy,<sup>62</sup> in direct repudiation of its world-renowned Constitution,<sup>63</sup> from those very denominations, amongst others, which founded it when they sought refuge from this tyrant in a distant land!<sup>64</sup> Notice Ellen White's certainty:

[T]he beast... was seen "coming up out of the earth." Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation... must arise in territory previously unoccupied and grow up gradually and peacefully. It could not, then, arise among the crowded and struggling nationalities of the Old World—that turbulent sea of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." [Rev. 17:15] It must be sought in the Western Continent.

What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? *The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America...*

... The lamblike horns indicate youth, innocence, and gentleness, fitly representing the character of the United States... "coming up" in 1798. Among the Christian exiles who first fled to America and sought an asylum from royal oppression and priestly intolerance were many who determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty. Their views found place in the Declaration of Independence, which sets forth the great truth that "all men are created equal" and endowed with the inalienable right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." And the Constitution guarantees to the people the right of self-government... Freedom of religious faith was also granted, every man being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Republicanism and Protestantism became the fundamental principles of the nation. These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity...

The lamblike horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation... The "speaking" of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities. By such action it will give the lie to those liberal and peaceful principles which it has put forth as the foundation of its policy. The prediction that it will speak "as a dragon" and exercise "all the power of the first beast" plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the dragon and the leopardlike beast...

Such action would be directly contrary to the principles of this government..., to the direct and solemn avowals of the Declaration of Independence, and to the **Constitution**... The Constitution provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," and that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the United States." Only in flagrant violation of these safeguards to the nation's liberty, *[sic]* can any religious observance be enforced by civil authority. But the inconsistency of such action is no greater than is represented in the symbol. It is the beast with lamblike horns—in profession pure, gentle, and harmless—that speaks as a dragon.<sup>65</sup>

By the decree enforcing the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, **our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution** as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.<sup>66</sup>

Ellen White's reference to spiritism does not matter here.<sup>67</sup> What really counts, thirdly, is that **then and only then** will those who are bowing to Rome qualify for the mark of the beast. No one will suffer God's wrath

until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been *rejected*. There are many who have never had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desire a knowledge of the truth, [*sic*] to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy... Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently.

The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.<sup>68</sup>

### ***The Remnant Church***

Ellen White is perfectly correct at least that the "line of prophecy in which these symbols (beast, image, mark) are found begins with Revelation 12".<sup>69</sup> However, as this also embraces her foundational theology, the great controversy between Christ and Satan, which warrants separate appraisal,<sup>70</sup> comment here is limited.

Ellen White views the woman in the wilderness, 6, 14, as God's authentic church hiding from the papacy during the Dark Ages.<sup>71</sup> Satan and his angels lost their place in heaven, 7-9, before Creation,<sup>72</sup> though there are echoes of Calvary here as well.<sup>73</sup> His fury "because he knows that his time is short", 12, is applied to the last days.<sup>74</sup> Likewise, his warfare against "the remnant of (the woman's) seed," 17, KJV – specifically the Seventh-day Adventist Church<sup>75</sup> – involves his climactic death decree against authentic Sabbath keepers.<sup>76</sup>

### ***The Berean Test<sup>77</sup>***

Having surveyed Ellen White's actual theology of the Great Tribulation and its preface, the Little Time of Trouble, in sufficient detail elsewhere for objective analysis,<sup>78</sup> I can leave my current survey right here and evaluate her assertion, in brief, that *the faithful who are alive when Jesus finally returns will all be Seventh-day Adventists*, or at very least, will stand right beside them in their loyalty to God's seventh-day Sabbath.

However, since there is patent evidence that, in developing their exclusivist dogma on the run, Seventh-day Adventism's pioneers marshalled the evidence for their settled positions rather than begin at the beginning and work carefully through Holy Writ, reserving major decisions until the whole task was complete,<sup>79</sup> I will evaluate Ellen White's theology in the logical sequence which John the Revelator appears to suggest.

### ***War in Heaven***

If any of John's relevant dramas appears to precede all of his others in time, it is the heavenly battle between Michael and Satan, 12:7-9. Yet nothing even remotely hints that John transports us right back *before Creation!* For one thing, the devil is specifically identified as "the accuser of our brothers," 10. And they in turn are identified unequivocally as *humans wholly dependent upon Christ's blood, and faithful even until death*, 11. This depiction is utterly inappropriate for angels *per se* – the *only* possible candidates before Creation – and for any humans prior to Calvary. For another, John's temporal adverb *now* (ἄρτι (*artí*)), 10, locates Satan's expulsion from heaven in extremely close proximity to "the *salvation* and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his *Christ*", 10, with its transparent reference to the Cross. Compare our Lord's own assurance in its very shadow: "*now* the prince of this world will be *driven out*", Jn. 12:31.

For yet another, John's consequential conjunction *therefore* (διὰ τοῦτο (*dia touto*)), Rev. 12:12, links its entire verse to Satan's exile to the earth. It follows that its verb *has gone down* (κατέβη<sup>80</sup> (*katebē*)) is synonymous with *hurled* (ἐβλήθη<sup>81</sup> (*eblēthē*)), 9, 10. I do not wish to seem facetious. Yet unless Satan lay dazed for many long millennia before realising "that he had been hurled to the earth", 13, it is very difficult to understand his *imminence*-motivated fury, 12, which was most certainly in fearful force against NT Christians, 1 Pet. 5:8-10.

Equally, John's exegetical details leave no credible scope whatever here for the devil to lie comatose for even the five centuries between Calvary and the Dark Ages which Ellen White's historicist interpretation of the woman's flight into the wilderness quite indisputably demands.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the very fact that *John's message here is protection from Satan*, Rev. 12:14-16, *not persecution*, as it is in 13, cautions the meticulous exegete to expect far more than mere *recapitulation* in comparing their forecast time spans! More here anon.<sup>83</sup>

### ***The Sea Beast***

Next in logical sequence, at first sight, is the fearful beast which rises from the sea, 13:1f. Even then, it is quite crucial to realise that *this is the very beast from the abyss*, 17:8. Here is one of Ellen White's cardinal

oversights. She appears scarcely to have considered the relevant, significant portion of John's book in her entire corpus!<sup>84</sup> Had she done so, her confident conclusions would probably have been remarkably different. For **both** times, John reports seven heads and ten horns, mouthing consummate blasphemy, 13:1; 17:3. And **both** times, he watches as the beast's rise to power amazes all humanity, 13:3; 17:8. Even the sea and the abyss depict precisely the same source, as a careful glance at John's beloved OT will readily attest.<sup>85</sup>

Faced with all of this fine detail, the safest path to John's own message for his meticulous student is to come to terms with the paramount point of his whole account with the help of his own weightiest terms.

The horrendous heart of 13 – the pitiless persecution of God's faithful followers – is its summary in 5, 7. The sea creature was permitted “to exercise his **authority** for forty-two months... He was given power<sup>86</sup> to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given **authority** over every tribe, people, language and nation.” This transparently intimates that, during these 42 months, he persecutes the saints.

John's major motif, the noun **authority** (ἐξουσία (*exousia*)), with its almost constant companion, the verb **give** (διδόναι (*didonai*)), are extremely instructive in context. These initially occur thus in 2: “The dragon **gave** the beast his power<sup>87</sup> and his throne and great **authority**.” This immense endowment is bracketed verbally by two very striking, descriptive details which are patently *concurrent* with it. Indeed, both of them involve the sea beast's heads, 1, 3, further verifying that *John is painting a picture within a single moment of time*.

First, this creature has seven heads and ten crowned horns, 1. These crowns obviously imply its reign,<sup>88</sup> albeit temporary, as the parallel record of 17 will reveal shortly.<sup>89</sup> Secondly, “[o]ne of the heads... seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed”, 13:3. In fact, the **whole** beast, not only its one mutilated head, dies and revives, 12, 14. This healing does not follow the mortal blow as John watches. In the Greek, the expression “seemed to have had a fatal wound”, 3, reads simply “as if slain” (ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον (*hōs esphagmenēn eis thanaton*)). Virtually the identical expression (ὡς ἐσφαγμένον (*hōs esphagmenon*)) recurs in 5:6 alone to record the *living* Lamb's prior demise. That is, *the sea creature parodies the paramount Christ-event* to appear resurrected before John. It does not revive before his astonished eyes, as Seventh-day Adventism's version of historicism maintains.<sup>90</sup> It was at this precise moment, moreover, that devil **gave** this sea creature its great **authority**, 13:2. In its four-fold passive form *was given* (ἐδόθη (*edothē*)),<sup>91</sup> *didonai* merely reiterates the event initially reported by its active form *gave* (ἔδωκεν (*edōken*)), 2.<sup>92</sup>

Already, then, Ellen White has scant cause to conclude that the sea beast's striking revival follows the 42 months, when the beast exercises its malign **authority**. Moreover, she must offer more than historical “evidence” to satisfy John's meticulous students that the mortal wound was to heal gradually. In fact, apart from clear counter evidence in this strong parallel above, the tense of the Greek verb back of *had been healed* (θεραπεύειν (*therapeuein*)), 3, is often *punctiliar*,<sup>93</sup> relating an action taking but an *instant* of time, not a *span*. Where does John the Revelator even *hint* otherwise of this healing? I for one have searched in vain here.

The close parallel between 13 and 17 clarifies his genuine timing. The only actual difference between the beast in 13:1 and in 17:3 is that in the latter it has no crowns. This implies that it is not then reigning. This is also stated overtly: “The ten horns... are ten kings who have **not yet** received a kingdom, but for one hour will receive **authority** as kings along with the beast”, 17:12. Notably, the noun **authority** also recurs here, as a synonym for *reign*, too. Moreover, the manifest parallel with 13:1-8 implies that the latter's 42 months equate with the former's “one hour”. However, this does not remove them from John's day. In general, he predicts many future events. Yet these are all *imminent* for him,<sup>94</sup> albeit *conditional*,<sup>95</sup> in common with all prophecy.

Returning to 17, its paramount temporal data is this. The beast “once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction”, 8. Indeed, John repeats the triplex formula thrice, 8, 10, 11. But because harlot Babylon sits astride it, 3, 7, the fact that it “is not” does not mean that it does not exist. It is merely inactive, awaiting its climactic hour of power. John steps back in time from the scene which he initially sketches in 13, possibly to emphasise that the sea beast's death and resurrection parody Christ's, 1:18.

The beast's gift of **authority** equates with the healing of its mortal wound. For, apart from John's passing personal emotion, 17:6f., amazement occurs only in 13:3 and 17:8. This forcefully affirms that the 42 months do indeed equate with the one hour. The inference is that **authority** is a synonym for *rule*. This is confirmed by this key noun's employment immediately after the report of healing in 13:3: “The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men **worshipped** the dragon because he had given **authority** to the beast, and they also **worshipped** the beast and asked, ‘Who is like the beast? Who can **make war** against him?’, 3f.

Two more verbs which facilitate interpretation – **worship** and **battle** – emerge here. Both recur together in 7f. It is wholly irrelevant that the object of worship is sometimes the dragon and at others, the beast. In 4 the two acts of worship are clearly concurrent. So the wicked assess the latter's **authority** by its invincible skill in **waging war**, and **worship** it accordingly, especially for its consummate power in routing God's saints.

Another link occurs in the startling report: “The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and **blasphemies**... He opened his mouth to **blaspheme** God...”, 5f. But obviously, even this expands upon an earlier

detail: “He had... on each head a **blasphemous** name”, 1. As such, this is very eloquent affirmation that the sea creature’s **authority** and its pernicious reign are *precisely* concurrent. And compare **blasphemy** in 17:3.

Well and good. But who wielded the sword which, incidentally, actually slew the sea creature, 13:14? The wound, 3,<sup>96</sup> 12, 14, always denotes divine judgment.<sup>97</sup> So the beast is slain at God’s behest. John does not detail the time. Regardless, it was Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation which “slew” the dragon, 12:7:10.<sup>98</sup> So the beast’s temporary demise evidently coincides with Satan’s rout and expulsion from heaven.

