

The Great Controversy

Between Christ and Satan:

How Biblical is Ellen White's

Major Integrating Theme?

by Fred Mazzaferri

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revising my "The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan: Just how Biblical is Ellen White's Major Integrating Theme?", January, 2001

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Quotations

Sacred Scripture

Unless otherwise specified, throughout this entire assessment I employ the **New International Version** (NIV) – 1990 British edition – for all such quotations, with all emphases supplied personally.

Ellen White Corpus

With very rare exceptions, dictated by decades of writing prior to cyberspace, I likewise adopt the standard abbreviations for the Ellen White writings listed @ www.whiteestate.org/cdrom/bib-stan.

DARCOM Apologia

Reference to the Daniel and Revelation Committee's seven-volume apologia for exclusive Seventh-day Adventist dogma is facilitated by the labels **DARCOM 1-7**.

They all share the details: ed. F.B. Holbrook; Biblical Research Institute:

DARCOM 1: Shea, W. H., *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (Silver Spring, 1992²).

DARCOM 2: *Symposium on Daniel: Introductory & Exegetical Studies* (Washington, 1986).

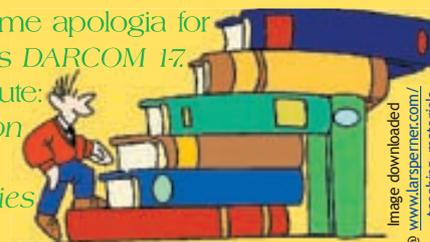
DARCOM 3: *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy* (Washington, 1986).

DARCOM 4: *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, (Silver Spring, 1989).

DARCOM 5: *Doctrine of the Sanctuary: a Historical Survey (1845-1863)* (Silver Spring, 1989).

DARCOM 6: *Symposium on Revelation: Introductory & Exegetical Studies, Book 1* (Silver Spring, 1992).

DARCOM 7: *Symposium on Revelation: Exegetical & General Studies, Book 2* (Silver Spring, 1992).



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The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan: How Biblical is Ellen White's Major Integrating Theme?

The apostle Paul charts a reliable course for every Christian who, faced with any major claim of the Holy Spirit's special gifting, wishes to know whether this charisma is authentic or the possible product of demonic deception: "Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. **Test everything.** Hold on to the good", 1 Thess. 5:19-21.² The Seventh-day Adventist Church not only holds that its huge Ellen White corpus is equally as inspired as Scripture,³ but it also parades its prolific prophet as one of the most significant validations that *it is God's singular, legitimate, Christian denomination in the entire world.*⁴ It should not object, then, if her prophetic credentials are *carefully and fairly* scrutinised as, in fact, she herself suggests:

I have written many books, and they have been given a wide circulation. Of myself I could not have brought out the truth in these books, but the Lord has given me the help of His Holy Spirit. These books, giving the instruction that the Lord has given me during the last sixty years, contain light from heaven, and will bear *the test of investigation.*⁵

Ellen White treated an impressive range of disciplines including education,⁶ family relations,⁷ health,⁸ history,⁹ science¹⁰ and theology.¹¹ Within the very brief compass of the current appraisal, though, only the latter subject can be covered in response to Paul's inspired appeal. Even then, some selectivity is unavoidable.

The Ellen G. White Estate is the official Seventh-day Adventist entity with full legal responsibility for its purported prophet's vast verbal legacy. Confronted by several decades of extremely determined criticism from near and far, it has therefore invested copious resources in doggedly defending her crucial credentials. As a beneficial result, every cyberspace browser has ready access to current, *official* apologia. To commence here also shields the honest enquirer from the all too facile charge of interest in just one side of the debate.

The Ellen G. White Estate lists the following among their purported prophet's major theological themes:¹² the love of God, the Father; the Great Controversy between Christ, his Son, and Satan, their arch enemy; Jesus' sacrifice and celestial intercession, and salvation through him alone; the convert's response in love for God and his neighbour; the priority of God's Word; the third angel's message and Seventh-day Adventism's world mission; Christ's Second Advent. On browsing the entire site, though, one discerns that one of these is deemed to stand head and shoulders above all others as Ellen White's *primary* integrating motif.

Dr. Herbert Douglass, currently her most enthusiastic, professional apologist, correctly claims that "(m)any scholars have identified Ellen White's unifying principle as the Great Controversy Theme. This provided a coherent framework for her theological thought as well as for her principles in education, health, missiology, social issues, and environmental topics."¹³ Therefore, such key issues answer a pragmatic query: "How can we tell when we are on center or chasing stray geese near the edges of what is *really* important?"¹⁴

However, here I cannot possibly evaluate even this cardinal theme across Dr. Douglass' full, broad spectrum¹⁵ beyond theology. The problem of space is intensified by the need to weigh Ellen White's own words very carefully. And frequently, they are *strikingly* detailed. Worse, *sometimes she seems to have prepared two somewhat disparate records of the identical, purportedly visionary episode, even for evangelistic dissemination!* It is helpful, then, to invest a few initial moments in a brief review of the genesis of that material.

It is fairly common knowledge, even amongst the laity, that a decade of scattered revelations culminated in Ellen White's two-hour, Great Controversy vision of March 14, 1858. First published later that same year in around 200 pages in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, this was amplified in 1,600 pages in *Spirit of Prophecy*, vols. 1-4, 1870-1884, then almost 4,000 pages in her full-blown, *evangelistic, Conflict of the Ages* series, beginning in 1888 with *Great Controversy*.¹⁶ Not so well known, though, is that her account was first revised for the public at large in the periodical *Signs of the Times*, dating from 1874. Her theology probing farthest back dates from January 9, 1879, as a revision of *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1.¹⁷ It is very instructive to make at least an initial comparison between this evangelistic material and its fully revised form in her *Conflict of the Ages* series.¹⁸

The Major Contours of Ellen White's Great Controversy Theme

In the Beginning

Ellen White seldom speaks with greater wisdom than in this minuscule gem regarding the origin of evil:

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin.¹⁹

Regardless, her account of both the background to its origin and its maturation is *remarkably* detailed:

The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings... Angels are God's ministers... But the Son, the anointed of God, the "express image of His person,"... holds supremacy over them all. Hebrews 1:3...

... God desires from all His creatures the service of love... that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service.

So long as all created beings acknowledged the allegiance of love, there was perfect harmony throughout the universe of God. It was the joy of the heavenly host to fulfill the purpose of their Creator... And while love to God was supreme, love for one another was confiding and unselfish. There was no note of discord to mar the celestial harmonies. But a change came over this happy state. There was one who perverted the freedom that God had granted to His creatures. Sin originated with him who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. Lucifer, "son of the morning," [Isa. 14:12a, KJV] was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. He stood in the presence of the great Creator... [Eze. 28:12-15, KJV, selectively quoted]²¹

Highest Treason in Heaven

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation... [Eze. 28:17; Isa. 14:13f., KJV, quoted, the latter selectively] Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator... And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.

Now the perfect harmony of heaven was broken... In heavenly council the angels pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning... only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed his jealousy of Christ to prevail, and became the more determined.

To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God... had become the purpose of this prince of angels... But He who would have the will of all His creatures free, left none unguarded to the bewildering sophistry...

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts... that... He might set forth the true position of His Son and ... the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne... [N]one but Christ... could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven... Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love.

The angels joyfully acknowledged the supremacy of Christ ... Lucifer bowed with them, but in his heart there was a...

Satan in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son...; yet Jesus... had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Satan was envious of Christ, and in his ambition assumed command which devolved on Christ alone.²⁰

The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might... confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father... The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ should be equal with himself... Especially was he to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon it. His Son would carry out his will and his purposes... Satan was jealous and envious of Jesus Christ. Yet when all the angels bowed to Jesus..., Satan bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred. Christ had been taken into counsel with the Father in regard to his plans, while Satan was unacquainted with them... Why should Christ thus be honored before himself?

fierce conflict. Truth, justice, and loyalty were struggling against envy and jealousy... But again he was filled with pride in his own glory. His desire for supremacy returned, and envy of Christ was once more indulged...

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God. He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings..., for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide... The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer,... for it was his object to secure freedom for all. But now... an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage...

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God...

... Lucifer had presented the purposes of God in a false light... He cunningly drew his hearers on to give utterance to their feelings; then these expressions were repeated... as evidence that the angels were not fully in harmony with the government of God. While claiming... perfect loyalty to God, he urged that changes in the order and laws of heaven were necessary for the stability of the divine government... While secretly fomenting discord and rebellion, he ... caused it to appear as his sole purpose to promote loyalty and to preserve harmony and peace.

The spirit of dissatisfaction... was doing its baleful work... There were some who looked with favor upon Lucifer's insinuations... These stood ready to second Lucifer's demand for equal authority with the Son of God. But angels who were loyal and true maintained the wisdom and justice of the divine decree and endeavored to reconcile this disaffected being to the will of God..²²

God in His great mercy bore long with Lucifer. He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station... Long was he retained in heaven. Again and again he was offered pardon on condition of repentance and submission. Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise were made to convince him of his error... Lucifer was convinced that... the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God... [H]e had forsaken his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God..., he would have been reinstated in his office..²³

... But... Lucifer... fully committed himself to the great controversy against his Maker. Thus... Lucifer, "the light bearer," ... became Satan, "the adversary" of God and holy beings and the destroyer of those whom Heaven had committed to his guidance and guardianship.

Rejecting with disdain the arguments and entreaties of the loyal angels, he denounced them as deluded slaves. The preference shown to Christ he declared an act of injustice both to himself and to all the heavenly host, and announced that he would no longer submit to this invasion of... rights... Great numbers of the angels signified their purpose to accept him as their leader...

He left the immediate presence of the Father... Concealing his real purposes, he assembled the angelic host... As one aggrieved he related the preference God had given to Jesus to the neglect of himself. He told them that henceforth all the precious liberty the angels had enjoyed was at an end. For had not a ruler been appointed over them, to whom they... must yield servile honor? He... no longer would submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs..., and would be the commander of all who would... follow him and obey him. There was contention among the angels. Satan and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God... They rebelled against the authority of the Son.

Angels that were loyal and true sought to reconcile this first great rebel to the will of his Creator...

Still the loyal angels urged him and his sympathizers to submit to God... and confess the error of questioning His wisdom and authority.

Many were disposed to heed this counsel... But Lucifer... declared that the angels who had united with him had gone too far to return; that... God would not forgive... The only course remaining for him and his followers, he said, was to assert their liberty, and gain by force the rights which had not been willingly accorded them.

... Satan himself... had now gone too far to return. But not... those who had been blinded by his deceptions... But pride, love for their leader, and the desire for unrestricted freedom were permitted to bear sway, and the pleadings of divine love and mercy were finally rejected.

God permitted Satan to carry forward his work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all. Lucifer, as the anointed cherub, had been highly exalted; he was greatly loved by the heavenly beings, and his influence over them was strong... He had artfully presented his side of the question, employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects... All his acts were so clothed with mystery that it was difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work. Until fully developed, it could not be made to appear the evil thing it was...

God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had... misrepresented His plan of government, claiming that... in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. It was therefore necessary to demonstrate... that God's government is just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper and his real object must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works...²⁵

Satan Hurlled from Heaven

Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven..., being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might forever be placed beyond all question.

Satan's rebellion was to be... a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government

... The mighty revolter... told them that himself and they also had now gone too far to go back...; that God would not forgive, and now they must assert their liberty and gain by force the position and authority which was not willingly accorded to them.²⁴

The loyal angels... find the Father in conference with his beloved Son, to determine the means by which... the assumed authority of Satan could be forever put down. The great God could at once have hurled this arch deceiver from heaven; but this was not his purpose. He would give the rebellious an equal chance to measure strength and might with his own Son and his loyal angels. In this battle every angel would choose his own side, and his character and purposes would be manifested to all. It would not have been safe to suffer any who united with Satan in his rebellion to continue to occupy heaven. They had learned the lesson of genuine rebellion against the unchangeable law of God; and this is incurable. If God had exercised his power to punish this chief rebel, disaffected angels would not have been manifested;... he would manifest distinctly to all the heavenly host, his justice and his judgment.

It was the highest crime to rebel against the government of God. All heaven seemed in commotion. The angels were marshaled in companies, each division with a higher commanding angel at their head. Satan was warring against the law of God, because ambitious to exalt himself, and unwilling to submit to the authority of God's Son...

and His law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made...

To the very close of the controversy in heaven the great usurper continued to justify himself. When it was announced that with all his sympathizers he must be expelled from the abodes of bliss,... the rebel leader boldly avowed his contempt for the Creator's law... as a restriction of their liberty and declared... his purpose to secure the abolition of law...

With one accord, Satan and his host threw the blame of their rebellion wholly upon Christ, declaring that if they had not been reprov'd, they would never have rebelled. Thus stubborn and defiant in their disloyalty, seeking vainly to overthrow the government of God, yet blasphemously claiming to be themselves the innocent victims of oppressive power, the archrebel and all his sympathizers were at last banished from heaven.²⁷

It is worth pausing at this point in this comparison to clarify that, although Ellen White makes remarkably rare, *explicit* reference to Rev. 12:79 in detailing this ethereal conflict, she certainly has it very clearly in mind, even throughout the latter years of her ministry, from the perspective of the greatest maturity she attains.²⁸

Mankind's Catastrophic Temptation and Fall

Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were... free moral agents, capable of appreciating the wisdom and benevolence of His character and the justice of His requirements, and with full liberty to yield or to withhold obedience. They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested... The tree of knowledge... was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love of our parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death...³⁰

Good angels wept to hear... his exulting boasts. God declared that the rebellious should remain in heaven no longer. Their high and happy state had been held upon condition of obedience to the law which God had given to govern the high order of intelligences. But no provision had been made to save those who should... transgress his law. Satan... expressed his contempt of the Creator's law..., and that to abolish law was one great object of his standing as he did... Then there was war in heaven. The Son of God..., and his loyal angels, engaged in conflict with the arch rebel and those who united with him. The Son of God and true, loyal angels prevailed; and Satan and his sympathizers were expelled from heaven. All the heavenly host acknowledged and adored the God of justice. Not a taint of rebellion was left. All was again peaceful and harmonious, as before.²⁶

... The Father consulted Jesus in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. He would place man upon probation to test his loyalty, before he could be rendered eternally secure. If he endured the test..., he should eventually be equal with the angels...²⁹

In the midst of the garden... stood the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tree was especially designed by God to be a pledge of the obedience, faith, and love of our first parents... He told them that they might freely eat of all the trees of the garden except one; but if they ate of that tree they should surely die...

Satan stood in amazement at his new condition. His happiness was gone. He looked upon the angels... with him... Countenances... were gloomy and despairing. Strife, discord, and bitter recrimination were among them... He shuddered, and feared to face the future, and to contemplate the end of these things... Could he be again as when he was pure, true, and loyal, gladly would he yield up the claims of his authority. But he was lost beyond redemption, for his presumptuous rebellion! And... he had led others to rebellion and to the same lost condition with himself...

These fallen spirits had become turbulent with disappointed hopes. Instead of greater good, they were experiencing the sad results of disobedience...

Satan trembled as he viewed his work... His mighty frame shook as with a tempest. An angel from Heaven was passing. Satan called him, and intreated an interview with Christ. This was granted. He then related... that he repented of his rebellion, and wished again to enjoy the favor of God... The Son of God wept at Satan's woe, but told him... that... [t]he peace of Heaven would be marred, should he be received back; for... the seeds of rebellion were still within him... The law of God could condemn, but could not pardon.

Satan did not repent of his rebellion because he saw the goodness of God... The wretchedness he realized in losing the sweet light of Heaven, the sense of guilt which forced itself upon him, and the disappointment he experienced in not finding his expectations realized, were the cause of his grief... The loss of all the privileges of Heaven seemed too much to be borne...

... Satan's enmity against God found a new field in plotting the ruin of the human race. In the happiness and peace of the holy pair in Eden he beheld a vision of the bliss that to him was forever lost. Moved by envy, he determined to incite them to disobedience, and bring upon them the guilt and penalty of sin...

Our first parents were not left without a warning of the danger... Heavenly messengers opened to them the history of Satan's fall and his plots for their destruction, unfolding more fully the nature of the divine government... How important... that Adam and Eve should honor that law by which alone it was possible for order and equity to be maintained.

The law of God is... a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character... The harmony of creation depends upon the perfect conformity of all beings... to the law of the Creator... But... man alone... is amenable to moral law...; and... unswerving obedience is required...

The angels warned them to be on their guard against... Satan... While they were obedient to God the evil one could not harm them; for, if need be, every angel in heaven would be sent to their help. If they steadfastly repelled his first insinuations, they would be as secure as the heavenly messengers. But should they once yield to temptation, their nature would become so depraved that in themselves they would have no power and no disposition to resist Satan.

The tree of knowledge had been made a test of their obedience and their love to God... Satan... could have access to them only at the forbidden tree... They were admonished to give careful heed to the warning which God had sent them...

... Satan chose to employ as his medium the serpent... Resting in the rich-laden branches of the forbidden tree and regaling itself with the delicious fruit,... in the garden... lurked the destroyer, watching for his prey.

The angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating herself from her husband...; with him she would be in less danger from temptation... But... she unconsciously wandered

... When Satan became fully convinced that it was impossible for him to be re-instated in the favor of God, he manifested his malice with increased hatred...

His followers were seeking him; and he aroused himself, and assuming a look of defiance, informed them of his plans to wrest from God the noble Adam and his companion Eve. If he could in any way beguile them to disobedience, God would make some provision whereby they might be pardoned, and then himself and all the fallen angels would... share with them of God's mercy. If they should fail to obtain pardon, they could unite with Adam and Eve... and... take possession of Eden... And if they could gain access to the tree of life..., ... even God himself could not expel them.

Satan held a consultation with his evil angels... He... alone had wisdom sufficient to carry forward so important an enterprise. He wished them to consider the matter while he should... mature his plans. He sought to impress upon them that this was their last... hope. If they failed here, all prospect of regaining and controlling Heaven... was hopeless.

Satan... shuddered at the thought of plunging the... happy pair into the misery and remorse which he was himself enduring. He seemed in a state of indecision;... firm and determined, then hesitating and wavering.

His angels were seeking him... to acquaint him with their decision. They will unite with him in his plans... Satan cast off his feelings of despair and weakness, and... fortified himself to brave out the matter... [C]unning and deceit would do what might or force could not.

... It was decided in Heaven's council for angel's [*sic*] to visit Eden and warn Adam that he was in danger from the foe. Accordingly, two angels sped on their way...

The angels... gave them the sad history of Satan's rebellion and fall. They then distinctly informed them that the tree of knowledge was placed in the garden to be a pledge of their obedience and love to God; that the high and happy estate of the holy angels was to be retained upon condition of obedience...

They told them that Satan purposed to do them harm, and it was necessary for them to be guarded...; but he could not harm them while they yielded obedience to God's command; for, if necessary, every angel... would come to their help... But if they disobeyed the command of God, then Satan would have power to ever annoy, perplex, and trouble them. If they remained steadfast against the first insinuations of Satan, they were as secure as the heavenly angels...

The angels cautioned Eve not to separate from her husband ... If separated from each other, they would be in greater danger... The angels charged them to follow closely the instructions which God had given them in reference to the tree of knowledge; for... the foe... could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil...

Satan then assumed the form of a serpent..., who took his position in the tree of knowledge, and commenced leisurely eating of the fruit.

Eve, unconsciously at first, separated from her husband... Eve found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the fruit of the forbidden tree. She saw it was

from his side... [S]he soon found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the forbidden tree. The fruit was very beautiful, and she questioned with herself why God had withheld it from them. Now was the tempter's opportunity... [Gen. 3:1b cited] Eve... had no thought that the... serpent could become the medium of the fallen foe.

To the tempter's ensnaring question she replied: [2:5 cited]

By partaking of this tree, he declared, they would attain to a more exalted sphere of existence and enter a broader field of knowledge. He himself had eaten of the forbidden fruit, and as a result had acquired the power of speech... It was because of its wonderful properties... that He had prohibited them from tasting or even touching it. The tempter intimated that the divine warning was not to be actually fulfilled; it was designed merely to intimidate them...

The serpent plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree and placed it in the hands of the half-reluctant Eve. Then he reminded her... that God had forbidden them to touch it, lest they die. She would receive no more harm from eating the fruit... Perceiving no evil results from what she had done, Eve grew bolder..., and as she ate, she seemed to feel a vivifying power, and imagined herself entering upon a higher state of existence. Without a fear she plucked and ate. And now..., she became the agent of Satan in working the ruin of her husband. In a state of strange, unnatural excitement, with her hands filled with the forbidden fruit, she sought his presence, and related all that had occurred.