In brief, 13:5-8 expands 3f. As soon as the sea creature is “resurrected”, Satan gives it vast authority over humans for 42 months. So mankind worships it *en masse*, converts alone apart. Above all, there is not the slightest hint in this passage or in its parallel in 17 that the mortal wound follows the beast’s reign of terror.

### ***The Earth Beast***

Two immense evils, blasphemy against God and persecution of his saints, have already surfaced in 13:5-7. Still more appear in 11:7. John observes “another beast, coming out of the earth... He exercised all the **authority** of the first beast on his behalf,” 11f. Here yet again is our prophet’s major thematic noun **authority**, impressively qualified by his exhaustive adjective *all*. This implies that *the two beasts operate in parallel*, not sequentially, despite Ellen White’s confident stance.<sup>99</sup> At least two further stark facts bolster my perspective.

First, the earth creature made humans “**worship** the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed”, 12. This repeats the gist of 3f., 8. But now, such worship is induced by the second beast working “great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men”, 13. Hence the beast’s title *false prophet*.<sup>100</sup> Secondly, it coerces mankind “to set up an image in honour of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. He was given power<sup>101</sup> to give breath to the image..., so that it could speak and cause all who refused to **worship** the image to be killed”, 14f. Yet again the mortal wound is mentioned, further verifying the parallel between the two beasts. Moreover, to worship the sea beast is to worship its image,<sup>102</sup> which accompanies the earth beast. And the persecution of 15-17 clarifies its battle against God’s saints, 7. They refuse to worship the beast, despite such torment, 8, so they are slain, 10,<sup>103</sup> 15.

There is no evidence whatever, then, to separate *any* of the sea beast’s activities. It rises out of the sea as it recovers from its mortal wound, *then* its reign of terror begins. It blasphemes God and persecutes his saints. Moreover, there is no exegetical reason to separate the activities of the sea and earth beasts. Rather, they battle God *together*. The solitary distinction is that the latter is the former’s militiaman, doing *all* of his damnable work for him. And even that is merely portion of the striking, broader picture which clarifies next.

### ***The Woman in the Wilderness***

The precise identity of the woman in 12 is not essential to our current discussion. So it need not detain us. However, in passing, the popular, facile option, God’s genuine church, ignores the persuasive evidence that, just like Paul, Gal. 4:26, John has the New Jerusalem, Christ’s bride, Rev. 19:7; 21:2, obviously in mind.<sup>104</sup>

What matters most here is that in 12, John reveals *the heavenly realities behind the saints’ earthly trauma*. This is the initial scene in one of his greatest literary masterpieces. The verbal sketch which proceeds with finer detail from party to party is a crescent panorama of persecution. First are the heavenly woman and Satan her master foe. But his assault is quite futile. *Whatever the believers may suffer, they are completely secure within God’s constant care*. Second is the beast from the sea, blaspheming God and persecuting converts with Satan’s sweeping authority as his earthly henchman. Thirdly, however, the actual militiaman, who exercises all of this surpassing authority to the utmost on their behalf, is the creature from the earth.

But what about Ellen White’s confident interpretation of the earth, 11, as a quite sparsely inhabited region, specifically, the United States of America?<sup>105</sup> **PLEASE!!** *This will never do!* The noun *earth* (γῆ (*gē*)) occurs no fewer than seven times in 13,<sup>106</sup> four of them after the one in 11. And in all except 13, where earth’s surface is mentioned relative to the sky, the “*whole world*”, 3, is certainly in view. Why should 11 differ in the slightest?

Nor should Ellen White even interpret the sea, 1, through the “many waters” of 17:1, 15.<sup>107</sup> For one thing, the latter is a manifest reference to the *River Euphrates*, on which literal Babylon was built, Jer. 51:13.<sup>108</sup> As such, it tolerates no *marine* inference whatever. For another, John’s frequent interest in heaven, earth and sea<sup>109</sup> is preferable here, especially in light of 12:12. Satan was cast out of *heaven* and calls his allies from the *earth* and the *sea*. Indeed, if anywhere, humanity’s teeming hordes are evident in the earth of 12:12 alone! If any additional layer exists in this symbolism, John has provided it wholly in equating the sea with the abyss.<sup>110</sup>

Equally, what about our prophet’s verb *went off* (ἀπέλθεν<sup>111</sup> (*apēlthen*)), 12:17, which appears at first sight to imply sequence rather forcefully? Does the close of the 1,260 days witness the saints’ final conflict after all, as Ellen White insists?<sup>112</sup> If so, consistency demands that the dragon, who next stands on the sea shore, 13:1,<sup>113</sup> awaits the sea beast to attack God’s saints for him. Yet she equally insists that the sea beast operates during the 42 months. That is, *John certainly recapitulates his caveat at some point*. The puzzle is, Where?

Actually, we have heard the gist of 12:17 once already. First, this verb *was enraged* (ὀργίσθη<sup>14</sup> (*ōrgisthē*)) echoes the adverbial *filled with fury* (θυμός<sup>15</sup> (*thymos*)) 12, before the 1,260 days begin. Secondly, the verb *to make war* (ποιῆσαι<sup>16</sup> (*poiēsai*)) presages 13:4, 7, throughout the 42 months. So the verb *apēlthen* equates precisely with the verb *pursued* (ἐδίωξεν<sup>17</sup> (*ediōxen*)), 12:13. It follows fluently that *this is no novel sequence*. In 17, John is about to traverse the very same ground all over again through 13, but with a fresh perspective. He has already assured the saints that God will utterly preserve them during Satan's savage attack. Now he must divulge its fearful details. Even then, he does so in two parts – a survey of the torment as motivated by Satan's earthly agent, and the details as actually put into effect by the latter's cunning “prophet”.

### Remnant Church?

“But what about that remnant?”, I hear a host of devout Seventh-day Adventists object. “Don't you realise that it is **our** Church under attack in 12:17?” Nothing blinds a reader to the truth of God's Word more than the strong temptation to employ it as a mirror in which to view himself or herself. And it is here, above all else, that “the Adventist people have found... their identity”.<sup>18</sup> Sadly, however, this hoary proof-text says absolutely **nothing** of the sort! In fact this dogma derives from their pioneers' dependence on their inadequate KJV,<sup>19</sup> which should **never** have introduced the noun *remnant*, which is very theologically sensitive, at this point.

First, the fundamental aspect of *remnant* is this. Despite apostasy and oppression, God always has his core of loyal devotees.<sup>20</sup> True, the Book of Revelation sounds the gravest possible warning that the saints will suffer extreme pressure to recant. Yet it is “a great *multitude* that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language”, 7:9, not a minute *core* of Christians, who “come out of *the great tribulation*”, 14. Moreover, even if Seventh-day Adventist conduct, dogma and structure were all quite flawless, 12:17 is completely **devoid** even of a hint of remnant theology. Behind John's salient noun *rest* lies the Greek adjective λοιπός (*loipos*), which he utilises in its basic sense *the others* regardless of size or morality. For example, in 19:21 it covers the vast *majority*, all *wicked*. Compare “the *other* (*loipos*) trumpets”, 8:13, NRSV. Indeed, the Greek nouns in Ro. 9:27 and 11:5, where Paul treats the remnant theme *per se*, are ὑπόλειμμα (*hypoleimma*) and λείμμα (*leimma*) respectively, but **never** *loipos*. This neutral nuance of *loipos* obtains even in 12:17. For the woman's child, 1, is Jesus, 5. So her *other* children are **all** the faithful, not a small **core** of Christians.

Secondly, prophetess or not, Ellen White is not in view in 17. For *testimony of Jesus* connotes the Book of Revelation itself, 1:13. This forecast, not Ellen White's books, put John on Patmos, 9.<sup>21</sup> And heeding this admonition, not Ellen White's counsel, made God's saints martyrs, 20:4. Nor do Seventh-day Adventists have any monopoly whatever on this very sobering verse. Above all, it is John's contemporaries who face the persecution that he predicts.<sup>22</sup> So they must hold what he reveals to them firmly, 1:3; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4, NASB.

### The Six Angels of Rev. 14

The simplest way to grasp the actual import of God's hour of **judgment**, heralded by John's first angel of Rev. 14, is to compare it with our prophet's **precisely** parallel expression. In launching Christ's *Parousia*, his **fourth** angel heralds that “the time to reap **has** come”, 14:15. Normally I would not burden my lay readers with the bare Greek text. Yet John's fundamental point is so transparent, even to most amateur eyes, that I will do so here reasonably confidently – albeit with a hopefully reassuring word-by-word “literal” translation:

ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ – 14:7

ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα θερίσαι – 14:15

for has-come the hour of-the judgment his  
to-reap

Transparently, 14:7 bespeaks no extended **era** of *investigative* judgment, now almost 160 years long, but a short, sharp **instant** of *reward*. In fact, John uses the noun κρίσις<sup>23</sup> (*krisis*) only three times elsewhere,<sup>24</sup> always with reference to *executing* divine judgment. This applies equally to all three occurrences of its cognate noun κρίμα (*krima*)<sup>25</sup> and to all nine of its cognate verb κρίνειν (*krinein*).<sup>26</sup> Then why should *krisis* differ in any way at all in 14:7? Indeed, John qualifies the relevant time simply and casually as “the hour of *his* judgment”, precisely as in 19:2.<sup>27</sup> This also implies that he has the very same judgment in view each time.

Seventh-day Adventism has paid scant heed, either, to John's exegetical detail, **hour** (ὥρα (*hōra*)) of judgment, 14:7. This key noun occurs seven times elsewhere,<sup>28</sup> apart from the parallel, 14:15, and 9:15, dividing into two distinct classes. First, as in 9:15, is a *point* in time. Both 3:3 and 11:13 belong here. Four others are labelled *one hour*.<sup>29</sup> In all but 17:12, where a *period* of time is in mind, the subject is the punishment of harlot Babylon. Yet two extra details suggest that these three be included in the first category, not the second.

Babylon's judgment is also described this way: “(I)n one *day* her plagues will overtake her”, 18:8. And, as an angel hurls a huge millstone into the sea, he explains: “With such *violence* the great city of Babylon will be thrown down,” 21. This is obviously an extremely brief time span, as rapid retribution falls on the tyrant.

Returning to 14:7, it is therefore scarcely conceivable that John intends by *hōra* an extended *period*, now almost 160 years! Close context speaks extremely clearly here, too, at times in striking terms. For example, in heralding *judgment*, the first angel sounds “the everlasting *gospel*”, 6. How, though, can this be “the old, old story” absolutely crucial to Seventh-day Adventism’s very *raison d’être*? John is always his own best interpreter. Of course he teaches the Pauline gospel. “Jesus... freed us from our sins by his *blood*,” 1:5.<sup>130</sup> And none except those who “have washed their robes and made them white in the *blood* of the Lamb”, 7:14, will enter God’s holy presence. Yet even in the rest of the NT, at times the gospel views the future, not just the past. For instance, Paul concludes his protracted warning of God’s looming wrath, Ro. 2:5-15, in these temporal terms: “This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my *gospel* declares”, 16. Compare Lu. 3:18, in context. This is no new gospel, 2 Cor. 11:4, but a reflexion of the fact that my eternal destiny depends upon my response to the gospel, 2 Thess. 1:8, compare 2:9-12.

Regardless, even this does not fully clarify the good news about *judgment* which the first angel heralds.

John often looks far more to the OT than to the NT for his hundreds of allusions, if not direct citations, on which he typically founds his theology.<sup>131</sup> Even the Greek noun εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*) behind *gospel* is another case. For in 14:6, its cognate verb εὐαγγελίζεω (*euangelizein*) is back of *proclaim*. The only other place where John employs it is in 10:6, where it is rendered *announced*. The decisive detail is that Yahweh preached good news “to his servants the prophets.” This is a stock OT phrase,<sup>132</sup> while the gospel in its ultimate NT form was veiled in the OT.<sup>133</sup> Obviously, therefore, in 14:6 *John means good news in its OT sense*.

There is no mistaking the sharp focus of that nuance. The relevant verb יָשַׁע (yāšāʿ) appears more than 180 times, often as Yahweh rescues his servants from their foes.<sup>134</sup> Its four cognate nouns – יְשׁוּעָה (yēšūʿā), יָשַׁע (yēšāʿ), מוֹשִׁיעַ (mōšīʿā), תְּשׁוּעָה (tešūʿā) – occur almost 150 times, often with similar intent.<sup>135</sup> The classic rescue was the Egyptian Exodus,<sup>136</sup> which fortified hopes that there would be a second, out of Babylon.<sup>137</sup>

John himself confirms that this is *precisely* on target with his consistent employment of the Greek noun behind his thematically related *salvation*: σωτηρία (*sōtēria*).<sup>138</sup> The vast multitude of oppressed saints emerges from *the great tribulation*, 7:14, singing, “*Salvation* belongs to our God,” 10, and exulting in his righteous judgment against harlot Babylon, 19:1, as context reveals. Likewise, it is only after Satan and his minions are cast from heaven, 12:7-9, not when Jesus regains his Father’s throne, 5, that heaven’s choir chants its vast chorus: “*Now* have come the *salvation* and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ”, 10. In fact, in *every* case, *deliverance* would be far more precise a translation of John’s *sōtēria*.<sup>139</sup>

In brief, one peers completely in vain into John’s first angel’s message even for any hint of the Cross, of Christ’s redemptive blood or even of Christ himself! The redemption mentioned in the interlude of 14:1-5 is of no help here since such structural features rarely if ever mesh temporally with the contexts which they dissect.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, in the only clear reference to Christ in this context, 14:16,<sup>141</sup> he is the Judge, not our Saviour!

Secondly, part of John’s first angel’s good news is the command: “Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water”, 14:7. Ellen White often places stress here upon respect for the seventh-day Sabbath. However, while no one who notices John’s interest in the Decalogue<sup>142</sup> can dismiss the notion persuasively *in toto*, by no means does he major in *any* day of worship. The Sabbath was *no* source of dispute in his day. Rather, this behest is a potent foil to the false worship to which the false prophet entices the whole world. Moreover, the creation motif itself clearly implies definitive divine judgment.<sup>143</sup>

This all gains very strong support from John’s other two angelic messages. But first, the final nail in the coffin of Ellen White’s sectarian interpretation of his first angel’s message – of the whole three, in fact! – is that *these angels cannot possibly symbolise humans*! For John’s vision actually details three more angels, two of them envoys, 14:15-19. **All six** are styled *another*, so they are *akin*. They *all* depict humans or some earthly league or they do not. Yet the fifth, at least, typifies the *actual* parousial reapers, Mt. 13:39, 41; 24:31.

John’s second angel announces: “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which *made* all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries”, Rev. 14:8. This is all but reiterated in 18:2f. However, the initial report is far more forceful than the second, which states merely that “all the nations *have* drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries.” That is, there is no progression whatever from John’s first to his second account, as Ellen White has long taught.<sup>144</sup> Nor is Babylon’s fall spiritual, as she consistently holds, too.<sup>145</sup> For, when applied to cities elsewhere, the Greek verb πίπτειν (*pipein*) behind *fall* always means *physical* ruin through divine judgment.<sup>146</sup> Why should 14:8 or 18:2f. differ? John certainly gives no such indication, or even hints at it.

Neither is there any mistaking John’s third angel’s depiction of those who submit to the beast: “If anyone *worships* the beast and his image..., he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury... There is no rest day or night for those who *worship* the beast and his image,” 14:9-11. Here, in effect, is his initial angel’s message once more. Only, here it has been flipped over so that its stark, negative side will enhance its penetration.

Regardless, it may be asked, Is the declaration of Babylon’s *fall* not out of place between two *warnings* of looming judgment? By no means. For one thing, it anticipates the fuller record in 18:2f., which is proleptic itself. Compare the mighty angel’s dramatic *warning*, 21:24, appending a lengthy description of the corrupt

city's *literal* ruins. For another, John's first angel of 14 voices his caution in the positive terms of the legitimate worship which alone can shield the faithful from satanic persecution. His second angel highlights the certainty of the judgment by speaking *as if* it had already transpired.<sup>147</sup> His third angel takes advantage of the momentum of the second warning while virtually repeating the first one to "close the brackets", as it were.

In all, then, close parallels and immediate context attest that the hour of judgment, 14:7, involves the **execution** of divine vengeance. There is no hint whatever of **investigation**. This entire section has a *strong air of pastoral appeal*. Indeed, both John's plea for fortitude, 12, and the Holy Spirit's beatitude, 13, imply looming slaughter. Furthermore, the former *precisely* parallels our prophet/shepherd's highly dramatic appeal for endurance, 13:10, at the precise point where the murderous false prophet's very potent deceit is introduced.

Therefore, neither 1844 nor any reflexion of Seventh-day Adventism's identity or mission is to be observed here, quite apart from the fact that John's Book of Revelation was penned *in toto* for his **own** generation.<sup>148</sup> Certainly, God's saints should be steeled against pending persecution and their enemies warned of looming destruction. However, even if the third angelic message so qualifies, the first two contain no script *specifically* for preachers, Seventh-day Adventist or otherwise. Rather, *they are prophetic in proleptic style*. The hour of God's *executive* judgment has still to arrive as John's angels speak. Nor has Babylon yet collapsed.

### **Ellen White's Devastating Time Bomb**

Actually, while it is crucial that Christians strive for an ever clearer comprehension of Holy Writ, which is our spiritual food,<sup>149</sup> most sectarian, doctrinal differences do no more than fragment God's devotees, who should be united, to his universal glory,<sup>150</sup> through his superlative gifts to *all* converts of Christ and his Holy Spirit. However, whenever such dogma is *specifically life threatening*, as in the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses' *fundamental* objection to blood transfusions on purportedly biblical grounds,<sup>151</sup> Jesus' Golden Rule, Mt. 7:12, ought to motivate every alert Christian urgently and earnestly to caution all those who are threatened.

Ellen White's assurance that, in the climactic Time of Trouble prefacing Christ's Return, Satan will not be allowed to spill even a **single** drop of martyr blood<sup>152</sup> may be perfectly consistent with her controlling ideology of the Great Controversy between heaven and its arch rebel.<sup>153</sup> However, it is so completely devoid of authentic biblical support, in fact, that *it is a ticking time bomb which will probably devastate most of her devotees* who depend upon this very assurance to endure the satanic death threat which awaits them.<sup>154</sup>

But first, it is very instructive to observe the extraordinary lengths to which their purported prophet will go in adamant support of her crucial assurance. She reads John of Patmos aright, Rev. 16:2, in that those who succumb to demonic pressure to spurious worship must endure God's fearful, seven last plagues.<sup>155</sup> However, amongst her relative paucity of comment on the actual details of those plagues,<sup>156</sup> there is one which stands out extremely starkly. An executive angel offers this comment, 5f., which is highly significant since it is a very rare **theodicy**,<sup>157</sup> regarding the third punitive angel's plague of blood polluting all drinking water, 4:

**You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; for *they HAVE SHED the blood of your saints and prophets*, and you have given them blood to drink *as they deserve*.**

However, Ellen White soberly offers this quite extraordinary, arresting explanation of this striking theodicy:

**By condemning the people of God to death, they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood *AS IF it had been shed by their hands*. In like manner Christ declared the Jews of His time guilty of all the blood of holy men which had been shed since the days of Abel; for they possessed the same spirit and were seeking to do the same work...**<sup>58</sup>

Here, if nowhere else, is an excellent test bed of Ellen White's prophetic credentials. For here, if nowhere else,<sup>159</sup> she is most certainly offering what she deems *the Spirit-inspired intent of God's Spirit-inspired Word*. If not, a literal reading of the angel's theodicy destroys her credibility! The disastrous problem for her credibility is that she draws an utterly fallacious analogy between the angel's words and Christ's. For one thing, 13:15 is quite specific that the last-day earth beast "was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, *so that it could... cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed*." This is no mere **threat**. This is **result**! For another, note the exact wording of 20:4: "I saw... *those who had been beheaded... They had not worshipped the beast or his image*". Therefore, in 16:5f. the verb *have shed* (ἐξέχεαν<sup>160</sup> (*exechean*)) is in all respects fully as **literal** as the verb *have given* (δέδωκας<sup>161</sup> (*dedokas*)). So her theology is **specious**.

Nor is this merely academic! Many devotees will be sustained during the Time of Trouble by her assurance – *until that initial drop of martyr blood*. As the trickle swells to a stream, then a torrent, shattered faith may decimate the Advent Movement's ranks in its final hour – *a Great Disappointment indeed!* If its leaders wish to avoid it finishing *far worse* than it began, *with despair costing members their very salvation*, they should teach them to face and accept the very real problems that plague Ellen White's prophetic ministry.

Indeed, the striking irony of this scrap of ecclesial history is this. The Great Disappointment that spawned Seventh-day Adventism moved them to "rectify" William Miller's error with the dogma of a pre-Advent judgment starting in 1844. Yet in the process, *they shed one of his best insights*: Rev. 14:6f. heralds Jesus' **Return!**

## Summary and Conclusion

Ellen White is nothing if not completely confident in those distinctive dogmas which, through her specific, prophetic endorsement, segregates her Seventh-day Adventist Church somewhat from all others, even within the world-wide, Christian minority of seventh-day Sabbath keepers.<sup>162</sup> However, we would most probably have shouted "Amen!", too, had we experienced with her one of North America's most exhilarant religious revivals and its crushing aftermath, with the Book of Revelation seeming to reflect *every* step clearly!<sup>163</sup> This imposes the moral imperative upon the objective investigator *never* to permit his or her criticism of its participants to include even amusement at their naïvety to attract the reproach in turn of anachronism. The charge of ignorance implies guilt *only where its agent can reasonably have been expected to know better*.

Nevertheless, it is not without excellent motivation that even the Seventh-day Adventist Church declares in its paramount, statement of Fundamental Beliefs, Article 1, that sacred Scripture is "the test of experience,"<sup>164</sup> whether or not it has the slightest interest in the application of this principle to its founders' own chronicle. For example, at least two of its cousins call repeatedly at our doors with strikingly similar roots and claims, including an assurance that the Book of Revelation *specifically* endorses its own genesis and/or mission!<sup>165</sup>

How valid do Ellen White's credentials appear, then, under the searching scrutiny of sacred Scripture, at least in terms of the *literal* meanings of the passages which she endorses relevant to the current critique?

In a word, she is quite transparently a product of her age, with its almost total dependence upon the inadequate KJV, and largely devoid of the exacting principles of Bible study which are universally employed even amongst conservative students of widely differing confessions, with full confidence in biblical inspiration. In saying so, however, I question neither her many excellent biblical sentiments nor her utter sincerity.

Some readers will object here that this conclusion ignores my own caveat against inordinate expectation. Hardly! The *supreme* issue in my entire critique is whether Ellen White's writings bear the patent evidence of divine inspiration. *The Holy Spirit was never bound by her meagre textual data and naïve hermeneutics*. Indeed, Seventh-day Adventism credits her with advanced *medical* knowledge.<sup>166</sup> Why not exegetical, too?

First, she is grossly astray about John of Patmos' three angels' messages. These certainly proclaim the *proleptic* good news concerning God's vengeance upon the wicked at Christ's Parousia as an encouragement to authentic worship and a warning against spurious worship. They have *nothing* to say about any *investigative* judgment, let alone one beginning in 1844, or the *moral* declension of any Church. Nor do any of these angels – *three out of six*, please note! – symbolise *any* humans, either individually or collectively.

As such, these messages contain no *specific* script for preachers, Seventh-day Adventist or otherwise!