An expression of sadness came over the face of Adam. He appeared astonished and alarmed. To... Eve he replied that this must be the foe against whom they had been warned; and by the divine sentence she must die. In answer she urged him to eat..., for she... realized a delicious, exhilarating influence, thrilling every faculty with new life...

... There was a terrible struggle in his mind. He... must be separated from her whose society had been his joy... Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator—all were overborne by love to Eve. She was a part of himself, and he could not endure the thought of separation. He... decided to brave the consequences. He seized the fruit and quickly ate...

Satan exulted in his success. He had tempted the woman to distrust God's love, to doubt His wisdom, and to transgress His law, and through her he had caused the overthrow of Adam.³²

The Plan of Salvation Formulated

The Son of God... was moved with infinite compassion as the woes of the lost world rose up before Him. But divine love had conceived a plan whereby man might be redeemed. The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner... None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven...

Before the Father He pleaded in the sinner's behalf... Long continued was that mysterious communing—"the counsel of peace" (Zechariah 6:13) for the fallen sons of men. The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8); yet it was a struggle, even with

very lovely, and was reasoning with herself why God had so decidedly prohibited their eating it. Now was Satan's opportunity... [Gen. 3:1b cited]

... It did not occur to her mind that it might be that fallen foe... She answers his question, [2:5 cited] ...

Satan assured Eve that as soon as she ate of the fruit she would receive a new and superior knowledge... He... told her that it was because of its wonderful properties to impart wisdom and power that God had prohibited them from tasting or even touching it... [B]y eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree he had attained the power of speech... God would not carry out his word. It was merely a threat to intimidate them and keep them from great good...

Satan plucked the fruit and passed it to Eve... Now, said the tempter, you were prohibited from even touching it... He told her that she would realize no mor [*sic*] sense of evil and death in eating than in touching... the fruit. Eve... ate, and... imagined that she realized... the wonderful effects...

She then plucked the fruit for herself and ate, and imagined she felt the quickening power of a new and elevated existence... She was in a state of strange and unnatural excitement as she sought her husband, with her hands filled with the forbidden fruit. She related to him the wise discourse of the serpent, and wished to conduct him at once to the tree of knowledge. She told him she had eaten of the fruit, and instead of feeling any sense of death, she realized a pleasing, exhilarating influence. As soon as Eve disobeyed, she became a powerful medium through which to occasion the fall of her husband.

A sadness came over the countenance of Adam. He appeared afraid and astonished... He told Eve that he was quite certain that this was the foe whom they had been warned against; and if so, she must die. She assured him she felt no ill effects, but rather a very pleasant influence, and entreated him to eat.³¹

... He must be separated from her whose society he had loved so well... [I]n utter discouragement he resolved to share her fate... Eve was a part of himself;... he could not bear the thought of separation from her. He... decided to brave the consequences. He seized the fruit and quickly ate it, and, like Eve, felt not immediately its ill effects...

Satan exulted in his success. He had tempted the woman to distrust God, to question his wisdom, and to seek to penetrate his all-wise plans. And through her he had also caused the overthrow of Adam...³³

... The heart of the Son of God was touched with pity for the lost race... Soon he approached the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father, and he seemed to engage in close converse with him... Three times he was shut in by the cloud of glory; the third time he came forth his countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble ... He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that he had been pleading with his Father, and had offered to give his life a ransom, and take the sentence of death upon himself, that through him man might find pardon...

the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. But "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16...

Christ assured the angels that by His death He would ransom many, and would destroy him who had the power of death. He would recover the kingdom..., and the redeemed were to inherit it with Him... Sin and sinners would be blotted out, nevermore to disturb the peace of heaven or earth. He bade the angelic host to be in accord with the plan that His Father had accepted...

To man the first intimation of redemption was communicated in the sentence pronounced upon Satan in the garden ... [Gen. 3:15 cited] This... was to them a promise. While it foretold war between man and Satan, it declared that the power of the great adversary would finally be broken...

Heavenly angels more fully opened to our first parents the plan that had been devised for their salvation... [N]otwithstanding their great sin, they were not to be abandoned to the control of Satan. The Son of God had offered to atone... for their transgression...

The sacrifice demanded by their transgression revealed... the sacred character of the law of God...

... Not one of its precepts could be abrogated or changed to meet man in his fallen condition; but the Son of God... could make an atonement for him...

... When man became Satan's captive, the dominion which he held, passed to his conqueror. Thus Satan became "the god of this world." 2 Corinthians 4:4... All that was lost by the first Adam will be restored by the second...

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man...; it was... to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice... the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would... before all the universe... justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin...

... The great controversy begun in heaven was to be decided in the very world... that Satan claimed as his.³⁵

... He... would stand between the wrath of his Father and guilty man...

... Jesus comforted... the angels, and informed them that hereafter those whom he should redeem would... ever dwell with him; and that by his death he should ransom many... Satan and sinners should be destroyed, never more to disturb Heaven, or those who should inherit the new earth. Jesus bade the heavenly host be reconciled to the plan that his Father had accepted...

The Father did not yield up his dearly beloved Son without a struggle, whether to let guilty man perish or to give his Son to die for the lost race. It was impossible for God to change his law, or give up the smallest part of its claims, in order to save man; therefore he suffered his Son to die for man's transgression...

Angels of God were commissioned to visit the fallen pair and inform them that... [t]he Son of God had been moved with pity as he viewed their hopeless condition, and had volunteered to... die for them... [M]an, notwithstanding his great sin, might not be under the absolute control of Satan...

... Adam and Eve realized how... sacred was the law of God, the transgression of which made so costly sacrifice necessary to save them from utter ruin...

... The Father could not change nor abolish one precept of his law to meet man in his fallen condition. But the Son of God... could make an atonement for man...³⁴

Interim Lessons

Ellen White mentions at least two significant instances of lessons to be learnt by the *complete* cosmos from the Great Controversy before God's decisive Plan of Salvation was finally put into full effect. First of all:

The dark history of Cain and his descendants was an illustration of what would have been the result of permitting the sinner to live on forever, to carry out his rebellion against God... Fifteen centuries after the sentence pronounced upon Cain, the universe witnessed the fruition of his influence and example, in the crime and pollution that flooded the earth... [T]he sentence of death pronounced upon the fallen race for the transgression of God's law was both just and merciful...

... In the condition of the world that existed before the Flood they saw illustrated the results of the administration which Lucifer had endeavored to establish in heaven, in rejecting the authority of Christ and casting aside the law of God... The thoughts of men's hearts were only evil continually... Every emotion, every impulse and imagination, was at war with the divine principles of purity and peace and love. It was an example of the awful depravity resulting from Satan's policy to remove from God's creatures the restraint of His holy law. By the facts unfolded in the progress of the great controversy, God will demonstrate the principles of His rules of government, which have been falsified by Satan and by all whom he has deceived.

His justice will finally be acknowledged by the whole world... God carries with Him the sympathy and approval of the whole universe as step by step His great plan advances to its complete fulfillment. He will carry it with Him in the final eradication of rebellion. It will be seen that all who have forsaken the divine precepts have placed themselves on the side of Satan, in warfare against Christ. When the prince of this world shall be judged, and all who have united with him shall share his fate, the whole universe as witnesses to the sentence will declare, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." Revelation 15:3.³⁶

Secondly, there is a much deeper import to Abraham's traumatising trial of faith than greets one's eyes:

The sacrifice required of Abraham was not alone for his own good, nor solely for the benefit of succeeding generations; but it was also for the instruction of the sinless intelligences of heaven and of other worlds... Because Abraham had shown a lack of faith in God's promises, Satan had accused him before the angels and before God of having failed to comply with the conditions of the covenant, and as unworthy of its blessings. God desired to prove the loyalty of His servant before all heaven, to demonstrate that nothing less than perfect obedience can be accepted, and to open more fully... the plan of salvation.

Heavenly beings were witnesses of the scene as the faith of Abraham and the submission of Isaac were tested... All heaven applauded his fidelity. Satan's accusations were shown to be false. God declared to His servant, "Now I know that thou fearest God {*notwithstanding Satan's charges*} [sic], seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." [Gen. 22:12]...³⁷

Satan Tempts Christ

The Great Controversy now intensifies markedly as Jesus incarnate battles against Satan on planet Earth:

After tempting man to sin, Satan... styled himself the prince of this world. Having conformed to his own nature the father and mother of our race, he... declared that men had chosen him as their sovereign... Christ had come to disprove Satan's claim. As the Son of man, Christ would stand loyal to God... Satan had not gained complete control of the human race... All who desired deliverance from his power would be set free. The dominion that Adam had lost through sin would be recovered...

... The enticements which Christ resisted were those that we find it so difficult to withstand... Christ withstood the test upon appetite, upon the love of the world, and upon that love of display which leads to presumption. These were the temptations that overcame Adam and Eve, and that so readily overcome us.

... In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam's failure. But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body... It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation...

With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was... the first great temptation... [Mt. 4:2-4 quoted]...

There came... one in the guise of an angel... He claimed to have a commission from God... that Christ's fast was at an end... The Saviour was faint from hunger... when Satan came suddenly upon Him. Pointing to the stones... which had the appearance of loaves, the tempter said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

... Here is the insinuation of distrust. Should Jesus do what Satan suggests, it would be an acceptance of the doubt... In... his voice is an expression of utter incredulity. Would God treat His own Son thus?...

The words..., "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17), were still sounding in the ears of Satan. But he was determined to make Christ disbelieve this... assurance of His divine mission. He had come to live as a man among men, and it was the word that declared His connection with heaven. It was Satan's purpose to cause Him to doubt that word. If Christ's confidence in God could be shaken, Satan knew that the victory in the whole controversy would be his... He hoped that under the force of despondency and extreme hunger, Christ would lose faith in His Father, and work a miracle in His own behalf. Had He done this, the plan of salvation would have been broken...

... Christ was not to exercise divine power for His own benefit... Strengthened with the memory of the voice from heaven, He rested in His Father's love. He would not parley with temptation...

... He awaited God's time to bring relief. He was in the wilderness in obedience to God, and He would not obtain food by following the suggestions of Satan...

In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature... Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness... And by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome...³⁸

The tempter thought to take advantage of Christ's humanity, and urge Him to presumption... He said..., "Cast Thyself down,"... Unless Christ should consent to temptation, He could not be overcome...

When Satan quoted the promise, "He shall give His angels charge over Thee," he omitted the words, "to keep Thee in all Thy ways;" that is, in all the ways of God's choosing. Jesus refused to go outside the path of obedience... He would not place Himself, unbidden, in a position that would necessitate the interposition of His Father to save Him from death...

Jesus declared... "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."... God had already testified that Jesus was His Son; and now to ask for proof... would be putting God's word to the test...

Jesus was victor in the second temptation, and now Satan manifests himself in his true character... He is a mighty angel, though fallen. He avows himself the leader of rebellion and the god of this world.

Placing Jesus upon a high mountain, Satan caused the kingdoms of the world... to pass... before Him... Then the tempter's voice was heard: "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine."

Christ's mission could be fulfilled only through suffering... Now the tempter offered to yield up the power he had usurped. Christ might deliver Himself from the dreadful future by acknowledging the supremacy of Satan. But to do this was to yield the victory in the great controversy...

Satan had questioned whether Jesus was the Son of God. In his summary dismissal he had proof that he could not gainsay. Divinity flashed through suffering humanity. Satan had no power to resist the command. Writhing with humiliation and rage, he was forced to withdraw from... the world's Redeemer. Christ's victory was as complete as had been the failure of Adam.³⁹

"It is Finished!"

Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, "It is finished." John 19:30... Satan... knew that his kingdom was lost...

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The arch-apostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings... had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion...

When Jesus came into the world, Satan's power was turned against Him... In every possible way he sought to prevent Jesus from developing a perfect childhood, a faultless manhood, a holy ministry, and an unblemished sacrifice. But he was defeated. He could not lead Jesus into sin... From the desert to Calvary, the storm of Satan's wrath beat upon Him, but the more mercilessly it fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the bloodstained path...

Heaven viewed with grief and amazement Christ hanging upon the cross...

... Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God... [Rev. 12:10 quoted]

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away... He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings... Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with... the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken...

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God..., Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner...

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption...

The law requires righteousness, —[sic] a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give... But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men... More than this, Christ... builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26...

By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan's charges were refuted...

Another deception was now to be brought forward. Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice, that the death of Christ abrogated the Father's law. Had it been possible for the law to be changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have died... Here will come the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

That the law which was spoken by God's own voice is faulty, that some specification has been set aside... is the last great deception that he will bring upon the world. He needs not to assail the whole law... By consenting to break one precept, men are brought under Satan's power... This work is foretold in prophecy. Of the great apostate power which is the representative of Satan, it is declared, "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand." Dan. 7:25...

The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time... All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men... There will be but two classes...

Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off... "Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; . . . [sic] I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. . . . [sic] Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more..." Ezek. 28:6-19...

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent... that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe.

But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then... the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law.

... Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished."⁴⁰

The Fundamental Issues in the Great Time of Trouble

Having given adequate attention elsewhere already to Ellen White's speculations over the Great Tribulation,⁴¹ it will suffice here to focus specifically upon the transparent issues at stake, as she perceives them:

From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator, and... he has continued the same warfare upon the earth. To deceive men, and thus lead them to transgress God's law, is the object which he has steadfastly pursued...

No error accepted by the Christian world strikes more boldly against the authority of Heaven... than the modern doctrine... that God's law is no longer binding upon men...

... [A]s the claims of the fourth commandment are urged upon the people,... the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is enjoined; and as the only way to free themselves from a duty which they are unwilling to perform, many popular teachers declare that the law of God is no longer binding. Thus they cast away the law and the Sabbath together. As the work of Sabbath reform extends, this rejection of the divine law to avoid the claims of the fourth commandment will become well-nigh universal...

Yet this very class put forth the claim that the fast-spreading corruption is largely attributable to the desecration of the so-called "Christian sabbath," and that the enforcement of Sunday observance would greatly improve the morals of society. This claim is especially urged in America, where the doctrine of the true Sabbath has been most widely preached...

... The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf... to clasp hands with the Roman power;... this country will follow... Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience...

... It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath; that... calamities... will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity...

Satan's policy in this final conflict with God's people is the same that he employed in the opening of the great controversy in heaven. He professed to be seeking to promote the stability of the divine government, while secretly bending every effort to secure its overthrow. And the very work which he was thus endeavoring to accomplish he charged upon the loyal angels...

Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth. Their conscientious scruples will be pronounced obstinacy, stubbornness, and contempt of authority. They will be accused of disaffection toward the government...

... [E]ven in free America, rulers and legislators... will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance. Liberty of conscience, which has cost so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected. In the soon-coming conflict we shall see exemplified the prophet's words: [Rev. 12:17 cited]⁴²

Moment of Truth

At this point, it is well worth noting a striking snippet from Ellen White's account of the Time of Trouble:

... The glory of the celestial city streams from the gates ajar. Then there appears against the sky a hand holding two tables of stone folded together... That holy law... is now revealed to men as the rule of judgment. The hand opens the tables, and there are seen the precepts of the Decalogue, traced as with a pen of fire...

It is impossible to describe the horror and despair of those who have trampled upon God's holy requirements. The Lord gave them His law; they might have... learned their defects while there was yet opportunity for repentance and reform; but in order to secure the favor of the world, they set aside its precepts and taught others to transgress. They have endeavored to compel God's people to profane His Sabbath. Now they are condemned by that law which they have despised...

The enemies of God's law, from the ministers down to the least among them, have a new conception of truth and duty. Too late they see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God. Too late they see the true nature of their spurious sabbath and the sandy foundation upon which they have been building. They... have been fighting against God...⁴³

The Close of the Great Controversy

At the close of the thousand years, Christ again returns to the earth. He is accompanied by the host of the redeemed and attended by a retinue of angels... He bids the wicked dead arise to receive their doom. They come forth, a mighty host, numberless as the sands of the sea...

... As the New Jerusalem... comes down out of heaven, it rests upon the place... made ready to receive it, and Christ, with His people and the angels, enters the Holy City.

Now Satan prepares for a last mighty struggle for the supremacy. While deprived of his power and cut off from his work of deception, the prince of evil was miserable and dejected; but as the wicked dead are raised and he sees the vast multi-

tudes upon his side, his hopes revive, and he determines not to yield the great controversy. He will marshal all the armies of the lost... and through them endeavor to execute his plans... Yet... he does not acknowledge himself to be Satan... He represents himself... as a redeemer, assuring them that his power has brought them forth from their graves...

In that vast throng are multitudes of the long-lived race that existed before the Flood... There are kings and generals who conquered nations, valiant men who never lost a battle, proud, ambitious warriors...

Satan consults with his angels, and then with these kings and conquerors and mighty men... They lay their plans to take possession of the riches and glory of the New Jerusalem. All immediately begin to prepare for battle. Skillful artisans construct implements of war. Military leaders, famed for their success, marshal the throngs of warlike men into companies and divisions.

... Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle... With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth's broken and uneven surface to the City of God...

... Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom...

In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place. And now... the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government and executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people. [Rev. 20:11f. quoted]...

Above the throne is revealed the cross; and like a panoramic view appear the scenes of Adam's temptation and fall, and the successive steps in the great plan of redemption...

The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They... are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them...

As if entranced, the wicked have looked upon the coronation of the Son of God. They see in His hands the tables of the divine law, the statutes which they have despised and transgressed...

... [T]he time has now come when the rebellion is to be finally defeated and the history and character of Satan disclosed. In his last great effort to dethrone Christ, destroy His people, and take possession of the City of God, the archdeceiver has been fully unmasked. Those who have united with him see the total failure of his cause. Christ's followers and the loyal angels beheld the full extent of his machinations against the government of God. He is the object of universal abhorrence...

... Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain. The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences... Satan's own works have condemned him. God's wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated. It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created... The history of sin will stand to all eternity as a witness that with the existence of God's law is bound up the happiness of all the beings He has created...

... Satan... determines not to yield the great controversy... He rushes into the midst of his subjects and endeavors to inspire them with his own fury and arouse them to instant battle. But of all the countless millions whom he has allured into rebellion, there are none now to acknowledge his supremacy... The wicked... see that their case is hopeless... Their rage is kindled against Satan and those who have been his agents in deception, and with the fury of demons they turn upon them.

Saith the Lord: "Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit." "I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. . . . [sic] I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. . . . [sic] I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. . . . [sic] Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." Ezekiel 28:6-8, 16-19.

... Fire comes down from God out of heaven. The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed in its depths are drawn forth. Devouring flames burst from every yawning chasm. The very rocks are on fire. The day has come that shall burn as an oven. The elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein are burned up. Malachi 4:1; 2 Peter 3:10... It is the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men...

... The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God's people to commit... After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed... The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met...

... The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away...

... The earth originally given to man as his kingdom, betrayed by him into the hands of Satan..., has been brought back by the great plan of redemption. All that was lost by sin has been restored... God's original purpose in the creation of the earth is fulfilled as it is made the eternal abode of the redeemed...

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.⁴⁴

The Berean Test of Acts 17:11

Impressive! This is a wholly apposite response to Ellen White's grand, sustained vista of the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan, sweeping from prior to Eden to God's ultimate, eternal, new Creation.

However, legion are the very impressive literary panoramas, both secular and religious.⁴⁵ And equally as legion are the devotees of the Christian varieties who demand of their critics a commensurate alternative. In contrast, it is the *primary* duty of the genuine devotee of sacred Scripture to ascertain God's clearly revealed will, and to follow it, no matter how mundane or even unattractive it appears to mere human eyes.⁴⁶

Lucifer

It is often observed that Ellen White's account of Satan's fall and expulsion from heaven are starkly reminiscent of John Milton's in his renowned *Paradise Lost*. Even if this is purely coincidental,⁴⁷ the fact remains that, in their natural search for the origins of evil, Christians have long interpreted both Isa. 14:12-14 and Eze. 28:12b-15 in their terms. Indeed, how extremely **obvious** is the identity of Lucifer the covering cherub, KJV!

Sadly, though, "the obvious!" is the very oil which fuels the flames of most sectarian zeal. For example, if you ask the average devout Catholic, Who is the glorious woman in Rev. 12?, you will receive the fervent reply, The Blessed Virgin Mary! Indeed, most scholars of papal persuasion now have a far broader outlook. However, it is difficult to find even one who does not glance fondly back at this hoary, sectarian proof-text.