Secondly, Ellen White endorses even the broader Protestant Reformers' interpretations of John's sea and earth creatures completely in vain, quite apart from her profound concern for the United States Constitution. For one thing, the fact that our prophet's *primary* concern is the Great Tribulation about to engulf his *pristine* flock is never more manifest than in Satan's furious alarm, fresh from defeat at Christ's Ascension, that *his time is short*. For another, in *pastoral* concern, John covers his ground twice, prefacing his gruesome details of tempting and persecuting, satanic pressures to apostatise with the absolute assurance that *God is in complete control of the crisis*. Satan employs the sea beast as his henchman; he in turn leaves all of the actual detail to his militiaman, the earth beast. Their *simultaneous, single-phase* attack on the saints is summarised in 12:17, which embraces *all* Christians of John's day, not today's Seventh-day Adventists *alone*.

The peril of on-the-run mirror theology is evident even in that Ellen White may have avoided even the explicable myopia of the Protestant Reformers had she studied Rev. 13 in the bright light of the *parallel* Rev. 17.

Thirdly, Ellen White's application of an initial phase of the sea beast's rampage, before its mortal wound, to the Middle Ages paves the way for probably her most dangerous heresy, the complete nonsense that Satan will be denied even one *single* drop of martyr blood during the Great Tribulation which immediately precedes Christ's Return. I would not go as far as accusing her of deliberately rationalising away the manifest meaning of the *theodicy* of 16:5f. However, not even in her KJV can the confirming purport of both 13:15 and 20:4 be missed! Yet, as far as I can gauge from my comprehensive though less than exhaustive resources, she never brought their transparent references to martyrdom to bear upon her deductions, even though *both apply specifically to Satan's attempts to induce false worship and apply the mark of the beast!*

In brief, Seventh-day Adventism is profoundly and comprehensively self-deluded, with its prophet Ellen White's unequivocal, often compelling, support, in clearly discerning its God-given mission in John's Book of Revelation. Granted, it is certainly the best of all the exclusivist denominations,<sup>167</sup> especially with its much clearer grasp than most others of the pure Pauline gospel.<sup>168</sup> Yet even this is tainted by its end-time speculations. Worse, while it is paranoiac over blood-thirsty papists behind every tree, as it were, the secular fabric around it is being infiltrated by fringe religions like Mormonism, with ulterior motives which Ellen White never foresaw. Worst of all, her myopia, the patent fruitage of her habit of scouring sacred Scripture selectively for proof-texts for settled positions, may well cost many of her devotees their *saving* faith in the end!

- <sup>1</sup> See my "Seventh-day Adventism's Dogma of an Investigative Judgment through Ellen White's Eyes" July, 2002.
- <sup>2</sup> The so-called Jehovah's Witnesses say that John spoke "primarily to anointed Christians [the 144,000]"; *Revelation: its Grand Climax at Hand!* (Brooklyn, 1988), 318. So it is "the congregation of anointed Christians [exclusively Jehovah's Witnesses]" that "is fulfilling this commission [Rev. 14:6f.];" *ibid.*, 205. And Seventh-day Adventism's most prominent Editor, W. G. Johnsson, was shaken by a visit to Salt Lake City: "The parallels with Adventism are striking, almost eerie. Both arose in the northeast of the United States near the same time; both claim that the prophetic gift has been restored; both give America a prominent place in their teachings; both claim to set forth the true gospel after the apostasy of the Middle Ages; both direct attention to the sanctuary; both call for obedience to God's commandments; both claim to be the true church of the last days before Christ returns. And both look to Revelation 14. I was shocked to hear Revelation 14:6, 7 quoted by the Mormon guide and then to be told that the prophet Moroni fulfilled these verses!", "The Saints' End-time Victory Over the Forces of Evil", *Symposium on Revelation: Exegetical and General Studies*, ed. F. B. Holbrook (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 6.
- <sup>3</sup> Fundamental Belief no. 17: "her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth", stress supplied. In fact, this entails a striking elevation of her authority at the expense of Scripture! Prior to 1980, her life and ministry merely displayed "the gift of the Spirit of prophecy", while God's Word was the Church's "all-sufficient revelation of His will and... the only unerring rule of faith and practice." Ever since that epochal year, it has been merely "the infallible revelation of His will... the authoritative revealer of doctrines". These Fundamental Beliefs have been published officially in various places, including *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown: R&H, 2000<sup>6</sup>), 9-19.
- <sup>4</sup> 9T 19.
- <sup>5</sup> E.g., CWE 29f. Cf. Ev 198.
- <sup>6</sup> EW 258f. Her typical appeal to her angel makes it all the harder for loyal Seventh-day Adventists to evaluate her messages in the sober light of Holy Writ. She has equally supplied them with instant defenses against critics of her messages and/or her calling, without appraisal. Cf. my n. 9 and her sweeping caution, CWE 26: "Not a peg or pin is to be removed. No human authority has any more right to change the location of these messages than to substitute the New Testament for the Old."
- <sup>7</sup> E.g., 1SM 208; 5T 455f.
- <sup>8</sup> 2SM 111f. Cf. 101-104, 109-111, 387f.; Ev 223, 359f. She even "enlists" Satan in her cause! In revising GC in 1888 for public circulation, ch. 27 was omitted. But it has been preserved for SDA consumption as "Snares of Satan", TM 472-475. Here he affirms her dogma of a pre-Advent judgment, 472, and foreshadows his death decree for loyal SDAs, 473, and "unbelieving ones" to undermine their faith in her writings, 475! Yet nothing must divert us from the principle in Paul's caveat, Gal. 1:8: "even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" The fact that he reiterates his passionate position drives it very hard home.
- <sup>9</sup> 1SM 208. Regardless, unless her devotees credit her with a rubber nose, such sentiments are subservient to those echoing the Berean Test, Acts 17:11. E.g., they are under specific directive to dialogue with sincere critics, lest they be labelled Pharisaeic, CWE 44f., cf. 34, 35f., 36f. Moreover, should any critic be in error, they are duty bound to demonstrate the fact from Scripture, *ibid.*, 50f. But if not, they should stand right beside him, *ibid.*, 43f.! Nor are their crucial "fundamental articles of faith," *ibid.*, 40, exempt from careful scrutiny to ensure that they rest firmly upon "sound arguments, that will... bear the **closest and most searching scrutiny**", *ibid.* Indeed: "If the pillars of our faith will not stand the **test of investigation**, it is time that we knew it", *ibid.*, 44! Nor can those, especially SDA leaders, professing loyalty to Ellen White yet ignoring her critics equally pretend that this large slice of writings is atypical, as evinced, among others, by her specific directives to use sound arguments (Ev 166; GW 299; 5T 708), and respect critics (Ev 305f.; EW 102; GW 119, 372-374; MB 57f.; 1T 626, 649; 3T 220f.; 6T 120-122; 9T 239-244; TM 248). In brief: "Beneath an appearance of hatred and contempt, even beneath crime and degradation, may be hidden a **soul that the grace of Christ will rescue**"; MB 130. "Therefore **treat every man as honest**", GW 374; 6T 122!
- <sup>10</sup> CWE 32.
- <sup>11</sup> See GC 317-408 for Ellen White's defense of the Millerite Movement, warts and all. Indeed, she likens Miller's rejection of the reinterpretations of his biblical forecasts that spawned her Church to Moses' sin in sight of the Promised Land, EW 257f.! For a valuable critique, see D. Ratzlaff, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists* (Sedona: Life Assurance Ministries, 1996), 43-115.
- <sup>12</sup> See my n. 1.
- <sup>13</sup> E.g., EW 231; GC 320f. Cf. EW 232f.; GC 352f., 405. Indeed, God **deliberately** hid Miller's errors, EW 235f.; GC 323f., lest he not preach God's specific message, GC 405!
- <sup>14</sup> EW 232-237. Cf. CH 547; CWE 26; Ev 389f.; GC 611; 2SM 104; 9T 98.
- <sup>15</sup> E.g., GC 393f.
- <sup>16</sup> E.g., GC 355.
- <sup>17</sup> E.g., GC 311, 379.
- <sup>18</sup> E.g., GC 424. Cf. Ev 613.
- <sup>19</sup> E.g., GC 356.
- <sup>20</sup> E.g., GC 424, 431f., 435f.
- <sup>21</sup> E.g., GC 436-438, 482; GW 315 (note Christ-centred context); 2SM 105f. Cf. 1T 337.
- <sup>22</sup> E.g., GC 311f.; 2SM 387; 5T 455f.; 6T 17f.
- <sup>23</sup> E.g., GC 311f., 355f.; 2SM 106.
- <sup>24</sup> 1SM 206f. Cf. GW 302f.; 2SM 103f., 109f.; TM 24f. This places extremely stringent qualifications on Seventh-day Adventism's incessant assertion that it fully and meticulously respects the paramount Protestant principle, *sola scriptura*!
- <sup>25</sup> E.g., GC 389. I have no time here to review the naïve Millerite application of Jesus' parable of the ten virgins, Mt. 25:1-13, to their "Midnight Cry", as they called their caveat of his looming Return from *investigative* judgment, as in GC 393-408, 426-428! However, this is all too typical of an era of Bible study before the stringent *exegetical* controls that modern conservative researchers employ to discern the meaning of Scripture. Worse, it typifies the mirror theology by which Seventh-day Adventism has deluded itself that its experience was forecast repeatedly in Holy Writ. Cf. the Jehovah's Witness Commentary on the Book of Revelation, *Revelation, passim*. See my n. 2 for a typical, relevant example. Appendix A treats the sheer naivety of the facile "It fits!" approach to Bible prophecy fulfilment through another relevant example.
- <sup>26</sup> E.g., EW 237, 241-243, 249f.; GC 375-380.
- <sup>27</sup> E.g., 1SM 63f., 74. Cf. EW 249, 260f. and my n. 28.
- <sup>28</sup> E.g., 1SM 63. This raises the shut-door notion that has highly embarrassed the Seventh-day Adventist Church ever since its inception. In brief, *even though Miller's predictions repeatedly failed, probation closed for those who rejected them!* E.g., 1SM 63f. The contours of the basic debate are prominent in cyberspace on official and unofficial Ellen White sites.
- <sup>29</sup> E.g., Ev 319; EW 245; GC 390, 405.
- <sup>30</sup> E.g., EW 277; GC 603; 2SM 116, 118.
- <sup>31</sup> E.g., EW 277f.; GC 383, 390, 603f.
- <sup>32</sup> GC 381. Cf. COL 179; PP 167.
- <sup>33</sup> PP 124.
- <sup>34</sup> Ev 365; TM 61. Cf. @ my n. 36.
- <sup>35</sup> GC 382. Cf. 571.
- <sup>36</sup> GC 382f. Some of Babylon's inherent confusion appears to have rubbed off here!
- <sup>37</sup> GC 388f. Typical specifics: Ev 247, 365; GC 536f.; 2SM 68, 118; 8T 94; TM 61f.
- <sup>38</sup> E.g., 1T 77; 5T 206f., 383. But Miller had deserted them, EW 257. See my n. 11.
- <sup>39</sup> E.g., 1T 77; 5T 206f., 383. But Miller had deserted them, EW 257. See my n. 11.
- <sup>40</sup> E.g., GC 390, 454, 604; 5T 206f.
- <sup>41</sup> 4T 595. Cf. 592; 6T 17; 8T 159.
- <sup>42</sup> It was first proclaimed as this judgment began, as in EW 254f. When it ceases, probation closes as this judgment ends, as in EW 279f.; GC 613f. Ellen White specifically reports that the third angel "pointed to the heavenly sanctuary", EW 254, showing God's people the way to its Most Holy Place, 254f., 255, cf. 260f., where this judgment proceeds.
- <sup>43</sup> A prime expression in Seventh-day Adventist parlance, as in Ev 234f.; EW 271, 277f.; 1SM 362f.; 2SM 118; 1T 353; 8T 118.
- <sup>44</sup> Another prime expression in Seventh-day Adventist parlance, as in AA 55; EW 71, 271, 279; GC 464, 485, 611f.; 1T 353f.; TM 506-512. For the relevant theology and an evaluation, see my Appendix B.
- <sup>45</sup> GC 611. Cf. EW 278f.; GC 606f., 611f.
- <sup>46</sup> E.g., EW 255f.; GC 434-438.
- <sup>47</sup> E.g., Ev 184f.; GW 156f., 161; 1SM 362f., 372, 383f.; 6T 11, 19, 20f.; TM 92. Re obedience, cf. my n. 23.
- <sup>48</sup> E.g., GC 608-611.
- <sup>49</sup> See my "One Furnace Too Many: Ellen White Garbles Her Own Theology of the pre-Advent Time of Trouble", April, 2003.
- <sup>50</sup> E.g., EW 269-272; 1T 179-183.
- <sup>51</sup> EW 284. Cf. 283.
- <sup>52</sup> GC 634.
- <sup>53</sup> E.g., GC 438f.
- <sup>54</sup> E.g., GC 439 (note, "unquestionably"), 443, 445, 578.
- <sup>55</sup> E.g., GC 266f. (though strictly Rev. 11:2f.), 439. Cf. 54f.