Neither Isa. 14:12-14 nor Eze. 28:12b-15 yields their popular interpretations persuasively through cogent exegesis. For one thing, one is in a doom song against Babylon, the other indicts the king of Tyre. Granted, both times the vista sweeps well beyond the mere earthly city or ruler. And it is this very largesse which lends credence to this facile, satanic interpretation. However, that may not be the *best* – let alone the *only* – option by a long measure. And **no decision should precede rigorous exegesis of the relevant passages.**

The hoary KJV renders the Hebrew noun הֵיְלֵל (*hélél*) in Isa. 14:12 – its only OT occurrence – as *Lucifer*. This is derived from the Latin for *light bearing*. However, its basic meaning is simply *morning star*, as transparent in its ready application to our planet Venus. Consult your average dictionary if this is news to you.

However, there is much more here than meets our eyes. Sometimes the OT expresses truth in terms of familiar, convenient myths, while *certainly* not endorsing them.⁴⁸ Even Jesus was not averse to employing a manifestly fictional story familiar to his audience in order to drive his moral point home hard.⁴⁹ Isaiah the prophet addresses Babylon in the very language of the **polytheistic mythology** in which it was steeped:

In the Ras Shamra polytheism, the morning star attempts to climb... to the mountain of the gods in the far north. This would challenge the supremacy of... the Monarch of the gods. He is cast down... Such an analogy from mythology would be particularly appropriate when applied to the polytheistic Babylonians, whose mythology had many links with that of Ugarit.⁵⁰

Certainly, the popular lay notion of Lucifer, a noble archangel in heaven, knows nothing of his ascension to **heaven**, which Isaiah specifies in 13, nor of his falling specifically and permanently to his **tomb**, 9-11, 15-20.

Despite the "obvious!" import, at least to most lay Christians, of "the anointed cherub that covereth", Eze. 28:14, KJV, its context challenges even many a professional exegete as "one of the more difficult passages in the Book of Ezekiel—if not in the whole Bible!"⁵¹ Ostensibly, this is a funeral lament against the king of Tyre, a mere man who arrogantly considers himself a god.⁵² However, what gives some credence, at least at first sight, to the popular satanic interpretation is the suprahuman diction, which appears to soar well beyond that monarch. For example, citing the KJV: Eden, 13; the anointed cherub that covereth, 14; perfect in thy ways, 15. The two more minor details in this list may be covered sufficiently here with some despatch.

The problem for any interpretation of this whole passage is that the only man ever to inhabit the garden of Eden in a state of unfallen perfection was humanity's father Adam. Neither do the details of the adorning jewelry bespeak earth's pristine paradise. The equal hurdle for the satanic interpretation is this: nor do they bespeak heaven! So speculation, apart from a plausible suggestion in passing below, is quite unprofitable.

The perfection which Ezekiel mentions is best grasped in context. The major cause of the king of Tyre's fall is pride in commercial success, as specified both proximately, 16-18a, and initially, 2b-5. This suggests the *relative*, not *absolute*, perfection which the OT readily intends by its adjective תָּמִים (*tāmīm*).⁵³ Moreover, it can be argued plausibly enough that the obscure Hebrew expression translated *model of perfection* in 12b, NIV, has the sense *the one sealing a plan*, with possible reference to nothing more than mere commercial skill.⁵⁴ Whatever, any satanic inference is a rash, remote option, especially when the monarch's expulsion is followed immediately by his violent, flaming demise in utter disgrace, 18bf., in the very midst of the sea, 8.

Finally, what is the duty of a covering cherub in heaven? The participle in 14, 16 is a form of the Hebrew verb סָכַק (*sākak*), with the primary nuance *obstruct*, hence *cover as a shield*.⁵⁵ Sensitive to this exegetical finesse, here is one cautious yet rather persuasive explication of Ezekiel's paramount, second expression:

In the ancient Near East a cherub was understood to be a sphinxlike creature with an animal body..., wings, and a human head... These statutory creatures normally guarded the entrances to pagan temples. The cherubim of God guarded the ark

of the covenant, the Garden of Eden, and formed the throne-chariot of God. It seems as if Tyre's king was identifying himself with the patron deity of Tyre, Melkart, directly or symbolically, as the god's guardian sphinx. The Phoenician male-sphinx ... was normally bejeweled and sometimes had the head of the priestking... The sphinx was considered to be all-wise. Such a description fits well the verses under discussion, for the king is called a guardian cherub... and the many jewels listed in v. 13 as his covering befit the many jewels that adorned the Phoenician sphinx... The term "created" would be used in the sense... that it was the true God who had sovereignly placed this contemporary king on the throne of Tyre...

To assume that the stones were the garment of Satan in the Garden of Eden and that Satan was a guardian cherub of Eden would be purely hypotheses without any exegetical basis elsewhere in Scripture. In fact, neither Michael nor Gabriel are described as cherubim, and one might expect that Satan was on the same level as these before his fall.⁵⁶

In brief, neither of these hoary proof-texts as much as has his satanic majesty in view, let alone explains his resplendent creation and ignominious nemesis. In fact, as his appellation in pristine purity, *Lucifer* is nothing more than a spectacular monument to a protracted, former epoch of Bible "study" in which the zeal and utter sincerity of its devout practitioners were equally as commendable as their facility was lamentable.

Satan in the OT

We must look elsewhere, then, for biblical information on the early history of his satanic majesty. An "obvious" source is the Hebrew noun שָׂטָן (*sātān*) and its cognates, especially verbal. However, the results of any reasonable analysis of the data is likely to surprise if not disturb the novice. For the clear consensus even of well respected, conservative OT experts is this: "In the OT Satan is not the devil in the latter sense of the word; he is not an evil principle opposing God."⁵⁷ But please! Do check carefully, before stoning me!

The relevant verb שָׂטָן (*sātān*) appears only six times.⁵⁸ Five times the distressed psalmist employs it to lament his human enemies who slander him. Once alone, in Zech. 3:1, is there even a hint that any non-human entity is involved. I will return to its prime context, then, through the noun which it equally employs.

The noun *sātān* occurs 27 times.⁵⁹ occasionally as a mere adversary, with no overtones of moral corruption. Indeed, in Nu. 22:22, 32, it is Yahweh's very angel who confronts wayward Balaam "as an adversary", NASB! Compare 1 Sam. 29:4, where the *persona non grata* in pagan eyes is David.⁶⁰ An inference of peccancy is invited explicitly in 1 Ki. 5:4,⁶¹ although "*sātān*" may still be Yahweh's specific *human* agent, 11:14.⁶²

This introduces what most conservative Christians consider a major OT theological problem. In 2 Sam. 24:1 it is specifically Yahweh himself who incites David to a national act of disobedience, 10-17. Yet in 1 Chr. 21:1 *sātān* is the inducer! This may exemplify the possible principle that sometimes the Bible portrays God as *doing* what he does not *prevent*.⁶³ However, we would do well to scrutinise this enigma with great care.

Many commentators consider that the latter verse contains the OT's initial employment of the noun *sātān* as a proper name. The trouble, though, is that biblical Hebrew utilises neither capital letters nor an indefinite article. And *sātān* lacks its definite article nine times more,⁶⁴ always where all notion of a proper name is *unlikely* if not downright *impossible*. It follows that in 1 Chr. 21:1 *sātān* possibly stands right beside Nu. 22: 22, 32 as a transparent case of Yahweh **himself** becoming his own adversary against rebellious humanity.

This gains credence from the fact that our noun *sātān* is *always* articular when it applies *unambiguously* to a *heavenly* accuser, as in Job 1:6-12; 2:17. Here is consistent specificity – **the** Accuser – but not a proper name. It is noteworthy, too, that *the sātān* still has ready access to heaven, as implicit in the verb *present*, 1:6, 2:1 (*bis*) and the expression *the presence of the LORD*, 1:12; 2:7, in striking contrast to his absolute exclusion following his expulsion, Rev. 12:8. Likewise, our Lord no longer tolerates his accusations against converts, Ro. 8:33f. It is equally noteworthy that, although *the sātān* is an agent of dreadful disaster in the Book of Job, he is consistently under Yahweh's *specific* control. He does not *directly* oppose heaven's Sovereign.

This leaves the OT's final, articular use of the noun *sātān* in Zech. 3:1f. *Here alone* does *the* Accuser approach the NT's depiction of its satanic majesty. Even then, his charges are impeccable. For Joshua, portraying Israel, awaiting restitution from captivity,⁶⁵ merits the strongest Hebrew expression for repulsive filth. The fact is that *the* Accuser defies Yahweh's specific plan for his people, beginning with *imputed* purging.

We scour the OT completely in vain, then, for even a hint of the origin of **the sātān**, let alone any expulsion from heaven. Even what Christians know as his trademark deceit is only evident in Gen. 3 because John of Patmos twice refers to "that ancient **serpent** called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray", 12:9.⁶⁶ And we only realise that the divine promise of Gen. 3:15 is Messianic because of the apostle Paul's towering, personal assurance: "The God of peace will soon **crush** Satan under your feet", Ro. 16:20.

Before moving on, a careful clarification, in this age when even those most zealous about God's Decalogue seem oblivious to its Ninth, Ex. 20:16; Mt. 19:18!⁶⁷ *These conclusions from exacting exegesis should not be confused with those of liberal Bible scholarship*, or even of those who happily attribute much NT theology to the influence of the uninspired, intertestamental, pseudepigraphic literature.⁶⁸ The simple fact of the matter is that the NT is much clearer about numerous cardinal Christian doctrines than the OT. The classic example is the Pauline gospel of salvation full and free in Christ, "which was not made known to men in other generations as it has **now** been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets", Eph. 3:5.⁶⁹

Satan in the NT

In NT times there is no doubt that Satan is a specific, malefic individual, also called the Adversary,⁷⁰ the devil,⁷¹ the Enemy,⁷² the Evil One,⁷³ the Prince of this world,⁷⁴ and the Tempter.⁷⁵ And he leads his angels,⁷⁶ who should most likely be equated with the demons.⁷⁷ He hinders the receipt of God's Word,⁷⁸ he tempts converts to sin,⁷⁹ ever vigilant to exploit all the careless opportunities they provide,⁸⁰ although he flees from those who resist him.⁸¹ Because he is an extremely fierce foe,⁸² he can only be repelled through resolute faith.⁸³ He is a master of deceit,⁸⁴ even faking last-day miracles.⁸⁵ And he is the agent in some sicknesses.⁸⁶

Above all, Jesus unmasks Satan: "a murderer *from the beginning*, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and *the father of lies*", Jn. 8:44b.⁸⁷ He controls the entire wicked world,⁸⁸ and the unconverted are his children.⁸⁹ So Christ came *primarily* to destroy the devil and all of his works.⁹⁰ Conversion is deserting his kingdom for God's.⁹¹ And redemption is the effective release from our *inherent* slavery to sin and Satan,⁹² to be born again⁹³ as children of God,⁹⁴ whose carnal natures, although ever ready to rebel,⁹⁵ are controlled by his indwelling, sealing Holy Spirit.⁹⁶

When we come to Jesus himself, however, an extremely careful exception must be made. For one thing, in his humanity he was not merely someone who happened not to have sinned. He had that very same nature, *free of all corruption*, which Adam enjoyed at first, fresh from his Creator's hand. He demonstrated that Adam need never have fallen, not that we, his tainted offspring, can cease our sinning.⁹⁷ For another, Satan's temptations primarily challenged Jesus' *Messianic* resolve, which has very little to do with our daily struggles. The patent Exodus typology of the entire encounter further isolates it from mere relevance to us:

The passages of Scripture with which Jesus answers the three temptations (Dt. 6:13, 16; 8:3) are drawn from a passage where Moses, at the close of the forty years of wandering in the desert, addresses Israel on the threshold of the promised land, calling them to a more wholehearted devotion and obedience to God, and a trust in his care and provision for them. While each verse quoted might be seen as an appropriate expression of a moral principle which happened to come to Jesus' mind, the fact that the choice was in all three cases made from this single small section of the Old Testament suggests that the passage was especially in Jesus' mind... as a prefiguration of his own experience...

... [H]e... saw himself, as Israel, tested and taught in the desert as God's 'son' Israel had been.

This exegesis is confirmed by the very considerable parallels between the situation of Jesus and that of Israel in the desert. Both are times of hardship and testing, preparatory to the undertaking of a special task... Both suffer hunger... by God to teach a lesson. The forty days of Jesus' fast reflects the forty years of Israel's wandering...

The principle involved is in each case one of 'testing'. In each case the one tested was the 'son of God' (Mt. 4:3, 6, and Dt. 8:5, cf. Ex. 4:22). In each case God tested his son (the one fresh from the deliverance from Egypt, the other just commissioned for his redeeming work in baptism), to prove his loyalty, and to teach him to trust and obey and worship God alone, in preparation for his special task...

The first temptation is generally seen as a suggestion that Jesus should test his supposed sonship, and... satisfy his hunger, by attempting a miracle... Jesus' reply, however, is not concerned with the misuse of miraculous power, nor with doubt of either the reality of his sonship or God's provision. It picks on just that lesson which Israel's hunger had been intended to teach them, that physical food is not the most important thing, but rather... obedience to... the word of God (Dt. 8:23)...

In the second temptation... the testing of the reality of Jesus' sonship may again be involved, but is not explicit in Jesus' answer. Still less is there the suggestion that the spectacular effect of an uninjured fall from the pinnacle of the Temple would be a quick road to power; neither the temptation nor the reply supports such an exegesis. The temptation is to test God to see whether he will prove true to his promise in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 6:16 furnishes a most appropriate reply, for it is not only a command not to test God, but specifically a command not to test God as they had tested him at Massah. The reference is to Exodus 17:27, when the people, demanding water, and threatening to stone Moses, 'put the Lord to the proof... by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"' Jesus likewise is tempted to force God's hand to see whether he really is with his Son, and will meet his need as he has promised.

The third temptation is to achieve power by the worship of God's rival... Israel, too, was confronted by rival claimants to worship, and in Deuteronomy 6:13-15 God demanded an undivided allegiance to himself...

Jesus then saw himself as God's son, undergoing prior to his great mission as Messiah the testing which God had given to his 'son' Israel before the great mission of the conquest of Canaan. Israel then had failed the test; now, in Jesus, was found that true sonship which could pass the test, and be the instrument of God's purpose of blessing to the world which Old Testament Israel had failed to accomplish...⁹⁸

Compare Ellen White's grasp of Jesus' first temptation, at least, totally swamped by her temperance concerns. Adam had failed his very first moral lesson of self denial.⁹⁹ Here, then, through "a test infinitely more severe",¹⁰⁰ "Christ achieved a victory in behalf of the race upon the point of appetite."¹⁰¹ It follows that I must never risk my very salvation by indulgence!¹⁰² Even regularly imbibing tea or coffee hinders God's cause!¹⁰³

Of course temperance is a Christian principle: we are all but lowly stewards of our blood-bought bodies, 1 Cor. 6:19f. However, Ellen White seems to have gone overboard in this salient matter. For "*the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking*, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," Ro. 14:17.¹⁰⁴

For yet another, there is little evidence that Satan ceaselessly harassed Jesus as he does us. In fact, when this *specific*, initial test concluded, “the devil... left him *until an opportune time*”, Lu. 4:13 – a most likely reference to the *resumed* contest tacit in “the prince of this world is *coming*... (T)he world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me”, Jn. 14:30f. Surprisingly, the evangelists pen no explicit details of that conflict. Yet his reference to God’s directive in Jn. 10:18 about his Passion is highly relevant, especially when, in the only other references in the entire NT to *the prince of this world*, John reports Christ’s forecast that Satan will be overthrown through his death and ascension, 12:31f.; 16:11.¹⁰⁵

In fact, as soon as Christ returns to his Father, Rev. 12:5, there is a heavenly battle between Michael and his angels and Satan and his, 7. “But he was not strong enough, and *they lost their place in heaven*... He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him”, 8f. Even apart from the fact, decisive *per se*, that Satan still has access to heaven in Job 1:6-12; 2:17, we can be quite certain that John does not rush us back unexpectedly and inexplicably to before creation through the chorus of triumph that follows his expulsion, 10-12:

“Now have come the *salvation* and the power and the *kingdom* of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the *accuser* of our brothers, who *accuses them before our God day and night*, has been hurled down. *They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb* and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from *death*. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because *he knows that his time is SHORT*.”

For one thing, such *specific* temporal details make absolutely no sense before the Cross. For another, the measure of Satan’s concern is this: “*When* (he) saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who *had* given birth to the male child”, 13. And Scripture relates nothing about him lying comatose for many a millennium before that perception, as a heavenly war before Creation would necessitate.¹⁰⁶

This finds forceful support in Peter’s chilling caution that the devil “prowls around *like a roaring lion* looking for someone to devour”, 1 Pet. 5:8. What, though, about the *past* tense in Christ’s terse observation, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven”, Lu. 10:18? This readily accords with the rest of the evidence if it is recognised as prophecy, not history. Yet the long-imprisoned, rebel angels, 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6, appear at first sight to support a pre-Creation expulsion. However, should these not include Satan? And have he and his minions not ever been very active, with interment to the abyss still future, Rev. 20:13? These rather difficult references look askance at *all* of the other evidence, and are best set aside in this brief discussion.¹⁰⁷

Before that confinement, Satan’s ultimate campaign is the Great Tribulation. Having treated this briefly yet adequately enough elsewhere,¹⁰⁸ a summary must suffice here. Satan employs the sea beast, through the earth beast, Rev. 13, grievously to pressure God’s followers into alien worship by means of miracles, economic restraints and even a death threat. This clarifies John’s pressing pastoral caveat: “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus”, 14:12.¹⁰⁹ The critics of Seventh-day Adventist sectarian dogma sometimes rejects its reading of *commandments* as God’s Decalogue by documenting the usage of ἐντολή (*entolē*), the Greek noun behind it, in the Johannine literature.¹¹⁰ Moreover, it is indisputable that John employs its verb τηρεῖν (*tērein*) with objects well beyond the Decalogue.¹¹¹ Regardless, it is extremely difficult to embrace the surmise implicit here that John of Patmos was John the apostle.¹¹² Nor is there the slightest doubt over what the former’s pristine readers would have comprehended by his pointed parallel allusions, before both his reference to the Great Tribulation, 11:19, and God’s seven last plagues on Satan’s human devotees, 15:5, to Yahweh’s OT sanctuary.¹¹³ However, *the seventh-day Sabbath was no issue in their day*, when John’s forecasts were *certainly* scheduled for fulfilment.¹¹⁴

Strictly speaking, then, God’s seal need not enter this discussion. However, since many of Ellen White’s critics prefer the “obvious” option, the Holy Spirit, Eph. 1:13f., it warrants at least my brief, separate perusal.¹¹⁵

To discuss Satan’s actual interment is to venture onto the minefield of bewildering debate about John’s millenary theology. Because it is utterly impossible to survey all let alone adequately defend even one of the numerous options here, let me risk losing some readers by stating my strong premillennial preference, although my conclusions about where the saints spend the thousand years are irrelevant here.¹¹⁶ This entails a literal resurrection of the righteous at their outset and of the wicked at their close, Rev. 20:4-6, when our arch enemy, freshly released, deceives the latter into marching upon the newly descended New Jerusalem, only to suffer judgment and fiery doom, 7:15. However, nothing is specified regarding that judgment except that it involves books and deeds, 12, or of the duration of that punishment except for rather tenuous deductions from the likely intent of John’s enigmatic symbol of the lake of fire, as the second death, 14b.¹¹⁷

How does Ellen White’s Theology Compare?

A prefatory word is apropos. Almost *every* major theological detail which features here is the subject of vigorous debate, even within *mainstream* Christianity. One minuscule essay cannot begin to stand beside the many volumes, both learned and lay, which seek to settle such sincere polemics. In this exercise I can do no more, then, than to list some of the evidence for the respectable options, *sometimes with a distinct*

bias, for the sake of the discussion, towards Ellen White's theology. By presenting her in the best possible light, regardless of my personal beliefs, I can only hope that all suspicion of ulterior motives is precluded.

There are numerous occasions when Ellen White's theology compares well, if not impeccably, with Holy Writ. For instance, Christ created as his Father wished.¹¹⁸ God has granted all intelligent beings free will, so that they may serve him in love, fully appreciating his beneficent character.¹¹⁹ He created mankind with no bias towards evil.¹²⁰ But in yielding to temptation, our pristine parents became depraved in nature,¹²¹ leaving us with the absolute impossibility, unaided beyond humanity, of resisting its incessant clamours.¹²² Both justice¹²³ and mercy¹²⁴ are certainly crucial components of God's Plan of Salvation through the blood of Christ.

This raises the highly emotive topic of God's law and his gospel, especially among those who sincerely criticise Seventh-day Adventists for respecting Saturday as his holy Sabbath.¹²⁵ Whilst all will agree that no sinner is **justified** by law keeping,¹²⁶ and that the primary challenge Paul battled was misguided zeal for *circumcision*,¹²⁷ the highly respected G. E. Ladd speaks for many a fellow NT scholar in lamenting that "Paul's thought about the Law is difficult to understand because he seems to make numerous contradictory statements."¹²⁸ The tragedy here is that, just as protagonists over most theology of specific concern to Seventh-day Adventists on **both** sides are renowned for appealing to the **same** Ellen White corpus for strong support,¹²⁹ so also **both** sides in the gospel versus law debate enlist the **one** Pauline corpus for solid support!

Yet, just as the antinomian should be satisfied with Paul's affirmation, "Do we... nullify the law by... faith? Not at all! Rather, we **uphold** the law", Ro. 3:31, so also the Decalogian should accommodate his assertion, "we have been **released** from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code", 7:6. Likewise, in the specific debate over the survival of God's seventh-day Sabbath, the anti-Sabbatarian has every right to insist that the Holy Spirit inspired the patent intent of Col. 2:16f.: "(D)o not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a **Sabbath day**. These are a **shadow** of the things that were to come; the **reality**... is found in **Christ**."¹³⁰ Yet the Sabbatarian has equal right to insist that the **same** Holy Spirit inspired John of Patmos to make unequivocal reference to the **unabridged** Decalogue, in juridic contexts, too, to his flock.¹³¹ More saliently, he has Jesus' own avowal, "The Sabbath was made for **man**, not man for the Sabbath", Mk. 2:27.¹³²

Even were I able, this brief study is no place to settle this lively debate. I will therefore give Ellen White all the benefit of the doubt, especially because she can claim unbiased, towering support for her perspective that the gospel did not abrogate God's moral law.¹³³ However, Holy Writ offers not even a **single** hint that the latter, either in principle or in his Decalogue, features in any "Great Controversy" between Christ and Satan.

For one thing, it is by no means a decisive argument that there is no law if none is *explicitly* mentioned. The classic example is the OT's typically terse record of earth's pre-Exodus epochs. The very fact that Yahweh commends Abraham warmly because he "*obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws*", Gen. 26:5, manifestly implies that he was tutored **explicitly** and **pervasively**. In fact, Moses' protracted lexis appears to have a *specific, eloquent* source!¹³⁴ It is rather a small step, then, to conformance in heaven, even if in terms alone of unwritten regulations which are thoroughly understood. In such terms, Ellen White's crucial, cardinal dogma does enjoy some measure of credibility – **in isolation**.

In contrast, just as soon as a crisis loomed, Yahweh ensured that his laws were **proclaimed** in an awe-some ceremony, Ex. 19:120:21. Yet there is not a **single** word anywhere in the vast sweep of Scripture about Lucifer/Satan challenging his law, on which – **far** more importantly – the very stability of his entire cosmos depends! Likewise, Satan must be granted time to develop his plans. Yet there is not one **solitary** mention of law in any satanic context in God's entire Word!¹³⁵ Again, Adam and Eve are cautioned about the consequent peril, but the Genesis record is silent! Yet again, the entire universe, with the astounding exception of us earthlings, grasped important lessons about the Great Controversy from Noah's flood! And in kind, the Bible record of Abraham's great test, supposedly for the benefit of future generations, is quite silent regarding Satan's accusations until Ellen White slips an explanatory note into Yahweh's explanatory words in Gen. 22:12! I say Bible record because hers is **strikingly** reminiscent of one in the uninspired pseudepigrapha!¹³⁶

Well may we all wonder, for another, why Ellen White *alone* of all visionaries forecasts that hand holding aloft those two stone tables, then opening them to terrify sinners just before Christ returns; why she *alone* observes them in his hand at his post-millennial coronation; why she *alone* mentions God's law – or even the crucial Great Controversy, for that matter – in describing the perfection of Eternity. Heaven, in contrast, is perfectly content with merely these brief, backward glances: "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away", 21:4; "No longer will there be any curse", 22:3.

The significant question of such additional, presumed inspired, details certainly cannot be treated adequately here.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, quite an excellent beginning can be made by carefully considering the following, typical apologetic statements from one official, Seventh-day Adventist internet site devoted to this task:

The writings introduce no new topic, no new revelation, no new doctrine. They simply give additional details and round out subjects already a part of the Scripture record. The whole realm of spiritual truth is encompassed by the Bible. There is no

need for more to be added. But further details, incidents, and applications... lead to keener perception and deeper understanding of the truth already revealed.¹³⁸

A telescope doesn't put more stars into the heavens; it simply reveals more clearly the stars that are already there. And Ellen White's writings... may also be seen as a microscope that helps "to magnify and make clear the details of the truths of the Word" of God. Likewise, the writings of Ellen White add detail and make clear the teachings of the Scriptures.¹³⁹

Additions in terms of details, from one privileged to view in vision scenes of Biblical history, is no more surprising than the fact that one finds details mentioned by one Gospel writer that are omitted by another describing the same event. Paul identifies the Egyptian magicians by name (2 Tim. 3:8), whereas in the book of Exodus they are nameless. Jude describes a prophecy of Enoch (Jude 14, 15) that is nowhere recorded in Genesis. Similar insights by Ellen White complement the Biblical record, which remains the unique, authoritative, revelation of God's will.¹⁴⁰

A big difference exists between "new light—additional truth" and additional details. If prophets do not provide additional details, what would be their purpose?... One of the prophet's functions... has been to give additional details about salvation truths and the character of God... Mrs. White does not introduce doctrines that are not already in the Bible. But she does add details and insights so that those truths are seen in greater clarity, with deeper understanding...¹⁴¹

At first sight these responses appear reasonable, if not decisive. On closer inspection, though, one must protest: This will *never* do! For one thing, the consistent surmise in all such comments is that Ellen White is a genuine prophet. The clear corollary is that her additional details beyond sacred Scripture are as reliable as those in the latter, and merely complement them. However, it is sheer circular reasoning to defend such addenda of any purported prophet by purely subjective criteria! *They can **only** be assessed objectively as they **diverge** from Holy Writ!* The telescope metaphor is a splendid case in point. Great excitement gripped astronomers world-wide at the launch of the Hubble telescope into orbit, well clear of Earth's atmospheric distortion. Yet even greater was their frustration that its images, familiar from earth-bound instruments, were useless. For its giant glass had been ground imprecisely through a mere speck of stray paint! For another, the analogy drawn between Ellen White and even Paul and Jude is misleading. Paul took his extra detail from the Targum (Aramaic paraphrase) of Jonathan commenting on Ex. 7:11. And Jude quoted the pseudepigraphic 1 En. 1:9. Only, unlike Ellen's echoing "Moses", "Enoch" here voices a familiar, prime NT doctrine.

As for the evangelists, either first or second hand, they drew their data from a *common* pool of reliable information according to their separate apologetic purposes.¹⁴² Even then, reliable modern translations are meticulously careful to scrap material with inadequate evidence of authenticity,¹⁴³ and to label ancient passages that are misplaced.¹⁴⁴ In contrast, the additional details in the Ellen White corpus rarely if ever oblige.

Worse, "major" doctrines like her Great Controversy theme are virtually unique to Seventh-day Adventism because *they sweep so far **beyond** even the compatible biblical data that **they are simply not there to be gleaned** by conservative hermeneutics!* That is, to all intents and purposes, they are **extra-biblical** dogma. And this certainly imposes extremely stringent qualifications on Seventh-day Adventism's incessant assertions that, as thoroughly as scrupulously, it cherishes that paramount Protestant principle, ***sola scriptura!***¹⁴⁵

Indeed, the time has come when its utter bankruptcy, even in this crucial dogma, can no longer be denied. As the culminating act in its decades of striving to erase the scars of the Ford fiasco,¹⁴⁶ this Church issued vol. 12 of its Commentary reference series, its *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*.¹⁴⁷ This purports "to devote the bulk of (its) articles to the biblical data... This was an occasion to let the *Scriptures* speak."¹⁴⁸ However, as its relevant essay, "The Great Controversy,"¹⁴⁹ seeks to be "biblically based,"¹⁵⁰ without the usual plethora of Ellen White references, its polemic resembles an ample slice of Swiss cheese, riddled with huge holes! For those who are interested, I devote an Appendix to documenting its self-condemning string of sheer surmises: "***apparently***..."; "We may (safely/rightly) ***infer***..."; "It would ***appear***..."; "***evidently***..."¹⁵¹

This decisive conclusion is confirmed beyond quibble when, like Ellen White's major, Great Controversy motif itself, sectarian dogma depends crucially on sheer ***heresy***. For example, she is manifestly explaining what she considers *the* deeper purport of both Isa. 14:12-15 and Eze. 28:12-19 to Satan's genesis, fall and even destruction. However, no such secure exegesis is possible. Like sin itself, the origin of its father remains an intractable mystery. As such, this cannot be knowledge currently crucial to the very welfare of God's cosmos! In fact, even though the NT witnesses the full flowering of God's process of *progressive* revelation,¹⁵² the closest it comes to her cosmic spectacle is Paul's tantalising reference to God's church as the theatre in which his wisdom is displayed to the entire cosmos, Eph. 3:10f.¹⁵³ Even his reference to the apostles as "a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men", 1 Cor. 4:9, is quite sarcastic, as befits its context. For the Greek noun *θέατρον* (*theatron*) behind *spectacle* can denote the infamous Roman amphitheatre.

Likewise, Ellen White is theologically inept to rip Rev. 12:7-9 from its totally transparent context to "support" her thesis that Satan and his host were hurled from heaven before Creation. So most of her detailed record of crescent rebellion in heaven is simply unreliable. She fares little better in relating mankind's fall. For she relies upon her thesis that Eve strayed from Adam's secure presence into direct satanic temptation. In stark contrast, Moses' ancient Bible narrative is as crystal clear as it is succinct: Adam "was ***with*** her," Gen. 3:6.

Some of Ellen White's keenest apologists confidently demur, even in cyberspace, for all the world to see:

This is an argument over semantics, insisting that "with her".. means that he had been with her during her entire walk to the Tree and conversation with the serpent.

Following is this text in its original Hebrew, according to the King James Interlinear Bible:

(ishshah) (ra'ah) ('ets) (towb) (ma'akal) (huw') (ta'avah) ('ayin) ('ets) (chamad) (sakal) (laqach) (periy) ('akal) (nathan) (gam) ('iysh) ('akal)

(Translated literally)

(woman) (saw) (tree) (good) (meat) (that) (pleasant) (eyes) (tree) (desired) (wise) (took) (fruit) (eat) (gave) (also) (husband) (eat)

... Even without looking at the Hebrew, consider a few facts:

–In his conversation with Eve, the serpent never acknowledges Adam's supposed presence (Gen. 3: 1-5). In fact, Adam's opinion of her decision is never mentioned until he "did eat." (verse 6).

–When confronted by God, Adam doesn't blame the serpent, but casts the blame on Eve (verse 12). Had he been at the Tree at the same time, it seems he and Eve together would have blamed the serpent.

–When confronted by God, Eve doesn't say "the serpent beguiled us, and we did eat" but rather, "the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." (verse 13).

Many Bible scholars have taken this position through the ages, long before Ellen White ever commented on it.¹⁵⁴

Sadly, this is sheer sciolism. For one thing, the Hebrew which they "quote", only to ignore – probably because *they lack all working knowledge of it* – does not excuse such neglect. They give virtually little more than a lexical list, not the "original Hebrew" in all its grammatical/syntactical detail. For instance, they twice list the verb *eat* as 'akal (I assume they intend 'ākal for אָכַל, *he ate*, the standard, **perfect** tense form of concordance entry. But in the OT, it first occurs in Gen. 3:6 as אָכַל (wattōkal), *and she ate*, and second as אָכַל (wayyōkal), *and he ate*, both formally **imperfect** tense, functionally perfect via the Hebrew syntax.¹⁵⁵

Worse, they appear wholly oblivious of the striking fact that their lexical list lacks the very preposition עִמָּ (im), meaning *with*, on which this entire debate swings! And had they noticed that it occurs in this verse in the form עִמָּהּ (immāh), that is, suffixed with the pronoun *her*, this entire debate could have been settled cleanly and simply. For, as any reliable Hebrew grammar will confirm,¹⁵⁶ the **only** viable meaning in such a construction is *accompaniment*. That is, *Adam and Eve were certainly together, in one place, at that time*.

Even the human wisdom upon which most of these devotees' response depends does not really assist their polemic. The fact that the serpent only addresses Eve means that it craftily focused its delusive efforts upon her. It does not prove that Adam was absent. In fact, those with access to the Hebrew notice what English translations mask. *Every* pronoun subject implicit in *every* verb in the divine taboo, even when distorted by the serpent, *is – die, eat, be – is plural, not singular*. Had Adam been absent, the latter would have been more natural, surely. And before their God, of course Adam blamed Eve, who blamed the serpent. They reported the steps in their catastrophic fall *precisely*. There is no support here for Ellen White's thesis.

Unlike my appeal to the decisive Hebrew text, of course such reasoning does not prove my point. But at least it does demonstrate some of the limitations of human rationale. In fact, fringe denominations like the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses are where they are because they depend upon it! For example, if you try to persuade them that one day Satan will lead the evil of all ages across a desolate earth to attack the New Jerusalem, Rev. 20:7-9, they will pose this perfectly logical question: How can he **possibly** feed them all!?

As for those "(m)any Bible scholars", I will make just two quick points. Can our apologists nominate *any* modern, independent, conservative, OT scholar, with the Hebrew text wide open before him or her, who approves Ellen White's position? And so what? For many of us, one of the primary problems is that all too often her writings closely echo the literary milieu of her age all too indiscriminately, warts and all! Seventh-day Adventists frequently exult in her advanced *health reform*. Then why not advanced *theology* as well!?

The Plan of Salvation is another topic that cannot be treated adequately here, even though Ellen White's virtual perfectionism, in contrast to her exemplary Protestantism,¹⁵⁷ grows naturally in her Great Controversy soil. Suffice it here to say that her relevant hamartology is perilously unbiblical. On one hand, fallen human nature is depraved, right from birth.¹⁵⁸ Sin is not so much whatever I *do, say* and *think* as what I **am**. I sin because I am a sinner! And by far the bulk of my sins are those of sheer ignorance!¹⁵⁹ It follows that, if my Lord's humanity was *exactly* like mine, he could **not** have reached the age of choice without having ever sinned without the *divine* assistance which is denied *every* other infant!¹⁶⁰ On the other, my inherent sinfulness will only be destroyed in the Great Transformation at Christ's Return.¹⁶¹ So Ellen White's entire dogma concerning converts growing so fit for heaven that *they need no Mediator before God in the Time of Trouble*, as a final demonstration to the cosmos that his law can be kept perfectly, is despairingly **impossible**.¹⁶²

Having evaluated Ellen White's relevant eschatology elsewhere,¹⁶³ I need add no more here than a definitive example of her sometimes erratic "exegesis", even if in one of her least familiar books, even when explaining what she transparently regards as *the* purport of the apostle Paul's relevant passage in 2 Thess. 2: 9-12.¹⁶⁴ My point is perfectly patent if I meticulously align each of her precisely parallel sentiments as follows:

He speaks of **Christ's** coming as an event to immediately **follow** the work of Satan in spiritualism in these words: "Even him, **whose** coming is **after** the working of Satan with all power and signs..."

Clearly, Ellen White reads Paul as speaking of Christ's Return. And to her, the preposition *after* in her KJV has a **temporal** sense. In fact, she is completely astray on both counts. This is best grasped by beginning with the preposition *κατά* (*kata*) in the Greek. Because of the grammatical form of the Greek noun *ἐνέργεια* (*energeia*) behind *working*,¹⁶⁵ it has a wide spectrum of possible nuances including *purpose*, *reference* and *direction*. The only possible temporal option is *about*, *at*, *during* or *every*, which makes scant sense here. Yet all is clear in the common nuance *in accordance with*, especially because our English idiom **after this manner** was current even in King James' day. For Paul is cautioning that Satan will counterfeit Jesus' Parousia! In fact, it will be in this very "**coming** of the lawless one", 9, that "the lawless one will be **revealed**," 8.

Ellen White's major motif is hardly reinforced, either, by her various *contradictions*. For instance, she cannot have it both ways about the Plan of Salvation. It was devised either before mankind's fall or after. Yet in unambiguous terms which brook no melding, she supports *both* temporal options!¹⁶⁶ Likewise, the object of "Lucifer's" pristine envy is Christ's position in one record, which mentions his appointment as mankind's Creator only in passing. Yet in another, that very prospect galls him! In one, his wavering occurs before his expulsion. In the other, it follows, as "contrition", no less! Also, a stark dichotomy is evident between Jesus having to retrace Adam and Eve's steps, as it were, to pass the specific test they failed, whilst preserving God's justice, and his repeatedly offering "Lucifer" a full pardon in return for repentance and submission, at least until his rebellion was quite irreversible, without one single hint of any commensurate divine sacrifice.

Ellen White's evident contradictions also include certain stark differences over time in her accounts of her major theme. My independent research uses her evangelistic, *Signs of the Times* articles in lieu of *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1. Yet Dr. Alden Thompson's convenient conclusions to his own study are still apropos here:

... [T]hose elements... essential to the Great Controversy narrative do not appear clearly until the final telling of the story in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, namely, that the whole controversy has to do with freedom of choice and the service of love. The following aspects represent the most significant differences:

1. *Role of the love of God in the great rebellion.* Of the three editions, only *Patriarchs and Prophets* describes the role of love in the controversy. The beautiful two-page introduction in the first chapter (pp. 33, 34) is entirely absent from the earlier accounts. *Spiritual Gifts* and *The Spirit of Prophecy* simply narrate the facts of Lucifer's rebellion, emphasizing the frightful consequences when one resists the will of the all-powerful God.

2. *Relationship of free will and the law to the character of God.* From the beginning *Patriarchs and Prophets* focuses on the character of God as the key issue in the controversy: the law reflects God's character and thus can seek only the service of love. "Law of Love," "service of love," "freedom of will," and "voluntary service" are all key phrases (p. 34).

By contrast, in *Spiritual Gifts*, the issue of an unchangeable law is not clearly raised until the discussion of the change of the Sabbath (pp. 108-113), and there the issue is not the character of God and the service of love, but rather obedience to law... as the qualification for heaven. If Lucifer was excluded for ever because God's law was unalterable, then every transgressor of God's law must also perish (pp. 110, 111).

Spirit of Prophecy does integrate the law into the discussion quite early, but significantly it is not *the law* of God, but *laws*... that are eternal: God had made "laws" and "exalted them equal to Himself" (pp. 22, 23)...

3. *The possibility of restoration for Lucifer.* All three accounts indicate that there was a point of no return for Lucifer and his fellow rebels, but in contrast with the two earlier accounts, which indicate that Lucifer's fate was sealed from the moment he first sinned, *Patriarchs and Prophets* reveals that Lucifer and his cohorts had ample opportunity to be restored after they had broken heaven's harmony. In keeping with His great mercy God "bore long with Lucifer," attempting to convince him of the tragic result of "persisting in revolt." If he had simply agreed that God's law was good and just, he could have "saved himself and many angels." And even though "he had left his position as covering cherub" he could have been "reinstated in his office" (p. 39).

In this same connection, it is noteworthy that *Spiritual Gifts* reveals absolutely no sympathy for the plight of the heavenly rebels, either on God's part or on the part of the angels (pp. 18, 19). In *The Spirit of Prophecy*, traces of sympathy begin to appear as the loyal angels attempt to persuade Lucifer to submit (p. 20). Christ also weeps at Lucifer's fate, but the Father remains unmoved (pp. 29-31). Only in *Patriarchs and Prophets* does all heaven seek to win back the rebels (pp. 38-43).

4. *Eternal nature of Christ.* Both *Spiritual Gifts* and *The Spirit of Prophecy* reflect the tendency of some early Adventists to see Christ as a created being who was exalted to equality with the Father. But in *Patriarchs and Prophets* the statement of Christ's eternal relationship with the Father is clear and unmistakable. The earlier accounts describe Satan's animosity as the result of Christ's exaltation (cf. *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 18; *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 1, pp. 17, 18). But *Patriarchs and Prophets* reverses the cause-effect sequence, stating that it was only as a result of Lucifer's claim to equality with Christ that

a statement of Christ's authority had become necessary. There had been "no change in the position or authority of Christ... from the beginning."—Page 38.