- <sup>56</sup> E.g., GC 266. In 439 she sees this Pope's capture in 10. Also, the wound's healing, 3, 12, 14, was future, as in 579.
- <sup>57</sup> E.g., GC 573, 588.
- <sup>58</sup> GC 445. Cf. 449.
- <sup>59</sup> E.g., GC 448f., 573, 579, 587f., 590-592, 604f., 607f., 615f., 626, 635.
- <sup>60</sup> 5T 213.
- <sup>61</sup> E.g., GC 440-443, 578f.
- <sup>62</sup> See my n. 58.
- <sup>63</sup> E.g., GC 442; 5T 451, 711f.
- <sup>64</sup> E.g., GC 295f., 441, the latter cited @ my n. 65.
- <sup>65</sup> GC 440-442.
- <sup>66</sup> 5T 451. Cf. GC 588.
- <sup>67</sup> For a typical caveat see GC 551-562, 588-591, 603f. What bears on Ellen White's prophetic credentials is her certainty, as in EW 43, 59f., 86f., 262, that the Rochester rappings were "not the result of human trickery or cunning, but... the direct work of evil angels," GC 553. For striking counter evidence see Robert K. Sanders, "Truth or Fables: The Fox Sister's [sic] Fraud", @ [www.truthorfables.com/Fox\\_Sisters\\_Fraud](http://www.truthorfables.com/Fox_Sisters_Fraud).
- <sup>68</sup> GC 605. Cf. 449.
- <sup>69</sup> GC 438.
- <sup>70</sup> See my "The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan: How Biblical is Ellen White's Major Integrating Theme?", January, 2003, *passim*.
- <sup>71</sup> E.g., GC 54f.
- <sup>72</sup> E.g., CT 32f.; EW 145-147; PP 42; 1SM 222. Cf. DA 119.
- <sup>73</sup> E.g., DA 625f., 761, albeit with stress on the questions Satan first raised against God being forever settled.
- <sup>74</sup> E.g., COL 167f.; 5T 644f. Her temporal mindset also clarifies in Satan "comes down", as in GC x; 1T 210.
- <sup>75</sup> E.g., 2SM 384f.; 1T 223f.
- <sup>76</sup> E.g., 5T 449f.; TM 133. Cf. 8T 117; 9T 231.
- <sup>77</sup> Acts 17:11, the very test Ellen White invites for herself, as in 5T 691.
- <sup>78</sup> See my n. 49.
- <sup>79</sup> See my n. 1.
- <sup>80</sup> Aorist (my n. 93), from καταβαίνειν (*katabainein*).
- <sup>81</sup> Aorist (my n. 93), from βάλλειν (*ballein*).
- <sup>82</sup> *Supra*, 4, "The Remnant Church".
- <sup>83</sup> *Infra*, 6, "The Woman in the Wilderness".
- <sup>84</sup> I have searched in vain for any reference in her writings to Rev. 17:3b, 7b-14. Maybe this would have compounded the confusion I note in my n. 36, for her interpretations make it difficult to identify the twin of the earth beast on which Babylon sits!
- <sup>85</sup> Yahweh slays the sea monster, Ps. 74:13f.; Isa. 27:1; 51:9. Cf. Job 41:32.
- <sup>86</sup> Supplied in translation, as evident, e.g., in NASB.
- <sup>87</sup> Greek: δύναμις (*dynamis*).
- <sup>88</sup> Cf. 12:3; 19:12, 16.
- <sup>89</sup> Two ¶¶ *infra*.
- <sup>90</sup> E.g., GC 579.
- <sup>91</sup> 5 [bis], 7 [bis]. Cf. *receive*, 17:12 [bis]. The aorist (my n. 93) *edothē* is from διδόναι (*didonai*).
- <sup>92</sup> Cf. 4. Granted, the ultimate concession comes from God, to whom the verb normally applies, e.g., 11:3. Cf. 2:7, 26; 3:21, and by inference, 6: 11; 7:2; 8:2, 3; 9:1, 3; 12:14; 20:4. But it is perfectly clear that it is Satan who passes it on.
- <sup>93</sup> Aorist, with no English equivalent. However, this workhorse, past tense has many subtle nuances which cannot be discussed here.
- <sup>94</sup> See either my "Investigative Judgment", 20-22, or my "Seventh day Adventism's Upstart Doctrine of Determinism in the Books of Daniel and Revelation — a Selective Appraisal", November, 2000, 6, 8-11.
- <sup>95</sup> See my "Upstart Doctrine", *passim*.
- <sup>96</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> in NIV, which masks the 1<sup>st</sup> wound's roots in an unrelated verb.
- <sup>97</sup> 9:18, 20; 11:6; 15:1, 6, 8; 16:9, 21 [bis]; 18:4, 8; 21:9; 22:8.
- <sup>98</sup> Note context: Messiah's translation and exaltation, 5, and accusation of converts, 10, which God no longer tolerates, Ro. 8:33f. Cf. Jn. 12:31-33. The timing of the 42 months and Satan's fall are also related, *supra*, 4.
- <sup>99</sup> *Supra*, 3, @ my nn. 53-66.
- <sup>100</sup> 16:13; 19:20; 20:10.
- <sup>101</sup> See my n. 86.
- <sup>102</sup> 14:9, 11; 20:4.
- <sup>103</sup> Ellen White's position that 10 refers to the sea beast completely ignores context. The saints should heed this alert, 9, and endure patiently, 10c. Moreover, it may be very readily confirmed that here John is closely emulating the major OT prophets in employing Exodus typology.
- <sup>104</sup> John draws a striking contrast between New Jerusalem and Babylon. One is "the tabernacle of God", 21:3; the other becomes a "dwelling of demons..."; 18:2. One has "the glory of God", 21:11; the other is "garbed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold, jewel and pearl"; 18:16. Into one "will certainly not enter anything impure..., but only those written in the Lamb's book of life", 21:27; the other is ruined "since all the nations have drunk some of the wine of the fury of her adultery," 18:3. In one "will be the throne of God and of the Lamb, and his servants... will reign for ever and ever", 22:3-5; the other "will be consumed by fire," 18:8. Yet this is only *half* the story. John first depicts Babylon as the great harlot, 17, contrasting Babylon, *both prostitute and city*, with New Jerusalem. But at first sight this contrast seems partially ignored. In one almost passing detail alone, "prepared like a *bride* adorned for her husband", 21:2, does Jerusalem appear as a woman, the *bride* symbol an eloquent foil to *harlot*. However, there is *far* more to Babylon than that. The "*mother* of harlots and of the idolatries of the earth", 17:5, starkly contrasts with the *mother* figure of 12, who gives birth to both Messiah and his followers.
- <sup>105</sup> *Supra*, 3, @ my nn. 61-66, especially 65.
- <sup>106</sup> 3, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14 [bis].
- <sup>107</sup> *Supra*, 3, @ my n. 65.
- <sup>108</sup> Cf. Isa. 8:7, in its eloquent context.
- <sup>109</sup> 5:13; 10:1f., 4f., 6, 8; 12:12; 14:7. Evil infests his entire creation, but its Creator is in control!
- <sup>110</sup> See @ my n. 85.
- <sup>111</sup> Aorist (my n. 93), from ἀπερχεσθαι (*aperchesthai*).
- <sup>112</sup> *Supra*, 2f.
- <sup>113</sup> The KJV erroneously places John, not Satan, upon the seashore. Seventh-day Adventism's pioneers may be forgiven, then, for ignoring this detail as quite trivial. But correctly translated, it speaks extremely clearly of John's actual temporal intent. See further my n. 119.
- <sup>114</sup> Aorist (my n. 93), from ὀργίζειν (*orgizein*).
- <sup>115</sup> Lit., *having great fury* [ἔχων θυμὸν μέγαν (*echōn thymon megan*)].
- <sup>116</sup> Aorist infinitive (my n. 93), from ποιεῖν (*poiein*).
- <sup>117</sup> Aorist (my n. 93), from διώκειν (*diōkein*).
- <sup>118</sup> "To the Reader", in W. H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 1992<sup>2</sup>), xi, virtually reiterated in launching "Issues in Revelation: DARCOM Report", *Symposium on Revelation*, 175.
- <sup>119</sup> This subject is grossly confused in far too much lay thinking, however sincere, by an utterly careless dearth of reliable data, if not deliberate misinformation, and an equally appalling dearth of its cogent analysis. E.g., the Millerite Movement is survived to this day by two Sabbatarian denominations, the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Church of God (Seventh Day). Their major doctrinal distinction is that the latter gives no credence, commendably, to the vast Ellen White corpus. Regardless, its theological maturity has rarely been in greater question than in one recent, mindless attack on the NASB, W. C. Hicks, "Which Modern Version?", *Bible Advocate*, December, 1996, 10-12, 16b, 16c. He parades Lu. 24:52 as a "classic example" of a *wilful* omission challenging the very deity of Christ, 12c, 16bf. This is sheer nonsense, even though NIV typifies other modern versions in including "they worshipped him". On one hand, NASB includes scores of references which uphold the deity of Christ *fully* — including Jn. 1:1-4, hard on the heels of Lu. 24:52f! On the other, most importantly, the latter's "omission", as in GNB, RSV (but not NRSV), is *nothing* more than respect for the fact that it is attested in an authoritative, 3<sup>rd</sup>-century manuscript (P<sup>75</sup>), while the fuller text depends upon a 5<sup>th</sup>-century alternative (D). There is absolutely *no* papal let alone satanic plot or the like in the flood of modern Bible translations! However, I can add little more here than a few prime pointers to the general truth of this matter. First, the KJV itself offers clear evidence of *dependence upon late, somewhat corrupt NT manuscripts*. E.g., it renders Mk. 9:49 thus: "For everyone will be salted with fire and every sacrifice will be salted with salt". However, this is a *manifest conflation* from codex Vaticanus — "For everyone will be salted with fire" — and codex Bezae — "For every sacrifice will be salted with salt" — *both of which therefore predated codex Alexandrinus, preserved in Textus Receptus. Numerous similar conflations can be detailed*, so this is certainly no unique instance! Secondly, the KJV by no means escaped sheer *translational errors*. E.g., in Textus Receptus, the Greek behind both Heb. 3:11 and 4:3b is identical. Yet the former renders Yahweh's oath "They shall not enter into my rest"; the latter "if they shall enter into my rest". To its credit, this error is eliminated in NKJV, which employs the same NT manuscript tradition as KJV. Confusion is multiplied if one ventures to the OT, where few critics of modern Bible versions bother to look. E.g., most modern OTs actually record a *longer* version of Ps. 145:13 than KJV! This simple fact, which ought to put paid to the plethora of "Shock!! Horror!!" lists of supposed, satanic deletions from the Textus Receptus, has the support of one manuscript of the Masoretic Text and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Most compelling, though, is the simple fact that *this psalm is an*