5. *The love of the Father for sinners.* In the first two accounts, Christ is clearly the friend of sinners, but the wrath of the Father still burns. Thus Jesus explains that He is willing to "stand between the wrath of His Father and guilty man" (*Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, 23; *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 1, 46; italics supplied). Only in *Patriarchs and Prophets* does Ellen White integrate John 3:16 into the story, thus emphasizing the love not only of the Son but of the Father, as well. Accordingly, instead of describing Christ's role as shielding the sinner from the wrath of His Father, *Patriarchs and Prophets* states that Christ was willing to "stand between the sinner and the *penalty of sin*" (p. 64; italics supplied). Sin loses none of its offensiveness, however, for it must still "separate the Father and His Son" (p. 63.). But the important thing is that the sinner can now see the friendly face of God not only in the Son but also in the Father.

6. *The cross as an illustration of divine self-sacrifice.* Perhaps the most far-reaching implication in the transformation of the great controversy story has to do with the relationship between the death of Christ and the law and character of God. In the earlier accounts both God and the law are described in arbitrary, authoritarian terms. If man is to be saved, then Christ must die, for an arbitrary God and an arbitrary law demand death for sin. Furthermore the distance between "guilty man" and the Father means that Christ's death is... a reluctant concession to this "race of rebels" (cf. *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 2226; *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 1, pp. 45-51).

In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, however, the purpose of the death of Christ is seen... as the final answer to Satan's attacks against God. Satan had claimed that "God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, *He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself*" (p. 42; italics supplied). Against the background of that attack, the death of Christ "answered the question whether the Father and the Son had *sufficient love* for man to *exercise self-denial* and a *spirit of sacrifice*" (p. 70; italics supplied)... God acts in harmony with His law of love, for He was willing to give the ultimate sacrifice to demonstrate the supremacy of that law:... to take our place.¹⁶⁷

However, even this list is conservative. At very least, the unifying principle that Satan must be given time fully to reveal his own character and the fruit of his claims, for the eternal security of the entire cosmos, is only manifest in Ellen White's later revisions. Her earlier accounts leave her readers with the distinct impression that the ethereal phase of his rebellion was brief, curiously curtailed by God decreeing the conflict as a mere test of strength! Equally, modern Lucifer, gradually seduced by his own beauty, a master of deceit, enters the drama late. At first Satan shows his hand almost from the outset. And, despite his success, he is an insipid, vacillating character, even coveting "repentance" after his ignominious expulsion from heaven.

As usual, Ellen White's enthusiastic apologists, in this instance including Dr. Thompson, have this style of ready, seemingly plausible explanations which treat the subject in hand generally and at times specifically:

... [T]he visions that God sent Ellen White were always designed to be understandable to her at her level of growth at the moment of reception. That means that as Ellen White grew, the concepts given her in vision grew also, under God's direction ... To put the matter more bluntly, God was constantly "editing" the great controversy visions He gave to Ellen White. As she became capable of seeing more, God showed her more. That was why she did not tell the great controversy story just once in 1858 but kept retelling the story throughout her life and making some significant changes along the way...¹⁶⁸

Though not contradicting themselves, we must allow for the maturing experience of authors, even prophets, in that truth is unfolded to them only as fast as they are able to understand it. [stress original]

... The history of Israel is a splendid example of how He works with people where they are... The prophets were also part of this divine plan to unfold truth as fast as people are ready for it... Paul not only knew more about the plan of salvation than did Joel or David, he experienced the "unfolding" in his own life...

But some may say, "A prophet should be different. What prophets said when they were twenty years old should not need 'clarification' or 'expansion' when they are fifty-five!"... God speaks to men and women who "differ widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments." This... includes the "wide" spread of a person's grasp of truth between his/her youth and the mature years. Though the core of truth remains the same, one's insights are enlarged. Maturing skills of insight and communicating skills may express the core message differently in later years. In 1906 Ellen White reflected on her learning experience: "For sixty years I have been in communication with heavenly messengers, and I have been constantly learning in reference to divine things, and in reference to the way in which God is constantly working to bring souls from the error of their ways to the light in God's light."... [TDG 76]

... [L]etting the growth principle inform our study of Ellen White... we should expect deepening insights as she conveys God's messages to others..., especially when we compare her earliest descriptions of the origin of the great controversy in heaven with that in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

Thus, when readers sense a broader perspective in *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890) than is found in *Spiritual Gifts* (1858), they are recognizing the hermeneutical rule that a prophet will grow, as anyone else, in spiritual perception. This increase in spiritual perception will help the prophet to state more clearly the message that God wants conveyed. This is the principle that best describes the experience of Jesus on earth. Luke described His growth and maturing ability to share spiritual things with others: [Lu. 2:52 cited]¹⁶⁹

Truth does not change, but a person's appreciation for, and understanding of, truth does. Even prophets experience a deeper understanding of truth as time passes...

Mrs. White understood this human matrix through which the Word of God must pass in God's communication system. In her Introduction to *The Great Controversy* she alerted readers to the "diversity" of Biblical writers, not only in style but in the unique insights of a writer who "grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation."... [GC vi]

The principle of growth affected Ellen White's ministry in two ways: (1) Prophets can lead people only as fast as they can comprehend instruction. This may mean that God will lead the prophet with His instruction only as fast as people would understand the prophet's message; or (2) God will speak to prophets only in terms that can be understood by the prophet. As prophets grow in knowledge, Christian discipline, and experience, their capacity to understand more about God's plans increases proportionately...

Do we find any evidence for the principle of growth... as she amplified the Great Controversy Theme...? Much in every way. But the deepening insights are not in conflict with the original sketch...

The expansion of insights is not merely a matter of descriptive details. Clearer theological insights are apparent...

... As she grew older, she grew in knowledge. Visions..., when God knew she was ready, confirmed her Bible studies in such a way that fellow Adventists were impressed with her spiritual authority.⁷⁰

However, at least four major queries insistently confront such facile assertions. First, Must prophets comprehend the divine message they mediate? Not necessarily! For example, even Daniel wrestled repeatedly with his own visions, Dan. 7:28; 8:27; 12:8, only to be dismissed at last with a firm denial, 9-13. Granted, this may obtain because such forecast is designed for later generations, 8:17, 19, 26; 10:14; 12:9. Yet even the major OT seers, charged with shepherding their contemporaries, did not always grasp God's revelations. For instance, consider Isaiah's astonishment, Isa. 21:3: "I am staggered by what I hear, I am bewildered by what I see." Jeremiah even remonstrates with Yahweh, Jer. 4:10: "Ah, Sovereign LORD, how completely you have deceived this people... by saying, 'You will have peace,' when the sword is at our throats." Compare Yahweh's response to a minor prophet's passionate complaint, Hab. 1:2-4, that he was ignoring his people's iniquity, 5: "Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told." He was no prophetic teacher, but compare Peter's astonishment at a vision, Acts 10:11-14, challenging a deep-rooted belief lingering for years more, Gal. 2:11-13.

Secondly, Do even the prophets' most important messages steadily mutate as they mature theologically themselves? No definitive answer can be given because rarely if ever can we be sure what they believed before a particular revelation. It is better, then, to utilise our time profitably on the other pressing questions.

Thirdly, Must the recipients of a prophet's message comprehend it without a radical revision of their own theology? Not necessarily! The missions even of the three principal OT seers faced the brick wall from the very outset that their people simply did not understand because they did not wish to.⁷¹ Indeed, the age of comprehension is still future.⁷² This does not mean, though, that God always provides his saints with food which is very easily digested. If so, why did he bypass *every* disciple, and even Barnabas, such a "good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith," Acts 11:24, in calling Paul the **scholar** to be his most prolific missionary and author in NT times? No one who strives with his challenging theology will argue with Peter that his epistles are often "**hard** to understand," 2 Pet. 3:16. Yet he "wrote... with the wisdom that **God** gave him", 15!

Finally, and by far most saliently, Would God accommodate either the prophet's or the people's immature theology by inspiring the former with major, manifest **heresy**? Of course not! Scripture includes various difficult passages. But it is replete with *consistent* theology in its major themes, even allowing for greater light in the NT than in the OT, Heb. 1:1f. Yet we are asked by Ellen White's minions to accept that *her initial grasp of the Great Controversy sprouted in the soil of a major heresy from God himself in vision!* Note carefully that Satan's fierce jealousy of Christ sprang from a specially convened assembly in which *the Father elevated his Son to equality with himself!!* Hence his reiterated demands to be **equal** with God!! Compare her theology in its final form in which *Christ experienced no change at all in his status.* Rather, the Father merely **informed** heaven of the *status quo*. More strikingly, *the notion of elevation was a satanic misrepresentation!*

... Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels... *The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer...*

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God...⁷³

Jesus' testimony is didactic here, not least since his kindness in Jn. 16:12 is cited to support Ellen White's maturing, written theology. Although he worked amongst fanatically monotheistic Jews, he even risked his life, as in 5:18; 8:58f., to assert his divinity! Ellen White's minions are therefore flogging a dead horse. At best they have only a *plausible* case in terms of the people's and their prophet's initial immaturity, because the Bible data rendering it *probable* is scant. Regardless, one impregnable barrier, in Ellen White's own words, is this. Referring to God's writers' personal perception, she twice speaks of the *truth*, concluding: "*the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole*"⁷⁴ *That robs all error, however sincere, of the luxury of inspiration!*

Summary and Conclusion

Ellen White's apologists have themselves prominently singled out her Great Controversy theology as her cardinal motif. And in allowing that it embraces most of what other Christians call her Church's distinctive dogma, they equally endorse this theme as *the virtual backbone of Seventh-day Adventism*. It can scarcely be argued, then, that its critics are dealing with *trivia* or even issues of the *slightest* secondary import!

The great tragedy for sincere Seventh-day Adventists is that, although this rather alluring theology merits praise for numerous fine points and relative consistency, it does not fully pass the Bible test of authenticity. For one thing, at least in its final form, Ellen White's most frequent interest in her mutating motif is juridic. Yet, if there is some remote Bible passage unambiguously placing God's law in *specific* context with Satan or his agent, it is extremely well hidden! Even in the NT, with its complete revelation of sacred truth,¹⁷⁵ legal expressions are prominent, not dominant, sharing the stages with many a soaring Christian theme.¹⁷⁶ A tragic by-product of her focus, though, is that such salient themes can be diluted by hers. Even the surpassing theology of worship pervading John of Patmos' urgent warnings of the looming Great Tribulation¹⁷⁷ is typically her launching pad for her *legal* theme in general, or her *Sabbath* stress in particular, as in GC 436-438.

It is absolutely incredible, then, that God should reserve his *clearest*, most *specific* and *repetitious* references to a subject of *crucial* importance to humanity for earth's very last generation, through the pen of a prophet whose advocates themselves insist is strictly *non-canonical*!¹⁷⁸ Moreover, she herself likewise concedes she need *never* have bothered had her fellows been more diligent in their personal Bible study!¹⁷⁹

In brief, sacred Scripture can *only* be "understood" in such cardinal theology through Ellen White's *clarifying* writings, despite Seventh-day Adventism's insistence that it totally respects the paramount Protestant principle, *sola scriptura*!! Indeed, when pressured by resolute reformers to defend its Fundamental Beliefs under the regnal rubric, "let the *Scriptures* speak", its ultimate polemic mimics a slice of Swiss cheese, distinctive with holes like "*apparently*...", "We may (safely/rightly) *infer*...", "It would *appear*..." and "*evidently*..."!!

For another, while this unique mode of enlightenment may be *possible* in God's enigmatic dealings with fallen humanity, its *probability* certainly diminishes very markedly in the sober light of her rather limited facility for competent Bible study. For example, in her consuming zeal as a temperance reformer, she misses even the *prime* thrust of Jesus' wilderness temptations. And in warning about satanic, end-time delusions, she gives *the* meaning of 2 Thess. 2:9. Yet she sees no further than her *misreading* of its clear intent. This scarcely suggests that she and God's cardinal apostle Paul shared precisely the same inspiring Holy Spirit!

Worse, even that *possibility* diminishes very markedly in view of the serious *heresies* upon which Ellen White sometimes founds her principal thesis. Most serious is her denial of the unequivocal deity of Christ, requiring her to mutate *a specific exaltation initiative of his Father* to *a specific misrepresentation by Satan*!!

Almost as grave is her comprehensive failure to appreciate that Satan's expulsion from heaven occurred *after* and as a *direct result* of Christ's climactic triumph on the Cross. It follows that much of her extremely detailed portrayal of the crescent spread of heavenly, satanic rebellion before humanity's creation must be discounted as sheer *fantasy*, most probably gleaned from certain popular Christian myths of her day, rendered still more plausible by the "obvious" import of those classic proof-texts, Isa 14:12-14 and Eze. 28:12b-15.

Likewise, Ellen White bemuses even the modern, competent, *conservative* OT scholar with her reading the NT portrait of our arch enemy back into the OT data. If full enlightenment required fresh inspiration, the Holy Spirit has inspired no modern seer to insist that ultimate cognition has always inhered in that OT data.

Even the mutation thesis *per se* faces a few credibility hurdles in the magnification it applies to the data. For example, why do Ellen White's earlier accounts offer so detailed a psychological analysis of the fallen Satan, only to be eliminated later, after a rapid sweep across the high points virtually alone, expanded later? And in her final account, what point is served by her fine detail of his post-millennial preparations for war?

It is well past high time, therefore, that Ellen White's extremely diligent, utterly sincere apologists face the thoroughly unpleasant fact that they have quite exhausted the reserves of "plausible" explanations for those arresting differences between her initial account of her major motifs and its final form. On one hand, it is by filtering the Bible evidence *alone* that the phenomenon of mutation can even begin to be justified. On the other, the Achilles' heel of the entire thesis is the sheer *heresy* she has incorporated in her initial account. By far the most plausible explanation even of her prime theology, then, is that, by and large, it reflects little more than popular, second-hand, uninspired concepts, refined during her long life through wide reading.

The days have long gone when conscientious cult-busters may glibly condemn Seventh-day Adventism to the refuse tip hand in hand with such cousins as those so-called Jehovah's Witnesses. The issue of the former's Christian credentials is rather complex, however, as witness the surpassing support it can readily muster for largely unpopular doctrines like the seventh-day Sabbath and what most other Christians carelessly call soul-sleep.¹⁸⁰ Regardless, ironically, *its unique dogma is such precisely because sincere Bible students cannot find it in Holy Writ via the very hermeneutics on which virtually all conservative Christians rely!*

- ¹ 1 Jn. 4:1. But note the specific heresy defined in context. My comment at this point is quite general, with no hidden intent.
- ² Cf. the Berean Test, Acts 17:11. Ellen White cites 1 Thess. 5:19-21, AA 263, then comments: Paul "enjoined a careful discrimination in distinguishing the false from the true." Likewise, quoting Paul's passage, 2SM 79, then 1 Jn. 4:1, she asks, "This is the counsel of God; shall we heed it?"
- ³ Fundamental Belief no. 17 states: "her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth", stress added. This involves a striking elevation of her authority at Scripture's expense! Prior to 1980, her life and ministry merely displayed "the gift of the Spirit of prophecy", while God's Word was her Church's "all-sufficient revelation of His will and... the only unerring rule of faith and practice." Since that epochal year, it has been no more than "the infallible revelation of His will... the authoritative revealer of doctrines". The exclusiveness has been jettisoned.
- ⁴ Fundamental Belief no. 17 commences thus: "One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church [Seventh-day Adventism] and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White."
- ⁵ ISM 35, stress mine. Cf. 5T 691: "If the *Testimonies* speak not according to the word of God, reject them. Christ and Belial cannot be united." Yet rarely do devotees tolerate criticism let alone put her to any cogent test!
- ⁶ As in Ed, FE. ⁷ As in AH, CG, CT, MYP. ⁸ As in CD, CH, MH, MM Te.
- ⁹ As in AA, DA, GC, PP, PK. ¹⁰ Scattered. ¹¹ Pervasive.
- ¹² www.whiteestate.org/issues/themes1; www.whiteestate.org/issues/themes2.
- ¹³ The Ellen G. White Estate has kindly included his comprehensive *Messenger of the Lord: the Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Nampa: PPPA, 1998) on its web site, albeit without any pagination. Activate the relevant link @ www.whiteestate.org/books/books, then ch. 22. My quotation is @ his n. 6.
- ¹⁴ G. R. Knight, *Reading Ellen White* (Hagerstown: R&H, 1997), 48, stress added. ¹⁵ Chs. 22-31.
- ¹⁶ Surveyed in Dr. Douglass' ch. 40, # "Deepening Insights by a Maturing Prophet".
- ¹⁷ *Ellen G. White Signs of the Times Articles 1* (Mountain View: PPPA, 1974), 3f.
- ¹⁸ Cf. a similar, generally excellent, earlier study *infra*, 20f.
- ¹⁹ GC 492f. I do not accept all her sentiments as "plainly taught in Scripture". ²⁰ ST, Jan. 9, 1879.
- ²¹ PP 34f. Cf. GC 493f. ²² PP 35-38. Cf. GC 494f. ²³ GC 495f. Cf. PP 39.
- ²⁴ ST, Jan. 9, 1879. ²⁵ PP 39-42. Cf. GC 496-498. ²⁶ GC 498f. Cf. PP 42f.
- ²⁷ ST, Jan. 9, 1879.
- ²⁸ E.g., Letter 114, 1903, quoted in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary 7*, eds. F. D. Nichol *et al.* (Washington: R & H, 1957), 973. However, she also recognises that it was the crucifixion of Christ which fully and finally uprooted Satan from all of the affection and sympathy of the angels loyal to God, as @ my n. 40.
- ²⁹ ST, Jan. 9, 1879. ³⁰ PP 48f. ³¹ ST, Jan. 16, 1879.
- ³² PP 52-57. ³³ ST, Jan. 23, 1879. ³⁴ ST, Jan. 30, 1879.
- ³⁵ PP 63-69, selectively. ³⁶ PP 78f. ³⁷ PP 154f.
- ³⁸ DA 114-123, selectively. ³⁹ DA 125-130.
- ⁴⁰ DA 758-764, selectively.
- ⁴¹ See my internet essay, "One Furnace Too Many: Ellen White's Literary Self-sourcing in her Soteriology of the pre-Advent Times of Trouble – a Brief Appraisal", December, 2000.
- ⁴² GC 582-592, selectively. ⁴³ GC 638f. ⁴⁴ GC 662-678, selectively.
- ⁴⁵ E.g., Mormons look forward to inheriting their own planet finally, just like Adam.
- ⁴⁶ E.g., Christ promises peace, Jn. 14:27, but as a shield against tribulation, 16:33. Cf. Lu. 9:23f.
- ⁴⁷ "The Pioneers and the Prophet", www.whiteestate.org/issues/whitelie. Typical critics are Henry Brown, www.ex-sda.com/experience-henry-brown and Walter Rea, www.ellenwhite.org/rea/rea1; www.ellenwhite.org/rea/rea5. My Appendix E assesses this criticism briefly.
- ⁴⁸ E.g., in Canaanite mythology, Baal the storm god slays Yam, the ambitious, arrogant sea god, together with if not as Leviathan, the seven-headed serpent. This illumines the reference, Ps. 74:12-14, to Israel's escaping the Egyptians as Yahweh parts the sea and slays Leviathan the sea monster. Cf. Yahweh's end-time victory over the forces of evil, Isa. 27:1.
- ⁴⁹ E.g., in Lu. 16:19-30 Jesus makes transparent allusion to a Jewish dogma, *The Works of Josephus*, trans. W. Whiston (Hendrickson, 1987), 813, every detail of which few if any Christians would embrace.
- ⁵⁰ G. W. Grogan, "Isaiah", *The Expositor's Bible Commentary 6*, eds. F. E. Gaebelin *et al.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 108n. Cf. L. J. Coppes, "עֲזַרְיָה", *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, eds. R. L. Harris *et al.* (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 217.
- ⁵¹ R. H. Alexander, "Ezekiel", *EBC 6*, 882. ⁵² 2, 9. Cf. 6.
- ⁵³ J. B. Payne, "עֲזַרְיָה", *TWOT*, 974. ⁵⁴ Alexander, *art. cit.*, *loc cit.*
- ⁵⁵ R. D. Patterson, "עֲזַרְיָה", *TWOT*, 623bf.
- ⁵⁶ Alexander, *art. cit.*, 883.
- ⁵⁷ H. Bietenhard, "διάβολος", *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology 3*, ed. C. Brown (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 468.
- ⁵⁸ Ps. 38:20 [Heb. text, 21]; 71:13; 109:4, 20, 29; Zech. 3:1.
- ⁵⁹ Nu. 22:22, 32; 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22 [23]; 1 Ki. 5:4 [18]; 11:14, 23, 25; 1 Chr. 21:1; Job 1:6, 7 [bis], 8, 9, 12 [bis]; 2:1, 2 [bis], 3, 4, 6, 7; Ps. 109:6; Zech. 3:1, 2 [bis].
- ⁶⁰ Cf. 2 Sam. 19:22. ⁶¹ Cf. 11:23, 25.
- ⁶² Cf. Ps. 109:6.
- ⁶³ E.g., does Yahweh really harden Pharaoh's heart, Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17, or did the monarch drag the Exodus to its fearful limit himself, 8:15, 32; 9:34? Cf. Deut. 2:30; Josh. 11:20; Isa. 63:17; Ro. 9:18; 11:7, 25. Likewise, the metaphor of blindness and/or deafness, as in Deut. 29:4; Isa. 6:9f.; 29:10; Mt. 13:11-17; Lu. 8:10; Ro. 11:8.
- ⁶⁴ Nu. 22:22, 32; 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22 [23]; 1 Ki. 5:4 [18]; 11:14, 23, 25; Ps. 109:6.
- ⁶⁵ K. L. Barker, "Zechariah", *EBC 7*, eds. F. E. Gaebelin *et al.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 623-627.
- ⁶⁶ Cf. 20:2.
- ⁶⁷ E.g., long before I concluded that, in helping Seventh-day Adventism to face the odious truth about its sectarian dogma, I had no option but public exposure, I approached a range of leaders privately. The closest I came to dialogue was with one scholar, trusted by its leaders, who quickly rejected me as a liberal scholar! I protested that I not only agreed with all but a detail or two of his own published hermeneutics, but had practised them for years, but I received no response, let alone an apology for one of the worst charges against a Christian, the expert abuse of Holy Writ, James 3:1. This ignorant, highly arrogant Church only has itself to blame for being besieged by determined critics.
- ⁶⁸ E.g., Jesus' self-title, *Son of man*, used more than 80 times, as in Mt. 8:20, has often been attributed to Dan. 7:13f., or the pseudepigraphic 1 En. 37:1. This is well surveyed by D. A. Carson, "Matthew", *EBC 8*, eds. F. E. Gaebelin *et al.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 209-213.
- ⁶⁹ Cf. 9; Ro. 16:25f.; Col. 1:25-27; 1 Pet. 1:10-12.
- ⁷⁰ 1 Pet. 5:8, NASB.
- ⁷¹ Mt. 4:1, 5, 8, 11; 13:39; 25:41; Lu. 4:2, 3, 5, 6 [NASB], 13; 8:12; Jn. 8:44; 13:2; Acts 10:38; 13:10; Eph. 4:27; 6:11; 1 Tim. 3:6, 7; 2 Tim. 2:26; Heb. 2:14; James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8; 1 Jn. 3:8 [ter], 10; Jude 9; Rev. 2:10; 12:9, 12; 20:2, 10. Cf. διάβολος behind *slanderer*, 1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 2:3.
- ⁷² Mt. 13:39; Lu. 10:19.
- ⁷³ Mt. 5:37; 6:13; 13:19, 38; Jn. 17:15; Eph. 6:16; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Jn. 2:13, 14; 3:12; 5:18, 19.
- ⁷⁴ Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11. Cf. "ruler of the kingdom of the air", Eph. 2:2, and "prince of demons", Mt. 9:34; 12:24; Mk. 3:22; Lu. 11:15, the latter identified as Satan since Christ substitutes the latter name for *Beelzebub*, Mt. 12:26f. I am no more concerned here with the latter's derivation than that of *Belial*, employed uniquely in passing by Paul in 2 Cor. 6:15.
- ⁷⁵ Mt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5.
- ⁷⁶ Mt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7, 9.
- ⁷⁷ Mt. 4:24; 7:22; 8:16, 28-33; 9:32-34; 10:8; 11:18; 12:22-28; 15:22; 17:18; Mk. 1:32-34, 39; 3:15, 22; 5:24-28; 6:13; 7:25-30; 9:38; Lu. 4:33-36, 41; 7:33; 8:2, 27-39; 9:1, 38-42, 49; 10:17; 11:14-20; 13:32; Jn. 7:20; 8:48-52; 10:20f.; 1 Cor. 10:20f.; 1 Tim. 4:1; James 2:19; Rev. 9:20; 16:13f.; 18:2. (Evil) spirit(s) feature alone in Mt. 10:1; 12:43-45; Mk. 1:23-27; 3:11, 30; 6:7; 9:25-27; Lu. 6:18; 7:21; 10:20; 11:24-26; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12-16; 1 Pet. 3:19f.; 1 Jn. 4:1.

- ⁷⁸ Mt. 13:19; Mk. 4:15; Lu. 8:12. Cf. 1 Thess. 2:18.
- ⁸¹ James 4:7.
- ⁸³ Eph. 6:10-17. Cf. Jn. 17:15; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Pet. 5:9; 1 Jn. 5:18.
- ⁸⁶ Lu. 13:16; Acts 10:38. Bedevilment may be listed here. See my n. 77.
- ⁸⁹ Mt. 13:38; Jn. 8:44a; Acts 13:10; 1 Jn. 3:10. Cf. Eph. 2:3; NASB.
- ⁹² Eph. 2:2-4. Note "by *nature*". Cf. 2 Tim. 2:26.
- ⁹³ Jn. 1:13; 3:3-8; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23; 1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18.
- ⁹⁴ Lu. 20:36; Jn. 1:12; Ro. 8:14-17; 9:26; Gal. 3:26; 4:6f.; Phil. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:1f., 10; 5:2.
- ⁹⁵ Ro. 6:19; 7:18, 25; 13:14; Gal. 5:13, 16-21; 6:8; Eph. 2:13; 2 Pet. 2:18.
- ⁹⁶ Eph. 1:13f.
- ⁹⁷ Fallen human nature, which I treat @ nn. 158-162, is useless in one on whom I depend to escape the quagmire! But positively, no other baby has ever justified the description "'the *holy* one'", Lu. 1:35. And although "he was *like* his brothers in every way," Heb. 2:17, the Greek can express equality, 1:3, not just proximity, when it wishes. The hurdle for Ellen White's devotees is even higher than most. For she had Jesus standing in humanity's stead after 4,000 years of progressive degeneracy, as in DA 117. Yet what about sinners with half as much again? Indeed, if this thesis is cogent, he can only benefit the drug addict, for example, if he cringes in withdrawal trauma with him in the gutter, as it were, between fixes. Likewise mental and psychological deformities. Even the fact that Christ, in his perfect manhood, cannot have experienced the full ebb and flow of female hormones, let alone their consequences, sounds the death knell of this complete naïve notion.
- ⁹⁸ R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1971), 50-53.
- ⁹⁹ Con 12. Cf. 15f., 33.
- ¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 50f., 56-84.
- ¹⁰³ E.g., SL 32f. Indeed, to peruse just a single section of CDF, "coffee drinking is a sin," 425. For its use is "ruinous to the physical, mental and moral powers," 421. Those who indulge "cannot appreciate the value of spiritual things"; 425 — so much, in fact, that they "cannot worship God when deprived of the accustomed indulgence", 426! Of course one may over-indulge. Yet, as she fleetingly admits, 2SM 302f., caffeine has medicinal value. E.g., I suffered headaches for decades. When my medico tested me for migraine with vascular constrictive ergotamine tartrate, the cure was as instant as "miraculous"! Its usual prescription is as a capsule with 100 mg of caffeine citrate, as in two cups of coffee, to enhance the effect. Moreover, since caffeine itself is vascular constrictive, its regular use between medication now holds my hereditary curse almost wholly at bay, without any demonstrable detriment even to my spirituality. These days, even in the public press, many a Seventh-day Adventist medico happily recommends its moderate use to counter a surprisingly broad sweep of potential medical problems.
- ¹⁰⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 8:8.
- ¹⁰⁵ Here the trauma of the Garden of Gethsemane is most likely in view, even though John does not mention it. For three times there Jesus faced the great, final hurdle of complete submission to his Father's will concerning his looming Passion, Mt. 26:36-44.
- ¹⁰⁶ Even Seventh-day Adventist historicism inserts some 500 years from Calvary to the woman's trauma.
- ¹⁰⁷ Bound angels are familiar, in contrast, in the Jewish apocalyptic literature, as in 1 En. 21.
- ¹⁰⁸ See my n. 41.
- ¹⁰⁹ Cf. 12:17.
- ¹¹⁰ E.g., J. A. Gladson, *A Theologian's Journey from Seventh-day Adventism to Mainstream Christianity* (Glendale: LAM, 2000), 361-363.
- ¹¹¹ Unspecified doctrine, 3:3, 8; endurance, 3:10; John's prophecy, 1:3; 22:7, 9.
- ¹¹² The analysed evidence is accessible in L. Morris, *The Book of Revelation: an Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: IVP, 1987²), 27-35.
- ¹¹³ As God's heavenly temple was opened, Rev. 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 termed *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 is "the tabernacle, the Tent of the Testimony," Nu. 9:15. More typically and tersely, the first 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 abides, 25:22, in the Holy of Holies, 26:33f. Besides *the ark of the covenant*, the focus of the sanctuary is frequently termed *the ark of the Testimony*, as in 25:22; 26:33f.; 30:6, 26. The Decalogue itself is specifically designated *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 Yahweh's covenant, Ex. 34:27f., was placed within his ark, as in Ex. 25:16, 21; 40:20.
- ¹¹⁴ See my web essays, Nov. 2000: "Seventh-day Adventism's Upstart Doctrine of Determinism in the Books of Daniel and Revelation — a Selective Appraisal", 6, 8-11; "Seventh-day Adventism's Dogma of an Investigative Judgment through Ellen White's Eyes — a Brief Evaluation", 24-26.
- ¹¹⁵ See my Appendix A.
- ¹¹⁶ Above all, here the exegete must come to temporal terms with the clarity and salience of John's triumphal passage, Rev. 7:9-17.
- ¹¹⁷ On one hand, its final recipients are death and Hades themselves, 14. This implies that it is symbolic, for death and Hades are paltry fuel for literal fire! On the other, the meticulous exegete is restrained by the events of 7:10, which also terminate the millennium. A literal devil leads literal nations to attack a literal city. Surely, then, their nemesis is just as literal: "fire fell from heaven and devoured them", 9. This fire denotes the symbolic lake on at least two counts. First, it is quite inconceivable that the wicked be punished in two disparate fiery cataclysms as the millennium terminates. Secondly, the fire denotes total annihilation, even though long after the Parousia Babylon's smoke ascends for ever, 19:3. John utilises this temporal term precisely like his source, Isa. 34:10: Edom's smoke rises forever, yet it is desolate. A long depiction of the desolation follows, 11:15. This makes scant sense if the punitive inferno, 9, really burns for ever. The lake speaks likewise, though more subtly. Sinners have their place there, 21:8, outside New Jerusalem, 22:15! The obscene idea of eternal torment in hell, let alone right outside the New Jerusalem on the new earth, is completely excluded. John carefully labels the metaphor the second death, which is no life in any form whatever. Therefore, the *reality* of the igneous lake is annihilation by literal fire; its *symbolism* is the permanence of this nemesis.
- ¹¹⁸ E.g., Jn. 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2.
- ¹¹⁹ E.g., Jn. 3:16-21; Ro. 2:4b; 8:35-39; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 12:25; 1 Jn. 4:7-12, 16-19; Jude 21; Rev. 22:17. Cf. my n. 124. My sincere Calvinist brothers and sisters in Christ remind me that Holy Writ often bespeaks predestination and God's sovereign will. Yet what of the patent import of the following assurances? Jesus' sacrifice can counter "the sins of the *whole* world", 1 Jn. 2:2. He died for *everyone*, not just those accepting his incomparable gift: "one died for *all*... therefore *all* died", 2 Cor. 5:14. God "wants *all* men to be saved", 1 Tim. 2:4. In fact, "He is patient... not wanting *anyone* to perish, but *everyone* to come to repentance", 2 Pet. 3:9.
- ¹²⁰ E.g., Gen. 1:26f.; 5:1f.; Ps. 8:3f.; Heb. 2:6-8.
- ¹²¹ E.g., Ro. 1:20-32.
- ¹²² See my n. 95. However, cf. my n. 129.
- ¹²³ E.g., in the huge, forensic complex, among others, of the Greek verb δικαιοῦν (*dikaion*): Mt. 5:6, 10; 6:33; 13:43, 49; 25:37, 46; Lu. 14:14; 18:14; Acts 10:34f.; 24:15; Ro. 1:17; 3:10, 21-26, 30; 4:5f., 11, 23-25; 5:1, 9, 17-19, 21; 6:13, 16, 18-20; 8:30, 33; 9:30; 10:10; 14:17; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:21; 6:14; Gal. 3:8; Eph. 4:24; 5:9; 6:14; Phil. 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22; 3:16; Tit. 2:12; 3:7; Heb. 12:11; James 1:20; 3:18; 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:12; 4:18; 1 Jn. 1:9; 2:29; 3:7; Rev. 22:11. For those closely associated with law see *supra*, 17.
- ¹²⁴ E.g., Lu. 6:36; 18:13; Ro. 11:30-32; 12:1; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 2:4f.; 1 Tim. 1:13; Tit. 3:4f.; Heb. 2:17; 4:16; James 5:11; 1 Pet. 1:3; 2:10. Here may be added kindness, as in Acts 14:17; Ro. 2:4; Eph. 2:7; Tit. 3:4, and of course, love, as in my n. 119.
- ¹²⁵ Indeed, one "all-singing, all-dancing" anti-Seventh-day Adventist web site delights in labelling most others according to their sponsors' Sabbatarian stance, suggesting prayer for those deluded in this regard. Such arrogance is a blight on the entire debate.
- ¹²⁶ E.g., Acts 13:39; Ro. 3:20f., 27f.; Gal. 2:16; 3:11; 5:4. Cf. Ro. 4:2-8; 9:32; Eph. 2:8f.
- ¹²⁷ E.g., Acts 11:13; 15:1-5; Gal. 2:12; 5:24; 6:12-15; Eph. 2:11; Tit. 1:10.
- ¹²⁸ *A Theology of the New Testament* (London: Lutterworth, 1974), 495. This towering, conservative scholar was no Sabbatarian. Yet his ch. 35, launched by this lament, will enlighten anyone holding that theologians are all but unanimous that the gospel annulled God's moral law. Cf. @ my n. 133 and *Five Views on Law and Gospel*, ed. W. G. Strickland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).
- ¹²⁹ Especially over the human nature of Christ incarnate. A helpful essay which both samples the data on both sides of the hoary, too often destructive, debate and rises above it, seeking integration, is N. R. Gulley, "Behold the Man", *Adventist Review*, June 30, 1983. Its corollary is the substance of salvation, with Wesley and Luther both adding many bold theological strokes to the hopeless confusion of her corpus.

- ¹³⁰ Paul certainly means the seventh day here. For *festive, new moon, Sabbath*, denoting *yearly, monthly and weekly* religious observance, is familiar in the OT, as in 2 Chr. 8:13; 31:3; Neh. 10:33. Yet God's Sabbath can evoke his scorn, even in the OT, through apostasy: "Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear *your* evil assemblies. *Your* New Moon festivals and *your* appointed feasts my soul hates", Isa. 1:13f. Cf. Paul blasting an influx of *pagan* elements! Yet his stress on shadow/body poses the question: Can a purely *distorted* Sabbath be embodied in Christ?
- ¹³¹ See @ my n. 113.
- ¹³² He points here to earth's pristine history just as much as in Mt. 19:4-6. Indeed, the fact that the noun *man* is articular in the Greek in the former and anarthrous in the latter points an able exegete firmly to Adam as *the* man for whom the Sabbath was made, especially in view of Christ's patent inference that *the* man was he who, like the Sabbath, was made! And Adam was no mere Jew! Strikingly too, late in the first Christian century, John's Gospel treats the *Jewish* Passover, 2:13; 6:4; 11:55, the *Jewish* Feast of Tabernacles, 7:2, and even the *Jewish* Preparation day, 19:42. Yet in *no* reference to the seventh-day Sabbath, 5:9-18; 7:22f.; 9:14-16; 19:31, does he see *any* nationalistic import in it. See Appendix B. Cf. my n. 128.
- ¹³⁴ E.g., God's Second Commandment, Ex. 20:3, is patently implicit in Ex. 12:12; 18:11, and even in Gen. 35:1-5, all of which render the Hebrew noun אֱלֹהִים (*'elohim*) as *gods*. And God's Sixth Commandment, Ex. 20:13, is clearly implicit in Gen. 4:8-10. Moreover, the sequence of nouns in Gen. 26:5 invites *very* close comparison with Neh. 9:13, *with specific reference to Sinai*. Indeed, these verses share two identical nouns and a pair of cognates. Likewise, three of them match those of Deut. 11:1. Moreover, it is striking that Moses first employs all four nouns in Gen. 26:5. His message may be implicit and subtle. But certainly, it is unmistakably transparent to the attentive OT exegete nonetheless.
- ¹³⁵ Dan. 7:25 cannot refer to the papacy, even if Roman Catholicism "revised" the Decalogue. For one thing, the seer speaks only of *intent*, not *accomplishment*. If it be argued that divine law cannot really be changed, this is hardly in Daniel's mind in view of the *actual* devastation of the cultus he forecasts in 8:11-14! For another, Ellen White typifies her Church's selectivity with the data, as in GC 446, in all but ignoring the expression *set times* [singular Aram. noun, ܕܝܢܐ (*z'man*)], the first-listed object in the tyrant's focus. This denotes *predetermined* time, either a *period*, as in 2:16; 7:12, or an *instant*, as in 6:10, 13; 7:22. Where, dear historicist, is your confident interpretation of this salient detail? Nor may you ever have insisted that *laws* [singular Aram. noun ܕܘܪܐ (*dāt*)] means *Decalogue* had you noted its *secular* use in 2:13, 15; 6:8, 12, 15, in contrast to its single nuance of divine edict in 6:5. Whatever, the concrete barrier to your dogma is this. *The Book of Daniel was intended for replete fulfillment by Jesus' day*, not ours or even the Dark Ages! See my "Investigative Judgment", 1722, or my "Upstart Doctrine", 6-8.
- ¹³⁶ Jub. 17:15-18:13. See my Appendix C.
- ¹³⁷ A survey of the problem of assessing Ellen White's credentials is in progress. ¹³⁸ www.whiteestate.org/issues/rev-insp @ n. 209.
- ¹³⁹ See www.whiteestate.org/issues/rev-insp @ n. 204.
- ¹⁴⁰ See www.whiteestate.org/issues/faq-unus, # Miscellaneous Statements: Extra-Biblical Descriptions.
- ¹⁴¹ See www.whiteestate.org/books/mol/Chapt36, # Additional Details to the Biblical Story.
- ¹⁴² The fine details are daunting. But the ground is traversed adequately for serious lay students by R. P. Martin, *New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students 1* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 119-160.
- ¹⁴³ Hence the dismay of KJV devotees over modern versions, and the utter nonsense sometimes voiced in protest. A good case is Mk. 16:9-20, clearly marked in most modern NTs as suspect, and often as one of some five options! See the concise notes in NEB or NRSV.
- ¹⁴⁴ E.g., Jn. 7:53-8:11.
- ¹⁴⁵ E.g., in the Ellen White corpus: Ev 256; FE 126; GC 204f., 448, 595; 1SM 416.
- ¹⁴⁶ In August, 1980, many of Seventh-day Adventism's world-wide executives and scholars attended the Glacier View Colloquium in Colorado to assess the 1,000-page Position Paper of Dr. Ford, a renowned teacher and preacher, after suspicions that he was heretical had widened and deepened. For a superb coverage, including early details of his odious dismissal, see *Spectrum*, 11/2 (November, 1980).
- ¹⁴⁷ Eds. R. Dederan *et al.* (Hagerstown: R & H, 2000).
- ¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, x.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 969-1009. ¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, xi. ¹⁵¹ My Appendix F.
- ¹⁵² E.g., Jn. 1:17; Heb. 1:1f.; Jude 3. Cf. @ my n. 69.
- ¹⁵³ This challenges most concepts of church. E.g., the notion of a so-called church universal is a convenient cop-out for the obscenity of deep divisions between Christians, which directly counters Christ's express wish, Jn. 17:20-23!
- ¹⁵⁴ @ www.Ellen-White.com, access link, **A Closer Look at: "Ellen White Contradicts The Bible Over 50 Times"**, # 2.
- ¹⁵⁵ Uniquely, at times OT Hebrew transforms a verb's "tense" with a *waw* (ו) prefix and minor modifications.
- ¹⁵⁶ See Appendix D. ¹⁵⁷ See my n. 129.
- ¹⁵⁸ E.g., Ps. 51:5; 58:3. See my n. 97 for humanity's common depravity. ¹⁵⁹ E.g., 1 Tim. 1:13.
- ¹⁶⁰ At least once, Con 66f., Ellen White admits that Christ overcame Satan's temptations *only* with divine aid.
- ¹⁶¹ 1 Cor. 15:50-55. Cf. Phil. 3:21. This is surely implicit, too, in Ro. 8:18-27.
- ¹⁶² Even Ellen White warned: "Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children", Ed 18. Cf. CT 365; DA 311. If it is impossible for sinful mankind fully to *contemplate* the divine moral objective, we certainly cannot fully *practise* it!
- ¹⁶³ See my n. 41. ¹⁶⁴ Con 91f.
- ¹⁶⁵ Accusative case. The idiom is quite unknown in English.
- ¹⁶⁶ The apologists @ www.Ellen-White.com, link, **A Closer Look at: "Ellen White Contradicts The Bible Over 50 Times"**, # 1, claim that the seeming contradiction involves "our finite minds trying to grasp how a God who knows the future ever 'plans' anything and when? [*sic*] After all, no matter what He does, He already knew He was going to do it, so when did He really decide to do anything?" But this is a red herring. Divine revelation is meant to *enlighten*, not *confuse*, mankind. And Ellen White's account in ST @ my n. 34 reads in one solitary way: Christ *initiated* a long dialogue with his Father, *after mankind's fall*, and his *offer* to save our race was finally *accepted*. Cf. EW 149-151.
- ¹⁶⁷ "The Theology of Ellen White: the Great Controversy Story", *Adventist Review*, December 31, 1981, 12f.
- ¹⁶⁸ A. Thompson, "Ellen White's Pilgrimage to Golgotha", *Adventist Review*, December 24, 1981, 8.
- ¹⁶⁹ H. E. Douglass @ www.whiteestate.org/books/mol/Chapt34, link **rule six**.
- ¹⁷⁰ *Idem* @ www.whiteestate.org/books/mol/Chapt40, link, **Deepening Insights by a Maturing Prophet**. He adds @ www.whiteestate.org/books/mol/Appendix%20G, quoting 3SM 56: "Young Ellen, it seems, did not fully understand, at first, all the implications of her earliest visions. She had to work with the mindset of her time as well as the mental equipment of a teenager. She freely admitted that the first vision dramatically reversed her understanding of what happened in 1844. Later, she reflected on this phenomenon of not always understanding her own visions as soon as she received them: 'Often representations are given me which at first I do not understand, but after a time they are made plain by a repeated presentation of those things that I did not at first comprehend, and in ways that make their meaning clear and unmistakable.'" However, it is hardly credible that a mere passing paragraph, seemingly devoid of all context, in a private letter, December 20, 1904, to a Sr. Simpson, should supply a hermeneutic applicable to her prophetic gift *in toto*, especially when there is no indication that this was a general let alone a grave problem. Indeed, one searches Ellen White's own account of her initial Great Controversy vision, March 14, 1858, in LS 162f. quite in vain for any concern over comprehension. This dearth is all the more highlighted by her preoccupation with the satanic attack which gravely threatened her pressing task of publishing her vision. Regardless, even if this belated detail bespeaks general truth, such a lack of comprehension must be viewed in proper perspective as mere ripples of uncertainty, as it were, upon the surface of water steadily rising with the tide of maturity and experience, according to the model of inspiration championed by Thompson @ my n. 168.
- ¹⁷¹ E.g., Isa. 1:3; 5:13; 6:9f.; 30:9-11; 42:24f.; 48:8; 56:10f.; Jer. 4:22; 5:21; 9:12; 26:3-5; Eze. 12:2f.
- ¹⁷² E.g., Isa. 11:9; 29:18, 24; Jer 23:20; 24:7; Hab. 2:14. ¹⁷³ PP 37f. ¹⁷⁴ GC vi.
- ¹⁷⁵ See my n. 152.
- ¹⁷⁶ E.g., the person and work of each member of Deity, the nature and purpose of his church, earth's restoration to its eternal, edenic purity.
- ¹⁷⁷ Rev. 13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:9-11; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4.
- ¹⁷⁸ Well covered @ www.whiteestate.org/issues/issues, links under # **How Do Ellen G. White's Writings Relate to the Bible? The Authority of Ellen G. White's Writings**.
- ¹⁷⁹ E.g., LS 198, repeated in 2T 605; 5T 665.
- ¹⁸⁰ Seventh-day Adventists deny that mankind has a distinct soul/spirit. So this expression imposes the critic's own caricatured stance on them.