- acrostic**, in which *each* verse in turn commences with a *successive* letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the manuscripts consulted by the KJV translators, the requisite verse beginning with *l*, the 14<sup>th</sup> Hebrew letter, equivalent to our English *n*, is conspicuously and uniquely missing.
- <sup>120</sup> E.g., F. D. Nichol *et al.*, eds., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary 7* (Washington: Review & Herald, 1957), 813-815.
- <sup>121</sup> This may be read as exile for prior teaching. Yet as the Revelation existed in God's mind long before John received it, he may still have been banished to Patmos in order to record it.
- <sup>122</sup> See @ my n. 94.
- <sup>123</sup> Here as κρίσεως (*kriseōs*). <sup>124</sup> 16:7; 18:10; 19:2.
- <sup>125</sup> 17:1; 18:20; 20:4.
- <sup>126</sup> 6:10; 11:18; 16:5; 18:8, 20; 19:2, 11; 20:12, 13. <sup>127</sup> Cf. 16:7.
- <sup>128</sup> 3:3, 10; 11:13; 17:12; 18:10, 17, 19.
- <sup>129</sup> 17:12; 18:10, 17, 19.
- <sup>130</sup> Cf. 5:9; 14:3f.
- <sup>131</sup> E.g., as God's heavenly temple was opened, 11:19, in it "was seen *the ark of his covenant*." This is a common OT expression, as in Nu. 10:33; 14:44, for in the ark were the two stone tablets, 1 Ki. 8:9, specifically labelled *the covenant of the LORD*, 21. Likewise, in 15:5, the opened temple is called "*the tabernacle of the Testimony*". Uppermost in John's mind here is "the tabernacle, *the Tent of the Testimony*," Nu. 9:15. More typically and tersely, the 1<sup>st</sup> tabernacle is labelled *the Tent of the Testimony*, as in 2 Chr. 24:6, or *the Tabernacle of the Testimony*, as in Ex. 38:21. This refers to the ark, with its moral code, above which Yahweh's Shekinah glory abode, 25:22, in the Holy of Holies, 26:33f. Besides *the ark of the covenant*, this superlative focus of the entire sanctuary complex is frequently designated *the ark of the Testimony*, as in 25:22; 26:33f.; 30:6, 26. The Decalogue itself is specifically called *the two tablets of the Testimony*, as in Ex. 31:18; 32:15; 34:29, or simply, *the Testimony*, as in Ex. 25:16, 21; 40:20; Nu. 17:4. This moral basis of the covenant, Ex. 34:27f., was placed in the ark, as in Ex. 25:16, 21; 40:20.
- <sup>132</sup> E.g., Jer. 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4.
- <sup>133</sup> E.g., Ro. 16:25f.; Eph. 3:2-9; Col. 1:25-27.
- <sup>134</sup> E.g., Nu. 10:9; Deut. 20:4; 33:29; Jud. 10:12; 1 Sam. 7:8; 14:6, 23; 17:47; 2 Sam. 3:18; 22:3, 4; 2 Ki. 19:19, 34; 1 Chr. 11:14; 16:35; 2 Chr. 32:22; Ps. 3:7; 7:1, 10; 12:5; 17:7; 18:3; 22:21; 28:9; 31:2, 16; 37:40; 44:3, 7; 54:1; 55:16; 57:3; 59:2; 69:1; 71:2, 3; 72:4, 13; 76:9; 86:2, 16; 108:6; 109:31; 119:94, 146; 138:7; Isa. 25:9; 35:4; 37:20, 35; 49:25; 59:16; 63:1, 5; Jer. 15:20; 17:14 [*bis*]; 42:11; Eze. 34:22.
- <sup>135</sup> E.g., 1 Sam. 2:1; 11:13; 19:5; 2 Sam. 22:3, 36, 51; 23:10, 12; 2 Ki. 13:17 [*bis*]; 1 Chr. 11:14; 2 Chr. 20:17; Job 5:4; Ps. 3:8; 9:14; 12:5; 13:5; 14:7; 18:2, 35; 20:6; 27:1; 35:3, 9; 37:39; 53:6; 60:12; 68:20; 69:13, 29; 70:4; 71:15; 74:12; 108:13; 118:14, 15; 119:41; 140:7; 144:10; Prov. 21:31; Isa. 25:9; 26:1; 59:17. The impressive length of such lists readily verifies that this is a cardinal OT doctrine.
- <sup>136</sup> E.g., Ex. 14:13, 30; 15:2; Ps. 106:8, 10, 21; Hos. 13:4; Hab. 3:13 [*bis*].
- <sup>137</sup> E.g., Isa. 49:8; Jer. 31:7; 46:27; Zech. 8:7, 13; 10:6; 12:7. Cf. Ps. 69:35; 79:9; 80:2, 3, 7, 19; 106:4, 47.
- <sup>138</sup> I assume that this is a good rendition for the moment, rather than expose my lay reader to the Greek, but shed it @ my n. 139.
- <sup>139</sup> As in Acts 7:25 (see RSV); 27:34 (*survival*, NKJV); Phil. 1:19. This is as good a place as any to add that Ellen White's interpretation of heaven's directive, Rev. 18:4f., "'Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes'", has **nothing** to do with salvaging the honest-hearted from either Roman Catholicism or apostate Protestantism to join Seventh-day Adventism. John harnesses the OT prophetic call, as in Isa. 48:20; Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 9 [notice piled up sins], 45, for **all** of his people to return from captivity for his typological depiction of all of his end-time saints being taken "captive" by Satan's henchmen in potent temptation and cruel persecution, Rev. 13:10, only to escape before his vengeance, 18:4f.
- <sup>140</sup> E.g., the bowl septet is interrupted, 15:2-4, to reassure the saints that their future with God is secure.
- <sup>141</sup> Even then, some see another angel here since they balk at a mere angel, 15, directing Deity.
- <sup>142</sup> E.g., the saints "obey God's commandments", Rev. 14:12.
- <sup>143</sup> E.g., the creation theme bespeaks restoration, 21:1-5. <sup>144</sup> E.g., GC 389f. <sup>145</sup> E.g., GC 383, 389. Cf. 603.
- <sup>146</sup> 11:13; 16:19.
- <sup>147</sup> John's book is characterised by passages *starkly* out of sequence, for *pastoral* emphasis, like the interludes 7:1-8, 9-17; 10; 11:1-13. Cf. 5:8; 11:7; 12:6 presaging 8:3f.; 17:8; 12:14 respectively.
- <sup>148</sup> See @ my n. 94. <sup>149</sup> E.g., Mt. 4:4; 1 Pet. 2:2, in context.
- <sup>150</sup> See Eph. 1-4.
- <sup>151</sup> Now the subject of intense, albeit covert, internet debate, which need not detain us here. <sup>152</sup> See @ my nn. 51, 52.
- <sup>153</sup> See @ my n. 69. <sup>154</sup> See @ my nn. 52, 60, 76.
- <sup>155</sup> E.g., EW 65f.; GC 627f.
- <sup>156</sup> E.g., EW 64f., 289; GC 628, 636-639.
- <sup>157</sup> A vindication of God's character in the face of rampant evil. It seeks to answer the fundamental question: Why does evil prosper, even to the point of persecuting the righteous, if a **just and holy God is in absolute control** of the cosmos he created?
- <sup>158</sup> GC 628.
- <sup>159</sup> Frequent, in fact. E.g., see my "Investigative Judgment", *passim*.
- <sup>160</sup> Aorist (my n. 93), from ἐκχεῖν (*ekchein*).
- <sup>161</sup> Perfect, from διδόναι (*didonai*), though the aorist (my n. 93) ἔδωκας (*edōkas*) also enjoys the support of several respected manuscripts.
- <sup>162</sup> E.g., see my n. 119.
- <sup>163</sup> In evaluating history, the danger of not taking enough care in stepping into another's shoes is adequately illustrated in D. Anderson's seven-chapter essay, "National Sunday Law – Fact or Fiction?", @ [www.ellenwhite.org](http://www.ellenwhite.org). He is perfectly correct in rejecting Ellen White's theology. However, in the process he should have asked the basic question, Could a National Sunday Law have been enacted *in her day*? The relevant records are sampled briefly in U. Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Assn., rev. ed., 1944), 597f. However, see especially A. T. Jones, "National Sunday Law: Argument of Alonzo T. Jones Before the United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor; at Washington, D. C., Dec. 13, 1888", @ [www.adventist4truth.com](http://www.adventist4truth.com). It is well beyond quibble that early Seventh-day Adventists had *good* cause to fear the looming enactment of a National Sunday Law, if not conclusive proof of its probability. We who enjoy the vast benefit of hindsight, completely free from the psychological context of its oppressive proximity, would therefore do well *never* to permit even a *hint* of *derision* to disgrace our detached analyses of their situation. Regardless, the paramount question remains, **So what?** Unless it can be verified beyond reasonable doubt that *John of Patmos* had even the Sabbath in mind in the earth creature's forceful inducements to spurious worship, let alone political interference in matters of worship, not even the *enactment* of any National Sunday Law would have the *slightest* relevance in interpreting his end-time predictions. Moreover, all such interpretations face the utterly insuperable barrier that, *in toto*, the Revelation expresses John's *inspired, pastoral concerns for his contemporaries*. See my n. 94.
- <sup>164</sup> See my n. 1.
- <sup>165</sup> See my n. 2.
- <sup>166</sup> Her major works/compilations include CD, CH, MH, MM, Te. For some years her most passionate apology is likely to remain H. E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord: the Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Nampa: PPPA, 1998). Most relevant here are chs. 24-28, available conveniently, albeit without pagination, @ [www.whitestate.org/books/mol/TOC](http://www.whitestate.org/books/mol/TOC). However, although this is no place to elaborate, the objective reader ought to take careful note of the plethora of *criticism* equally current here, much of it credible enough, with extensive documentation, to paint a contrary portrait of a *virtual plagiarist* whose purported prophetic insights contain little originality, if any, along with both implicit and explicit endorsements of some of the prominent health-care *myths* of her day. The awakening received its greatest impetus in recent decades through R. L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: Ellen G. White and the Origins of Seventh-day Adventist Health Reform* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), revising its 1976 predecessor. Numerous researchers have since added similar, reliable exposés.
- <sup>167</sup> E.g., so-called Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. Respectable Sabbatarian denominations like the Church of God (Seventh Day) – see my n. 119 – have generally avoided such delusions of grandeur, to their great credit.
- <sup>168</sup> However, whatever its *official* stance, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has long been racked by open disputes over righteousness by faith so serious that they are at the very root of the recent Ford fiasco which has probably rendered it a mortal wound! And they are certainly sustained by Ellen White's ambivalence, as the Wesleyan heritage in her writings struggles with the more Lutheran sources she borrows – leaving her devotees to vacillate in both mind and practice between the latter's gospel assurance and the former's perfectionist demands.

## Appendix A

### *The Number of John's Sea Beast*

One of John's most cryptic details by far, specifically singled out for sagacity, appears in his open invitation, 13:18: "If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast... His number is 666." It is little wonder, then, that many Christians have totally abandoned the enigma to incessant extremist speculation.

Seventh-day Adventism applies this number 666 to the papacy, for once without Ellen White's nod!<sup>1</sup> Yet it offers a superb counter to the "It fits!!" theology by which she and her fellow pioneers often forged dogma.

The fundamental problem in solving John's riddle two long millenia beyond his era is methodology: We moderns can scarcely grasp how difficult numbers were to most ancients before Europe's adoption of the ultra convenient Indo-Arabic decimal system a thousand years ago.<sup>2</sup> No longer need any Roman student sweat profusely over some homework like VIII • XVII = CXXXVI. For now,  $8 \times 17 = 136$  is an absolute breeze!