APPENDIX A

The Seal of God in the Book of Revelation

In the first of two interludes dissecting John of Patmos' seal septet,¹ he describes the sealing of the enigmatic 144,000, Rev. 7:1-8. This has the most profound impact on Seventh-day Adventism's somewhat unique eschatology. I will permit Ellen White herself to provide most of the details, beginning with the import of the latter passage. All of heaven, not just Seventh-day Adventism, it seems, views its details with some alarm:

... Jesus... gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised His hands, and with a voice of deep pity cried, "My blood, Father, My blood, My blood, My blood!" Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels..., and crying with a loud voice, "Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold! until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads."

I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. He said... that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on the earth; that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go; but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the Father and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to ... bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads.²

Why such surpassing concern? These four winds symbolise "earthquake, tempest, and political strife"³ And these "fierce winds of human passion" will burst upon humanity as the climactic Time of Trouble,⁴ to threaten the very lives of all God's faithful followers, even though mankind's probation has already closed:

... When this time of trouble comes, every case is decided; there is no longer probation... The seal of the living God is upon His people. This small remnant, unable to defend themselves in the deadly conflict with the powers of earth... make God their defense. The decree has been passed by the highest earthly authority that they shall worship the beast and receive his mark under pain of persecution and death...⁵

In answering the fundamental question, What is this all-important seal of God, Ellen White fixes one eye upon Eze. 9, with its account of the marking of God's faithful followers in a time of most fearful apostasy:

... At the time when the danger and depression of the church are greatest, the little company who are standing in the light will be sighing and crying for the abominations that are done in the land. But more especially will their prayers arise in behalf of the church because its members are doing after the manner of the world.

... Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. ... They mourn... to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church...

The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. The Lord commissions His messengers...: [Eze. 9:5f. quoted]⁶

Simply stated, Ellen White interprets John's *seal* – σφραγίς (*sphragis*) – through Ezekiel's *mark* – תָּו (tāw). It is here, too, that her stress upon perfectionism – **no Mediator in the Time of Trouble!!** – fits very neatly indeed,⁷ though this curious notion is quite foreign to Holy Writ,⁸ not just to any of its inputs to the seal motif. However, Ellen White fixes her other eye even more firmly upon Moses' *sign* – אֹת (ôṭ), as in Ex. 31:13, 17.⁹

The seal of God, the... sign of His authority, is found in the fourth commandment. This is the only precept of the Decalogue that points to God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth... Throughout the Scriptures the fact of God's creative power is cited as proof that He is above all heathen deities.

The Sabbath... was instituted to commemorate the work of creation, thus to keep the minds of men ever directed to the true and living God... The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God. It points to God as the Creator, and is the sign of His rightful authority over the beings He has made.¹⁰

This is scarcely surprising, given her conviction that the final battle for human loyalty will focus upon the seventh-day Sabbath.¹¹ It is striking, then, that she claimed that the sealing was already in progress in her day!¹² Yet she stops short, apparently, of claiming that its beneficiaries had no more need of Christ's blood!

In rejecting such sectarian theology, especially its emphasis upon the Sabbath, even Ellen White's critics of completely indubious integrity speak with one succinct voice on *both* sides of the Sabbatarian debate: "the Bible interprets the 'seal of God' as the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30), not the Sabbath."¹³ Sadly, however, in this stance *both* sides of this debate miss the point of John's unique sealing largely if not totally.

Above all, Ellen White seems quite oblivious of the strictures of semantic range. Assuming pending verification that here John's literary source is Eze. 9, the exegete who probes his *sphragis* may certainly gaze through Ezekiel's tāw to Moses' ôṭ, at least in Ex. 12:13. For the blood provided *precisely* the same protection against Yahweh's destroyer of the Egyptian firstborn, 23, and his avengers in Eze. 9:17. However, Ellen

White is completely mistaken to place heavy emphasis on her conclusion that not one single drop of martyr blood will be shed during the Time of trouble,¹⁴ although the decisive details cannot be repeated here.

Regardless, there is no warrant whatever to apply *any* other sense of *ôt*, foreign to this isolated reference, to *sphragis*.¹⁵ In fact, Ellen White's linking the Sabbath to God's seal is *theology without one single syllable of biblical support*. For she argues her case in her **English** lexis, not those of the Semitic-Greek Scriptures. However the former may define *seal*, the latter reveals no obvious nexus between *ôt* and *sphragis* or *tāw*.¹⁶

What, though, of the range of related nuances of *ôt*, beginning with its chief employment, at the Exodus?

The... intention of a sign is not to terrify the onlooker, but to mediate an understanding or to motivate a kind of behavior. When Moses works signs at God's command (Ex. 3:12; 4:8, 9, 28, 30), they serve to demonstrate his legitimacy to the people ... as one sent from God, and also guarantee the reliability of the message with which he is sent to the Israelites. Similarly, the signs which God worked in Egypt were not designed primarily to terrify Pharaoh..., but to cause him to acknowledge "that I am Yahweh" (Ex. 7:3, cf. v. 5), or "that I, Yahweh, rule in the midst of the land" (Ex. 8:19[23], cf. v. 18 [22]). The signs which God worked in connection with the exodus are meant to bring about the same result among the Israelites: the recognition and acknowledgment of Yahweh as the only God (on Dt. 4:34, cf. v. 35; cf. Ex. 10:2). The accusation that Israel has no mind to understand, no eyes to see, and no ears to hear, in spite of having experienced these signs (Dt. 29:2[3], cf. v. 3[4]), grows out of this concept. Behind this idea lies the expectation... that they will arouse faith when they are recognized (Nu. 14:11), and promote readiness to hearken to Yahweh's voice (14:22), to take his words seriously (Jer. 44:29), to recognize the work of God in the fate of idolaters (Ezk. 14:8), and to acknowledge the intervention of God on behalf of his own (Ps. 86:17).¹⁷

Amongst others, this semantic range also includes signs to maintain faith and to give it expression, as in Ex. 13:9, 16, and to bring Yahweh's various covenants to receptive minds: with his creation following Noah's Flood, Gen. 9:12f., 17; with Abraham, 17:11; and with Israel, Ex. 31:13, 17. However, what counts in this current survey is that none of this is even remotely in view, even implicitly, in either Eze. 9 or Rev. 7. Therefore, *all* such nuances must be ignored entirely in seeking to understand John of Patmos' employment of *sphragis*.

Likewise, Ellen White's critics err in inferring a nexus between John's *sphragis* in Rev. 7 and Paul's cognate verb σφραγίζεω (*sphragizein*) in 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30. For one thing, that would involve the sheer **anathema** of a mere angel, Rev. 7:2f., mediating God's Holy Spirit to his converts! For another, the *relevant sealings are completely distinct*. Paul's is *personal*, experienced at a *different* time by *each* saint at *conversion*. John's is *corporate*, experienced by *all* converts *simultaneously*, in a *single* end-time moment. In fact, nowhere does John mention the Spirit's indwelling a convert! Almost without exception,¹⁸ his rôle in John's book is prophetic revelation, 19:10. Four times over, when John is in vision, it is *in the Spirit*.¹⁹ And each time Jesus addresses some individual church, the Spirit is equally counselling.²⁰ Only in 22:17 is he engaged in sharing the gospel invitation. Even his being despatched throughout our whole planet, 5:6,²¹ is the precise foil of the demonic spirits, fresh from the mouthes of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, roaming the whole earth working the miraculous signs, 16:13f., that are the great hallmark of the false prophet, 19:20.

In brief, Ellen White is quite correct that the seal of God prefaces the Great Tribulation,²² despite her perfectionist heresy. And John's literary source is certainly Eze. 9, with both *tāw* and *sphragis* connoting possession and protection. The latter, sometimes through its cognate verb *sphragizein*, can mimic *ôt*, as in Jn. 3:33; 6:27; 1 Cor. 9:2.²³ But God's Holy Spirit is by no means a mere mark upon his convert! Indeed, it must be asked, In precisely what sense can any convert, *already filled with God's Spirit*, receive him in Rev. 7?²⁴

¹ The other is the remainder of the ch., 947.

⁴ GC 614.

⁷ Generally, as in EW 67; 5T 214, 215f. Specifically, as in EW 48, 279-281; GC 613f.

⁹ Typical equatings of *sphragis* and *ôt* include Letter 77, 1899 (*SDABC* 7, 969a), RH, 23/4/1901 (*ibid.*, 980bf.).

¹⁰ ST, November 1, 1899. Cf. GC 452; PP 307.

¹² E.g., Letter 207, 1899 (*SDABC* 7, 982a); EW 44, 58; 1SM 66; 2SM 263.

¹³ D. Anderson @ www.ellenwhite.org/faq. Cf. *idem* @ www.ellenwhite.org/egw23; S. Cleveland, *White Washed: Uncovering the Myths of Ellen G. White* (Glendale: LAM, 2000), 40; D. Ratzlaff, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventist Truth* (Glendale: LAM, 2000), 15.

¹⁴ See my internet essay, "Not One Drop of Blood in the Time of Trouble? Ellen White's Catastrophic Time Bomb Awaiting her Hapless Devotees", December, 2000, 3, 10. Even the use of *ôt* in Gen. 4:15 is inconclusive, as NASB carefully notes, and of no assistance to her case.

¹⁵ A simple illustration may assist. You *cannot* comprehend my intent with the noun *air* until I set it in context. It means one thing in "breath of fresh air", another in "air of mystery", and yet another in "pretty Irish air [melody]".

¹⁶ Confirmed by convenient lists of synonyms, as *ad loc.*, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, five vols., eds. W. A. VanGemeren *et al.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), and any OT preface in replete NT dictionaries, etc., as *ad loc.*, *NIDNTT*, three vols.

¹⁷ F. J. Helfmeyer, "אֹתוֹ", *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 1, eds. G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 171.

¹⁸ John uses the noun πνεῦμα (*pneuma*) 24 times, 19 of God's Holy Spirit, albeit symbolically at times. To the following survey I need only add that the rôle of the Holy Spirit in 1:4, in a trinitarian context, is unclear. However, we are invited to infer the same prophetic rôle as in 5:6, with the suggestion, here and in 3:1, of Jesus' personal direction. See further, my n. 20 *infra*, about the import of his symbolic eyes in 5:6.

¹⁹ 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10.

²⁰ 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22. This may also be implicit in the enigmatic 3:1.

²¹ Note the eyes, and cf. Zech. 4:10b in context. Interestingly, John borrows the latter's symbolism again in 11:4 in hinting at the source of prophetic inspiration of God's two, rather enigmatic, witnesses.

²² D. F. Neufeld, ed., "SEAL OF GOD", *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington: R & H, 1976²), 1305bf., argues a passable case with the initial, relevant biblical data. The actual author is not designated, as customary in this reference.

²³ Cf. Ro. 4:11.

²⁴ Although the details cannot be entered into here – but see my n. 41, main essay – this end-time seal is also enigmatic in that, disastrously for the credibility of prime Ellen White eschatology, the persecuted saints can forsake their faith completely in the Time of Trouble.

² EW 38.

³ TM 444.

⁵ 5T 213.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 209-211.

⁸ See my n. 23, *infra*.

¹¹ See @ nn. 42f. of my main essay.

APPENDIX B

The Apostle Paul and God's Law

These citations sample Essay II, # 8 in C. E. B. Cranfield's fine commentary, *The Epistle to The Romans*, Vol. II (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 845-862. All stress is original. My few touches are specifically (xxx).

For Paul, *the law is God's law...* Being God's law, it is 'spiritual' (7.14), 'holy', 'righteous' and 'good' (7.12...)... All this the law not only was originally but also continues to be, even when it is misused and dishonoured by men (as is implied by the contexts of the statements in 7.12 and 14)... As the revelation of God's will, the law has for its true and proper purpose 'life' (7.10) for men, whatever other consequences it may have as it is met by human sin... And it is consonant with his conviction that the law is God's, that throughout his epistles he treats the OT as a whole with the greatest respect as having divine authority.

... *the law makes sin manifest as sin, as disobedience to God.* According to 5.13f, sin was already in the world and men were already sinners before the law was given... In the absence of the law, sin... was not clearly visible. But, when the law was given, sin became plainly and unmistakably visible, something sharply defined. The law makes its recipients recognize sin as sin, and themselves as sinners (cf. 3.20).

... *the law actually enhances sin;* for, by showing men that what they are doing is contrary to God's will, it gives to their continuing to do it the character of conscious and wilful disobedience, thereby increasing their sin in the sense that it makes it more sinful. And that it should have this effect was part of the divine intention in giving the law (cf. 5.20a: 'But the law came in as a new feature of the situation in order that the misdeed might increase' and Gal 3.19:... in order that there might be transgressions, the conscious disobeying of definite commandments).

... *the law... increases sin in the sense that it makes men sin more.* As God's explicit prohibition (Gen 2.17) constituted the opportunity which the serpent was able to exploit for the purpose of deceiving and ruining Adam (Gen 3.1ff), so the law serves sin as an [opportunity] (7.8 and 11); for the law's presence makes it possible to inveigle men into deliberate rebellion against God—so that Paul can actually say [1 Cor 15.56b cited]. The opposition which the law offers to men's sinful desires has the effect of stirring them up to greater fury...

In particular, the law makes men sin more, in that it establishes the possibility of legalism. For sinful man the very existence of the law is necessarily a temptation to try to use it as a means by which to establish a claim upon God and so to assert a measure of independence over against Him. He imagines that he can so adequately fulfil the law's demands as to be in a position to flaunt as a crown of his merit what is in reality God's indictment. But the legalist's confidence of being 'justified . . . [sic] on the ground of having done what the law requires' is utterly vain (3.20), since fallen man can never adequately obey the law of God... [A] tampering with the law of God the Jewish oral law largely was—Jesus bluntly called it 'the tradition of men', according to Mk 7:8; for, instead of recognizing in the demands of the law the absolute demand of God, by which He claims us wholly for Himself and for our neighbour, and with which men cannot live on terms of merit but only on terms of divine forgiveness, it sought to turn them into something manageable and achievable.

The law pronounces God's condemnation and curse. So in 2 Cor 3.9 the giving of the law is referred to as 'the ministration of condemnation'. The condemnation from which Christ has freed us (8.1) is condemnation pronounced by the law. In Gal 3.10 Paul writes: 'For as many as are of the works of the law {i.e., as many as are legalists, refusing to accept the righteous status God has made available in Christ and insisting on thinking that they can earn their own righteous status by their fulfilment of the law's demands} are under a curse...'; and in Gal 3.13: 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree'. And the condemnation and curse of the law involve death. So in 2 Cor 3.7 the giving of the law is called 'the ministration of death'. It is not that the law is injurious to us in its own nature... It is because it encounters sin that the law, which was intended 'unto life', actually results in 'death' (7.10).

... *the ultimate goal and inmost meaning of the law are not the condemnation of sinners, but Jesus Christ...*

The law has Christ for its goal... by virtue of its revelation of God's will for man, of God's absolute claim to man's life, man's allegiance, man's obedience... Jesus Christ... is the one and only Man who has truly and fully loved God with all His heart and with all His soul and with all His might... and has fully and truly loved His neighbour..., the one and only Man who has been completely and utterly obedient (5.19; cf. Phil 2.8).

The law has Christ for its goal... by virtue of its ceremonies, and He is its goal, as being their meaning and substance. So Paul sees the work of Christ in the light of the sacrifices ordained by the law. In 3.25..., the death of Christ is interpreted in terms of sacrifice. It is implied by 1 Cor 5.7f... that Christ is the true and final Paschal lamb, to whom all the Paschal lambs sacrificed according to the law were pointing forward. Reference must also be made to 1 Cor. 11:25, in which Paul repeats the words... by which Jesus had stamped a sacrificial significance on His approaching death...

The law has Christ for its goal... in that He is the one and only remedy of men's desperate condition, which the law brings to light. By making objectively visible... the impossibility, for sinful men, of a righteousness earned by works, the law points to the righteousness of faith. We may refer to 3.20; 4.14-15a; 5.20f; Gal 3.22, 24.

The law has Christ for its goal... in virtue of the fact that it sets the necessary forensic stage on which Christ's saving work is wrought, and He is its goal, in that the justification which He achieves for us is no mere amnesty or indulgence, no caprice or sentimentality on the part of God, but acquittal... Paul underlines again and again by his language the legal framework of

Christ's action. But, be it carefully noted, this legal framework is the framework, not of human law and, of course, not of legalism, but of God's law... [T]he fact that our justification is truly acquittal by the just Judge and not mere caprice seems to us to be something which the Epistle to the Romans was designed to emphasize...