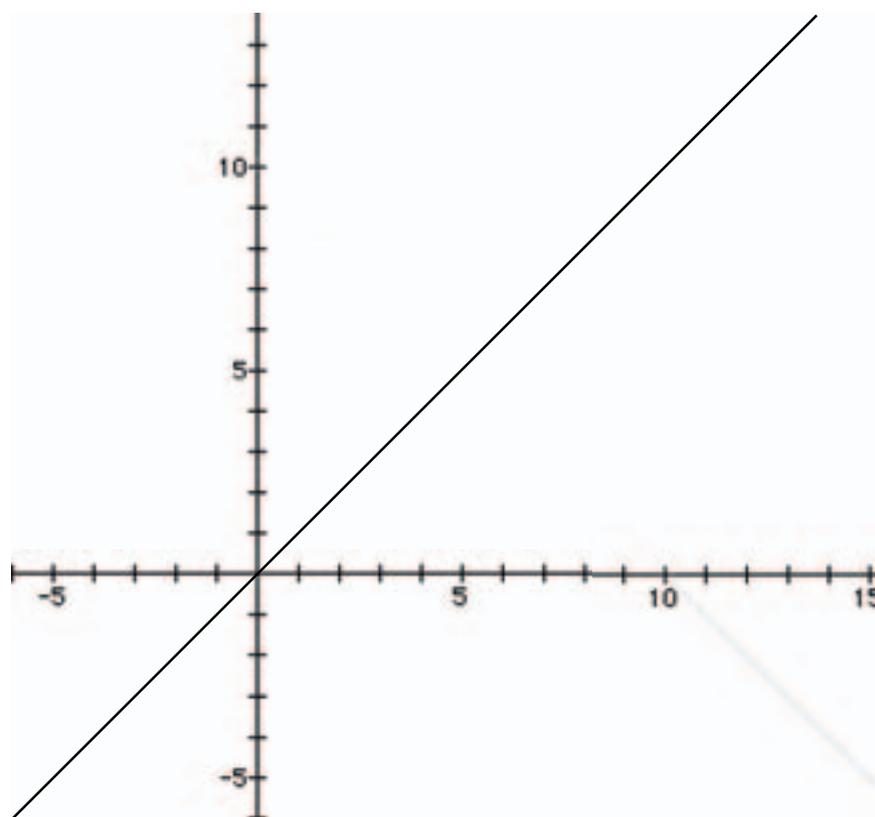
Lacking unique numeral symbols, biblical Greek equally relies on its alphabet, with three obsolete symbols,<sup>3</sup> to do double duty. For instance, its three symbols ὤνη read equally as the noun back of forest, as in James 3:5, and the integer 438.<sup>4</sup> This offers an ingenious solution to John's enigma. If 666 is written as ϞϞϞ, not in long hand, six hundred sixty six, we have *Antichrist*: Χριστός, *Christ*, covered by a snake-like symbol!

Among more common approaches,<sup>5</sup> by far the most popular is gematria, working backwards from 666 to some proper name or title. For example, if Nero Caesar is transliterated from Greek into Hebrew, which also depends upon its alphabet for its numerals, as נרון קסר, we obtain 666 ( $100+60+200+50+200+6+50$ ), reading right to left.<sup>6</sup> The trouble, though, is that *this would have been gibberish to John's pristine readers*.<sup>7</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists go to the extreme of reading our prophet as if he did not even have them in mind at all! Preacher after fervent preacher claims that the Pope's title, on his tiara, is *Vicar of the Son of God*.<sup>8</sup> In Latin this is VICARIVS FILII DEI, and this certainly yields 666 ( $5+100+0+0+1+5+0+0+1+50+1+1+500+0+1$ ). However, cautious members, at least, admit two more grave problems. There is **no** evidence to locate this title on the Pope's tiara.<sup>9</sup> Worse, his closest **actual** title was Vicar of Christ.<sup>10</sup> And VICARIVS CHRISTI yields 214.

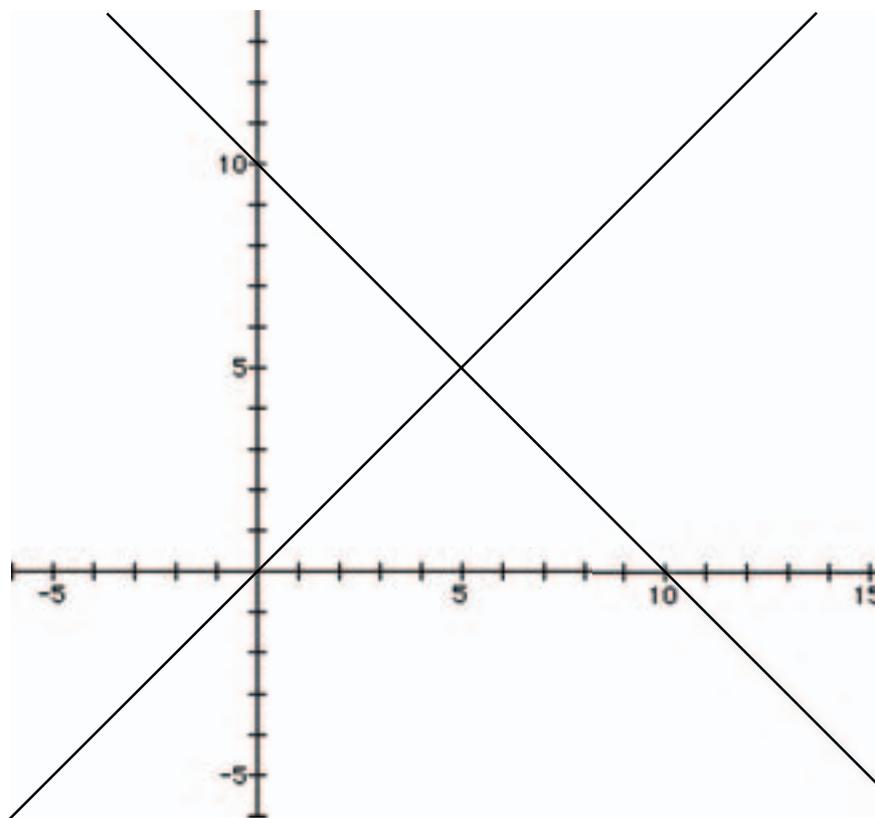
A hypothetical example may assist the modern mind to grasp the utter nonsense which devotees of this discredited interpretation offer the gullible, in all sincerity. I may wish to identify Brian as 60 with a code in which each letter of the English alphabet has a successive numerical value, starting with A=1. Only, BRIAN yields 44 ( $2+18+9+1+14$ ). But wait! BRYAN yields 60 ( $2+18+25+1+14$ )!! **PLEASE!!** John, God's inspired prophet, has given us no authority whatever to contort any name or title until it finally fits some precious presupposition.

More broadly, the general fallacy of the "It fits!!" approach which has yielded countless diverse "solutions" since John's day is readily grasped through a little extremely basic algebra. The simple linear equation  $y=x$



has an *infinite* number of solutions. The triumphal cry "It fits!" may rightly ring forth for  $y=x=49$  as it may for  $y=x=499$  or even  $y=x=499,999,999,999$ , on and on to the nether regions of Numberland, with no limit at all.

However, if I require that, *simultaneously*,  $y=10-x$ , a second line will represent this equation on my graph:



And it is immediately obvious that **one and ONLY one solution obtains**:  $y=x=5$ , where the two lines cross. The infinitude of completely valid solutions to each equation if independent reduces spectacularly to *only the single one which is common to both*. Dual validity is infinitely more demanding than the independent!

It is *precisely* the same with John's famous enigma. One of his conditions is that this beast's name be equivalent to 666, and gematria is the most credible route to follow. However, his other, *simultaneous* condition is that his riddle must be *fully* intelligible to his *pristine* readers, who face the beast's looming wrath.<sup>11</sup> No matter how momentous an impact he or she may have had upon human history, even world-wide, **no one who surfaced beyond their horizon**, either before or since, **can possibly qualify as John's great tyrant**.

To my mind, the most obvious candidate by an extremely long measure is Domitian, the very Roman Emperor who was beginning to demand that his citizens worship him, virtually as a god, at the very time that John penned his prophecy. This simple historical detail is beyond all quibble. Most importantly, his official title in Latin was *Imperator Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus*. This was rendered as *Autokrator Kaisar Dometianos Sebastos Germanikos* for his Greek-speaking subjects. And in turn, for their coins, this abbreviated to **A.KAI.ΔOMET.ΣΕΒ.ΓΕ=666** (1+20+1+10+4+70+40+5+300+200+5+2+3+5)<sup>12</sup>!! *How could they possibly miss John's point*, or even look elsewhere, *with the very coins jangling in their pockets marked 666!*<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D. F. Neufeld, ed., "NUMBER OF THE BEAST", *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington: R&H, 1976<sup>2</sup>), 1008-1010.

<sup>2</sup> J. Gullberg, *Mathematics from the Birth of Numbers* (New York & London: Norton, 1997), 3-68 is a highly readable, lay accessible account of the fascinating subject in a sweeping context.

<sup>3</sup> Hence my abandoning my practice, this once, of transliterating the Greek for the benefit of my lay readers.

<sup>4</sup> However, I must avoid the impression that every Greek word had a numerical equivalent. The far right letter of any numeral was limited to one of the symbols representing 1 to 9, the next left 10 to 90, the next left 100 to 900, etc.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., taking 666 as a triangular number, i.e., the sum of consecutive integers beginning with 1:  $666=1+2+3+...+34+35+36$ ;  $36=1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8$ ; Rev. 17:11 identifies the beast as an eighth king. But this is highly artificial and solves absolutely nothing.

<sup>6</sup> The convention in both Semitic languages of the OT, Hebrew and Aramaic, and still a broad cultural heritage to this day in the Middle East.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., in 9:11 he provides a name in both Hebrew and Greek, implying that few, if any, of his pristine readers were bilingual. It is inconceivable, therefore, that more than a handful of them, if any, understood Latin as well! Cf. the passing reference to the language in Jn. 19:20.

<sup>8</sup> Some evidence can be quoted to ground this tradition in official Roman Catholic sources, as in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book*, eds. D. F. Neufeld & J. Neuffer (Washington: R&H, 1962), # 1750. Whatever, it was current amongst Seventh-day Adventism's prominent pioneers, and openly published officially by them, Neufeld, ed., *art. cit.*, 1009b.

<sup>9</sup> Neufeld, ed., *ibid.* Cf. Neufeld & Neuffer, eds., *art. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers: the Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation II* (Washington: R&H, 1948), 607.

<sup>11</sup> See @ my fn. 84 in my main text.

<sup>12</sup> The fact that this has no numerically redundant letters, like the five (almost 1/3!) for VICARIVS FILII DEI, somewhat enhances its credibility.

<sup>13</sup> This does not necessarily mean that the replete abbreviation graced every coin. However, there can be no doubt that Domitian's arrogance guaranteed that his *replete* title was extremely well advertised to the *farthest* limits of his kingdom. And his coinage was one basic medium.

## Appendix B

### What Latter Rain?

One of Ellen White's most repetitious themes throughout her end-time speculation is the so-called Latter Rain of God's Holy Spirit. This both prepares and empowers faithful Seventh-day Adventists for the gargantuan, evangelistic thrust which completes Christ's gospel commission of Mt. 28:16-20, and prefaces the fearful, Great Tribulation,<sup>1</sup> from which they will all be delivered alive, albeit only through his resplendent Return.

#### *Ellen White's Theology of the Early and Latter Rains*

Ellen White is certainly explaining *the* meaning of sacred Scripture, as she understands it, when she applies Palestine's autumn and spring rains to Pentecost and a *fuller*, end-time bestowal of God's Holy Spirit:

[Zech. 10:1; Joel 2:23 cited] In the East the former rain falls at the sowing time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain... *The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit.* As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character..

The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.<sup>2</sup>

It is true that in the time of the end, when God's work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, *the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church.* The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain...

But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest "in the time of the latter rain." In response, "the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain." "He will cause to come down . . . [*sic*] the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain." Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23.<sup>3</sup>

The angel who unites in the proclamation of the third angel's message is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. A work of world-wide extent and unwonted power is here foretold. The advent movement of 1840-44 was a glorious manifestation of the power of God; the first angel's message was carried to every missionary station in the world, and in some countries there was the greatest religious interest which has been witnessed in any land since the Reformation of the sixteenth century; but these are to be exceeded by the mighty movement under the last warning of the third angel.

The work will be similar to that of the Day of Pentecost. As the "former rain" was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the upspringing of the precious seed, so the "latter rain" will be given at its close for the ripening of the harvest. [Hos. 6:3; Joel 2:23 cited] "In the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh." "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts 2:17, 21.

The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. *The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close.* Here are "the times of refreshing" to which *the apostle Peter looked forward* when he said: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus." Acts 3:19, 20.<sup>4</sup>

Impressive! However, the simple, crucial question is, Does this theology pass inspection by God's Word? And that question is fully answered in two parts. First, Which aspects of inspired truth do those references from which Ellen White extracts her eschatology *actually* yield to the painstaking exegete? Secondly, What does sacred Scripture *really* instruct its humble students about the *personal* ministry of God's Holy Spirit?

#### *The Biblical Theology of the Autumn and Spring Rains*

In OT times, the Promised Land was crucially dependent upon regular rainfall. Hence the covenant blessings, as in Deut. 11:13-15,<sup>5</sup> and its curses, as in 16f.<sup>6</sup> For the prophets, these *material* blessing became quite a natural simile for Yahweh's *spiritual* beneficence, as in Isa. 55:10f.: "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not

return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” In 45:8, Yahweh’s inspired penman is even more specific: “You heavens above, rain down righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness grow with it”.

Of paramount interest here is a pair of Hebrew complexes with *specific, seasonal* connotations. The first is represented by the nouns יֹרֶה (*yôreh*) and מֹרֶה (*môreh*), the synonyms for the early, *autumn* rains, before the more plentiful, *winter* rains, which prepared the ground for plowing and planting. The second most often appears in the noun מַלְקֹשׁ (*malqôš*), for the late, *spring* rains which ensured that the crops ripened.<sup>7</sup>

Typical, prophetic examples of purely *literal* applications of both of these categories include these three:

“They do not say to themselves, ‘Let us fear the LORD our God, who gives autumn [*yôreh*] and spring rains [*malqôš*] in season, who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.’”  
Jer. 5:24

“Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains [*môreh*] in righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn [*môreh*] and spring rains [*malqôš*], as before.”  
Joel 2:23

Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime [*malqôš*]; it is the LORD who makes the storm clouds. He gives showers of rain to men, and plants of the field to everyone.  
Zech. 10:1

Amongst the *metaphorical* applications of the former category appear at least two references. These are better comprehended in light of the fact that the Hebrew noun *môreh* is cognate with the verb יָרָא (*yārâ*):

“Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains<sup>8</sup>, like the spring rains that water [*yārâ*] the earth.”  
Hos. 6:3

“Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers [*yārâ*] righteousness on you.”  
Hos. 10:12

And the *metaphorical* application of the latter category is represented by at least the following reference:

“Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains [*malqôš*] that water the earth.”  
Hos. 6:3

It is especially noteworthy that, *irrespective* of any metaphorical overtones, *all* of these references appear in contexts in which Yahweh is employing his prophets to call his people back from gross apostasy. That is, Yahweh’s overarching concern is a new *beginning* similar to conversion, not *maturation*. Nor is there any progression from the autumn to the spring rains, let alone any specific reference to the Holy Spirit. Neither Jeremiah nor Hosea even mentions God’s Spirit! Zechariah’s reference in 4:6 is too distant to infer in his 10:1. And the promised outpouring of his Spirit in Joel 2:28 is specifically *eschatological*, following the reformation of 23. Indeed, *one searches the above references utterly in vain for their slightest end-time relevance!*

Turning, finally, to the NT, the *solitary* companion of these specific OT references to seasonal rainfall is open for our inspection in James 5:7f.: “Be patient..., brothers, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for *the autumn and spring rains*. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.” Here, however, the OT emphasis on fresh beginnings following gross apostasy has moved markedly to a simple appeal for patience because Jesus’ promised Parousia appears to be delayed. *It has nothing whatever to do with any convert’s character development as such, let alone the Christian’s evangelistic duties, or any aspect of the gift of God’s Holy Spirit.*

In brief, it is the *farmer*, not the seasonal *rainfall* upon which his crops depend, which interests the NT’s single, pastoral, end-time admonition. Moreover, *its counsel has nothing whatever to do with the character perfection that consumes Ellen White’s latter-rain theology.* The OT alone employs the agricultural metaphor of seasonal rainfall *per se*. However, *it is absurd to insist that her theology is the fruit of its cogent exegesis!* In such key details, it is the patent product of the naïve *eisegesis* typical of Seventh-day Adventist pioneers.

### ***The Gift of God’s Holy Spirit***

Few scriptural subjects surpass God’s Holy Spirit in importance. Yet tragically, few suffer more distortion and even counterfeiting. Regardless, all that I can hope to achieve here is a survey of its actual bestowal.

Imagine the profound sorrow of Christ’s disciples as the fact sank home at long last that their dearly beloved Master was about to complete his earthly mission and return to heaven. “Do not let your hearts be troubled”, he reassured them tenderly, because “I am going there to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me”, Jn. 14:2f. They would see him again one day after all – and then there would *never* be any more parting! Absolutely wonderful as that paramount prospect was, Jesus was also concerned about his followers’ *immediate* future. So he offered them this second astounding assurance: “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth”, 16f.

We moderns miss much of the import of this promise unless we appreciate the unique circumstances: “Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified”, 7:39. So this was no invitation to share the blessings of some *ancient* gift. This was the promise of a totally *novel* bestowal. Ob-

serve its vast scope, too. In effect, in imparting the Spirit, Christ vowed, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you”, 14:18.<sup>9</sup> That is, the reception of God’s Holy Spirit would draw Jesus’ disciples into a far **closer** relationship with their Lord even than when he trudged Palestine’s dusty roads with them in person!

However, the natural question is, When was this pledge fulfilled? We are left in no doubt whatever here.

It is Pentecost. Jerusalem is bustling with Jews from far and near. Many diverse tongues fill the air as an ancient, common faith draws these long-scattered brothers together once more. Suddenly and inexplicably, every visitor hears his own language on the lips of mere locals praising God! This miracle gives Peter the opportunity to explain this great enigma: the believers have been filled with his Holy Spirit, Acts 2:15. Here he appeals to the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32. Yet he is completely silent about the seasonal rainfall of 23, despite its proximity, let alone any other OT meteorological reference, in order to explain God’s superlative gift!

What interests this discussion most is this bestowal’s import: “Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the **promised** Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear”, Acts 2:33. *Christ’s promise of the Spirit was fulfilled on the first Pentecost after Calvary*, almost 2,000 years ago! It was **the** sign to the world that Jesus’ labours on earth were both *complete* and *acceptable* to his Father.

Someone may well protest here, in sincere concern, that none of us were present at Pentecost. Still to be settled, then, is this pastoral question, When do **I** receive the Spirit? In the section of the NT which, more than any other, treats the topic of the Christian and God’s Holy Spirit, Paul is emphatic that “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, *he does not belong to Christ*”, Ro. 8:9! These are extremely sobering words for anyone who imagines that we receive God’s Spirit some time after conversion! But Paul is not through yet.

If our apostle had to nominate the one congregation which caused him most heartache, those Galatians would certainly rate immediate mention. No church received a more scathing rebuke than these arresting sentiments, in which his anger reaches its peak: “You **foolish** Galatians! Who has **bewitched** you?”, Gal. 3:1. His frustration is all too manifest, too, when he exclaims, “I would like to learn *just one thing* from you”, 2.

This all places proper stress upon his following question, which is of abundant interest to our current discussion: “Did you receive the Spirit by **receiving** the law, or by **believing** what you heard?” The transparent inference is that *they received God’s Spirit when they believed*. This gains credence as Paul speaks of their “**beginning** with the Spirit,” 3. Observe very carefully, moreover, that precisely what Paul has in mind is “the **promise** of the Spirit”, 14. This is a highly conspicuous reference to Christ’s pristine promise, back in Jn. 14.

In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul elevates this doctrine to an even higher plane. He assures his flock that, “*Having believed*”, you were marked in him with a **seal**, the **promised** Holy Spirit,” 1:13. So again, Paul teaches that *I receive the Spirit* – available ever since Pentecost – *the very moment when I accept Jesus as my personal Saviour*. What is very special this time, though, is that *the convert is sealed with God’s Spirit*.

Certainly, we can lose the Spirit if we reach the point when, in effect, we are no longer Christians. For example, the ungodly who are devoid of the Spirit, Jude 19, began as believers, 2 Pet. 2:20-22. Yet it is the very Spirit himself who is this seal! While ever we do not reject him, he “is a deposit **guaranteeing** our inheritance”, Eph. 1:14. Simply stated, *as long as we continue to trust Christ as our Saviour, we CANNOT be lost!*

This leaves **no** room whatever for any second Pentecost or any final, greater infilling by God’s Holy Spirit. Of course God is free to reap earth’s harvest as he sees fit. So there may be an ultimate burst of his Holy Spirit’s converting power. However, *his OT prophets predicted no such thing, and his NT is equally taciturn*.

This conclusion applies equally to the *corporate* sealing of Rev. 7:1-8, in which Ellen White observes her climactic bestowal of God’s Holy Spirit in her Latter Rain. However, rather than repeat myself at length here, I will simply refer any interested readers to my former, specific critique of this definite example of eisegesis.<sup>12</sup>

What, though, of Acts 3:19f.? This is a lamentable case of Ellen White seeing no further than her KJV, although it is **mistranslated** here! Even the NKJV renders it: “Repent... and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, **so that** times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and **that** he may send Jesus Christ”. We are not told here or elsewhere in Scripture precisely what *times of refreshing* means. So Peter certainly does not save her dogma from the devastating charge that it is devoid of divine inspiration.

<sup>1</sup> She usually calls this the Time of (Jacob’s) Trouble, though a careful distinction should be made between this and the preceding, Little Time of Trouble. See my “One Furnace Too Many: Ellen White Garbles Her Own Theology of the pre-Advent Time of Trouble”, April, 2003, 2f.

<sup>2</sup> TM 506.

<sup>3</sup> AA 54f.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 28:12; Lev. 26:3-5; Isa. 30:23; Joel 2:23.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 28:22-24; 1 Ki. 8:35f.; 17:1, 14; 2 Chr. 6:26f.; 7:13f.; Isa. 5:6; Jer. 3:3; 5:24f.; 14:4; Eze. 22:24; Amos 4:7; Zech. 14:17f.

<sup>7</sup> Certain linguistic uncertainties in no way affect the flow of my analysis. So I will not elaborate for lay readers.

<sup>8</sup> Hebrew, גֶּשֶׁם (*gesem*), normally rendered simply as *rain*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. 23.

<sup>10</sup> The English past participle renders the Greek aorist participle πιστεύσαντες (*pisteusantes*), whose time depends upon the aorist passive verb ἐσφραγίσθητε (*esphragisthēte*) behind “you were sealed”. This syntax readily implies simultaneous action: “**when** you believed”, NLT.

<sup>11</sup> Interpreting the Greek noun ἀρραβών (*arrabōn*), whose meaning is eloquent in the modern Greek ἀρραβώνα (*arrabōna*), *engagement ring*. It denotes a down payment pledging the balance to follow, as in its source, the Hebrew noun עֲרָבוֹן (*ērābôn*), Gen. 38:17, 18, 20. Likewise, its cognate verb עָרַב (*ārāb*) bespeaks guarantee, as in 43:9; 44:32, with potent legal overtones.

<sup>12</sup> Appendix A of my “Great Controversy”, 27f.

<sup>4</sup> GC 611f.