The epistles reveal *Paul's radical rejection of legalism... and of... an understanding of the law which fails to recognize the fact, or the full implications of the fact, that Christ is its inmost meaning and goal.* Each of these two leads to the other: preoccupation with the quest for a righteous status of one's own earned by one's merits has the effect of blinding one to the righteous status which God has made available in Christ as a free gift, while failure to see that the real substance of the law is Christ opens the way to the legalistic misunderstanding and perversion of the law...

For Paul the legalism which prevailed among the Jews of his day meant slavery. So in Gal 4.25 he can say of 'the Jerusalem that now is' that 'she is in bondage with her children'. The covenant 'from mount Sinai', understood legalistically and without regard to Christ, bears 'children unto bondage' (Gal 4.24), and the Galatian Christians are warned against getting themselves 'entangled again in a yoke of bondage' (Gal 5.1b)...

To practise the observances of Judaism while rejecting Christ is to be left with only the letter of the law, without the Spirit (cf. Rom 7.6; 2 Cor 3.6); but the letter of the law in separation from the Spirit is the law—so to speak—denatured, for the law of God is by nature 'spiritual' (7.14). The literal observance of circumcision and other ceremonies of the law was valuable and significant as 'a shadow of the things to come', a pointer forward to Christ; but to regard these things as possessed of an independent value in themselves quite apart from Him is to be left with a mere empty 'shadow' in isolation from the [sic] 'the body' which gives it meaning (cf. Col 2.16f)...

For Paul, the law is not abrogated by Christ. This thesis is stated in full awareness of the widespread tendency today, observable not only in popular writing but also in serious works of scholarship, to regard it as an assured result that Paul believed that the law had been abrogated by Christ. This 'assured result', like so many others, needs to be re-examined.

There are... a number of passages... which, at first sight, seem to provide support for the view we are opposing... [I]t will be well to bear in mind... that the Greek language of Paul's day possessed no word-group corresponding to our 'legalism', 'legalist' and 'legalistic'. This means that he lacked a convenient terminology for expressing a vital distinction, and so was surely seriously hampered in the work of clarifying the Christian position with regard to the law. In view of this, we should always... be ready to reckon with the possibility that Pauline statements which at first sight seem to disparage the law, were really directed not against the law itself but against that misunderstanding and misuse of it for which we now have a convenient terminology... If we make due allowance for these circumstances, we shall not be so easily baffled or misled by a certain impreciseness of statement which we shall sometimes encounter.

... In 3.21 'apart from the law' might at first sight suggest that Paul regarded the law as having been superseded, brushed aside as out of date by the manifestation of God's righteousness. But the words 'attested by the law' in the same verse and the emphatic statement in v. 31 show the wrongness of such an inference. The simplest explanation of 'apart from the law' is that it is shorthand for 'apart from works of the law' (v. 28): God's gift is not earned by man's fulfilment of His requirements. That in 'you are not under the law' in 6.14, 'you . . . [sic] were made dead to the law' in 7.4, and 'now we have been released from the law' in 7.6, 'law' has the limited sense of 'the law as condemning you (us)' is confirmed by 8.1 ('So then there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus'), which draws out the significance [sic] of 7.1-6 which in its turn takes up and elucidates the statement made in 6.14b... Suffice it here to say that by 'the law of sin and of death' we understand the power exercised over us by sin and the resulting power over us of death.

We turn now to 2 Corinthians 3, which, as it contains a good deal which has often been taken to disparage the law and to imply that it was done away in Christ, must be looked at in some detail. Verse 3 provides a transition from the subject of the letter of commendation to that of the ministry of the new covenant. The contrast between the old and the new covenants is already in Paul's mind when he speaks of 'tables of stone' (cf. Exod 24.12) and 'tables that are hearts of flesh' (cf. Jer 31.33; Ezek 11.19f; 36.26f). The reference to Jer 31.31ff is picked up in v. 6: Paul is a minister of the 'new covenant'. There is no suggestion in Jer 31.31ff of a new law to replace that given through Moses: the suggestion is rather that the same law of God—'my law' (Jer 31.33)—will be given in a new way. What is looked forward to is not the abolition of the law, but its true and effective establishment. But what about v. 6b? The contrast here between 'the letter' and... 'the Spirit'... we take to be a contrast not between the OT law which is written and a spiritual religion which knows no law, but between the legalistic relation of the Jews of Paul's time to God and to His law and the new relation to God and to His law established by the Holy Spirit and resulting from Christ's work. In the absence of the Spirit the law... 'killeth' (v. 6c: cf. Rom 7.10). So in v. 7 the... service performed by Moses at the giving of the law is referred to as 'the ministration of death'... In v. 11 the vital question is: To what does 'that which passeth away' refer?... It is best to take the reference to be, not to the law... but to the ministry of Moses at the giving of the law... How much more then must the service of the minister of the gospel, a service 'which remaineth', be clothed with glory! The key to the true understanding of this whole passage is to recognize that it is really the two ministries which are being contrasted rather than the two covenants themselves... And the true explanation of the superiority of the glory of the Christian minister's ministry over that of Moses' ministry is not that the law which was given through Moses has been abolished, but that these two ministries are differently related to the ministry of Jesus Christ...

In vv. 12ff... [t]here is here no suggestion that the law is done away, but rather that, when men turn to Christ, they are able to discern the true glory of the law... (The NEB translation of v. 14... would scarcely occur to a translator who was free from preconceptions with regard to Paul's attitude to the law.)

We must turn now to Gal 3.15-25, which—perhaps more than any other single passage—has encouraged readers of St Paul to assume that he believed that the law is done away by Christ...

We must beware of the danger of exaggerating the depreciatory tendency of these verses. With regard to... 'was added'... there is no need to see more in it than an indication that the law was... given after the promise (cf. v. 17). With regard to ["because of transgressions"], Calvin's reminder is sufficient: 'The law has many uses, but Paul {here} confines himself to one which serves his present purpose . . . [sic] Therefore this definition of the use of the law is not complete . . . [sic]'...

In trying to evaluate the true significance of that element of depreciation which is present in these verses, it is of the first importance to bear in mind the polemical nature of Galatians. In this epistle Paul is seeking to undo the damage done by false teachers who have, in effect, exalted the law above the gospel. In arguing against their perverse, excessive exaltation of the law Paul naturally has to attempt to reduce the law's importance, in the eyes of those who have been led astray, to its true magnitude. It is not that Paul desires, absolutely, in any way to disparage the law, but that, in relation to this false exaltation of the law, he is forced in some measure to depreciate it. To fail to make full allowance for the special circumstances which called forth the letter would be to proceed in a quite uncritical and unscientific manner. In view of what has just been said, it should be clear that it would be extremely unwise to take what Paul says in Galatians as one's starting-point in trying to understand Paul's teaching on the law...

It is sometimes argued, on the strength of the nowadays popular explanation of *στοιχεῖα* [*stoicheia*] as denoting the spirits thought to rule the heavenly bodies, the 'elemental spirits', that the *στοιχεῖα* [*stoicheia*] in Gal 4.3 and 9 are to be identified with the angels referred to in Gal 3.19. If this identification were accepted, the implication would be that the giving of the law was the work of elemental spirits which can be described as 'of the world' (Gal 4.3) and 'weak and beggarly' (Gal 4.9), and this would seem to carry with it a disparagement not merely of legalism but of the law itself, and also, in view of Col 2.20, the implication that the law is done with as far as Christians are concerned. But... this explanation of *στοιχεῖα* [*stoicheia*]... is far from assured;... even if it is right, the identification of the angels of Gal 3.19 with these 'elemental spirits' is an unwarranted assumption; and... if Paul really thought that the law had been given through the agency of 'weak and beggarly' elemental spirits 'of the world', it is strange that in [Ro.] 9.4f he sets [receiving the law] among the privileges of Israel in the company of the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the promises, and... Christ Himself. We conclude that in Gal 4.3 and 9 Paul is referring not to the law itself, but to the legalistic misunderstanding and misuse of it...

Ep 2.15, containing as it does the very words, 'having abolished . . . [sic] the law', looks at first sight like a clear statement that Christ has abolished the law. But, when one considers the way in which 'the law' is qualified and the context of the verse, this interpretation looks much less convincing. The qualification, 'of commandments contained in ordinances', is most probably to be explained as a rather clumsy way of limiting the meaning of 'the law', of indicating that what is meant is not the law itself and as a whole; and the context suggests strongly that the meaning of v. 15a is simply that Christ has by His death abolished the ceremonial ordinances, in so far as they have the effect of maintaining the separation of, 'the enmity' between, Jews and Gentiles, by doing away with the obligation to fulfil them literally. That the writer... did not mean to assert that Christ had abolished the law as such is clear enough from 6.2f...

For Paul, the giving of the Spirit is the establishment of the law. In 8.14b he shows that the life promised for the righteous by faith is a life characterized by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and therefore also a life in which God's law is being established and fulfilled (vv. 4, 12-16). God's law is being established in the life of the believer... in that the Holy Spirit is freeing him more and more to give up tampering with God's commandments in the hope of exploiting them for his self-justification, to give up his 'glorying' (3.27) and humbly and frankly to allow the law to discover him to himself as the sinner that he is;... in that the Holy Spirit is setting him free to allow the law to point him again and again to Christ, its goal, and to help to keep him in the way of faith in Him...; and... in that the Holy Spirit is setting him free for obedience, enabling him to begin to call God 'Father' sincerely, soberly, intelligently, and to go on doing so more and more consistently.

... Paul's... authority cannot justly be claimed... for the view that the law was an unsuccessful first attempt on God's part at dealing with man's unhappy state, which had to be followed later by a second... attempt (a view which is theologically grotesque, for the God of the unsuccessful first attempt is hardly a God to be taken seriously); nor yet the view that in law and gospel two different modes of God's action are manifested, the ultimate unity of which, while it may indeed be supposed to exist in God, has not yet been revealed to us men. On the contrary, it is clear that we are true to Paul's teaching, when we say that God's word in Scripture is one; that there is but one way of God with men, and that an altogether gracious way; that gospel and law are essentially one, and their unity, so far from being a mystery still hidden from us, has been once and for all revealed to us in that one gracious Word of God, whose name is Jesus Christ, in whom at the same time God gives Himself wholly to man, and claims man wholly for Himself.

The reader may also gauge Cranfield's attitude to those who claim Paul as an advocate of the thesis that Christ abrogated the law from the following footnote, *ibid.*, 862. It applies to a paragraph in which Cranfield concludes, in effect, "that gospel and law are essentially one, and their unity... has been once and for all revealed to us in ... Jesus Christ". Note: his ¶¶ (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi), correspond to ¶¶ 2, 3, 4, 6 as quoted *supra*.

In this connexion it is most instructive to note that all the initial statements of sections (ii), (iii), (iv), and (vi) with reference to the law can also be made with reference to the gospel. The gospel reveals sin—the Cross shows us our sin; the gospel enhances sin, giving to our continuing sin the character of wilful rejection of God's love; the gospel increases sin—for when God's claim on man is most clear and pressing, it enrages our sinfulness most, our self-centredness recognizing the seriousness with which it is threatened; the gospel declares God's condemnation—it is declared in the Cross even as it is being borne for us. (Incidentally, it would hardly be unfair to say that the arguments advanced by G. B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology*, Oxford 1956, pp. 41-43, to prove that Paul regarded the law as a 'demonic agency' could, for the most part at any rate, equally well be used to prove the demonic character of the gospel!)

APPENDIX C

Ellen White Echoes the Pseudepigrapha!

Ellen White's striking interpretation, in PP 154f., of Abraham's test to sacrifice his only son Isaac, Gen. 22:14, in response to Satan's accusation, has this close parallel in Jub. 17:15-18:13, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 2*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985). For the crucial identification of Prince Mastema as Satan, observe that 10:8 labels him "the chief of the spirits," with authority over the tenth of them who are not bound for their sins. And the former are described explicitly, in context, as "subject to Satan", 11.

And it came to pass... that words came in heaven concerning Abraham that he was faithful in everything which was told him and he loved the LORD and was faithful in all affliction. And Prince Mastema [Satan] came and he said before God, "Behold, Abraham loves Isaac, his son. And he is more pleased with him than everything. Tell him to offer him (as) a burnt offering upon the altar. And you will see whether he will do this thing. And you will know whether he is faithful in everything in which you test him."

And the LORD was aware that Abraham was faithful in all of his afflictions because he tested him with his land, and with famine. And he tested him with the wealth of kings. And he tested him again with his wife, when she was taken (from him), and with circumcision. And he tested him with Ishmael and with Hagar, his maidservant, when he sent them away. And in everything in which he tested him, he was found faithful...

And the LORD said to him, "Abraham, Abraham." And he said, "Here I am." And he said, "Take your beloved son, whom you love, Isaac, and go into the high land and offer him up on one of the mountains that I will make known to you."

And he arose while it was still dark at daybreak and he loaded his ass and took two of his young men servants with him and Isaac, his son. And he split the wood of the sacrifice and he went to the place on the third day. And he saw the place from afar. And he arrived at a well of water and he said to the young men, "Stay here with the ass and I and the child shall go. And when we have worshiped we shall return to you."

And he took the wood of the sacrifice and put it on the shoulder of Isaac, his son, and he took the fire and the knife in his hand. And the two of them went together to that place. And Isaac said to his father, "Father." And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said to him, "Behold, the fire and the knife and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering, father?" And he said, "The LORD will see about the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

And they drew near to the (holy) place of the mountain of the LORD. And he built an altar and he placed the wood on the altar. And he bound Isaac, his son, and he placed him on the wood which was on top of the altar, and he stretched forth his hand, and took the knife in order to slaughter Isaac, his son.

And I stood before him and before Prince Mastema. And the LORD said, "Speak to him. Do not let his hand descend upon the child. And do not let him do anything to him because I know that he is one who fears the LORD." And I called out to him from heaven and I said to him, "Abraham, Abraham." And he was terrified and said, "Here I am." And I said to him, "Do not put forth your hand against the child and do not do anything to him because now I know that you are one who fears the LORD and you did not deny your firstborn son to me."

And Prince Mastema was shamed. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw a ram was caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called that place "The LORD has seen," so that it is said "in the mountain the LORD has seen." It is Mount Zion.

And the LORD called Abraham by his name again from heaven... And he said, "I swear by myself, says the LORD, because you have done this thing and you have not denied your firstborn son, whom you love, to me that I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of heaven and like the sands of the seashore and your seed shall inherit the cities of their enemies. And all the nations of the earth will bless themselves by your seed because you obeyed my word. And I have made known to all that you are faithful in everything which I say to you. Go in peace."

However, this entire topic is complicated by the fact that, more broadly, Ellen White appears oblivious of the pseudepigraphic literature. Above all, of several NT epistles that were slow to gain universal canonical status, a couple were regarded rather suspiciously through their association with the apocalyptic literature. One of the clearest examples here is that in 14f. the epistle of Jude quotes 1 Enoch 1:9 quite unambiguously:

Behold, he will arrive with ten million of the holy ones in order to execute judgment upon all. He will destroy the wicked ones and censure all flesh on account of everything that they have done, that which the sinners and the wicked ones committed against him.

Blissfully unaware of this source-critical detail, however, Ellen White assumes that the biblical Enoch really did utter this forecast, then proceeds to reconstruct OT history on her surmise! Typical references include IBC 1088 (MSS 43, 1900; 46, 1895); GW 52f.; PP 85f.; 6T 392, and PP 86 has a fine epitome in this morsel:

Enoch became a preacher of righteousness, making known to the people what God had revealed to him... He labored publicly also, bearing God's messages to all who would hear the words of warning... [Jude 14f. quoted]

APPENDIX D

A Touch of Hebrew Grammar/Syntax

Two prestigious reference grammars of OT Hebrew suffice to settle the question, raised by Ellen White, whether Adam was with Eve when she succumbed to temptation at the tree of knowledge, Gen. 3:1-6. In 6b, the phrase “with her” renders the preposition עִמָּה (*immāh*), that is, עִם (*im*) with the pronoun suffix *her*.

First, B. K. Waltke & M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 219, set out the relevant options for us thus, with # 1. matching the case in question here precisely:

The most common sense involves *accompaniment* (fellowship and companionship, person + person; ‘with’; ## 1–3) or *addition* (‘with, along with, and’; # 4); *‘m* often marks a personal complement after verbs (‘with, to,’ ## 5–7; adversative, ‘against,’ # 8). The locus of psychological interest can be marked with *‘m* (‘with, in’; ## 9–10).

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ הוּא וְהָאָנָשִׁים
אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ | They ate. . . , he and the men <i>with</i> him. ¹¹⁴
Gen 24:54 |
| 2. | כִּי לֹא יִירָשׁ בְּנֵי-הָאִמָּה הַזֹּאת
עִם-בְּנֵי עִם-יִצְחָק: | That slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance <i>with</i> my son, <i>with</i> Isaac.
Gen 21:10 |
| 3. | כִּי-עָם-אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה | He succeeded <i>with</i> (the help of) God this day.
I Sam 14:45 |
| 4. | עַם-עָרִיבָם הִחָרִימָם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: | And Joshua annihilated them <i>along with</i> their cities.
Josh 11:21 |
| 5. | וַעֲשֵׂה-חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם: | Show kindness <i>to</i> my master Abraham.
Gen 24:12 |
| 6. | בְּדַבְרֵי עִמָּךְ | when I speak <i>with</i> you
Exod 19:9 |
| 7. | וְלֹא-נִתְּנוּ אֱלֹהִים לְהַרְעֵ עַמְדִּי: | God did not allow him to do evil <i>to</i> me.
Gen 31:7 |
| 8. | כִּי-בְרַבִּים הָיוּ עִמָּדִי | when many are <i>against</i> me (or, even though many oppose me) ¹¹⁵
Ps 55:19 |
| 9. | וַיִּדְעַתָּ עִם-לְבָבְךָ | Know <i>in</i> your heart that. . .
Deut 8:5 |
| 10. | הֲיֵתָה רִיחַ אַחֶרֶת עִמּוֹ | There is another spirit <i>in</i> him.
Num 14:24 |

the preposition עִמָּה (*immō*), i.e., עִם (*im*) with the pronoun suffix *him*.

Secondly, briefly covering the identical ground is C. H. O. van der Merwe, J. A. Naudé & J. H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), with # 1 (i) again the perfect match:

1. Indicates the joining together of entities (comitative)

The translation of the spacial equivalent of the preposition עִם is ‘with x’.

(i) Indicates accompaniment

- | | |
|--|---|
| וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ הוּא וְהָאָנָשִׁים
אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ | And he and the men who were <i>with</i> him ate and drank (Gen. 24.54). |
|--|---|

(ii) Indicates addition to

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| עַם-עָרִיבָם הִחָרִימָם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ | Joshua utterly destroyed them <i>with</i> their cities (Josh. 11.21). |
|------------------------------------|---|

2. Indicates the direction of an action

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| וַעֲשֵׂה-חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם | And show steadfast love <i>to</i> my master Abraham (Gen. 24.12). |
|--------------------------------------|---|

3. Indicates spatial positioning

The following distinctions can be made:

(i) Proximity to

- | | |
|--|--|
| וַיֹּשֶׁב יִצְחָק עִם-בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹאֵי | And Isaac dwelt <i>at</i> Beer-lahai-roi (Gen. 25.11). |
|--|--|

(ii) Metaphorical use of the locative: *in*

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| וַיִּדְעַתָּ עִם-לְבָבְךָ | Know then <i>in</i> your heart (Deut. 8.5). |
|---------------------------|---|

APPENDIX E

*A Glance at Ellen White's "Debt" to John Milton's Paradise Lost*¹

One competent researcher into Ellen White's literary sources makes the following tantalising observation: Of unusual significance is the correlation found in a number of instances where both authors depict with some detail an experience which is not found in the Bible. Among such events are the following:

1. The scene in Heaven before and during the rebellion with the loyal angels trying to win the disaffected ones back to allegiance to God.
2. The warnings issued to Eve to stay by her husband's side; her subsequent straying.
3. The elaborate setting for the actual temptation with Satan's arguments analyzed point by point.
4. The detailed picture of the immediate results of sin on Adam and Eve and on the... world about them.
5. The explanation of the basic reason for Adam's fall: uxoriousness.
6. The angel's chronicling of future events to Adam.
7. The feelings of both Adam and Eve as they left the garden.

These likenesses... intensify the question: Why are these two authors... so much in agreement on major facts?²

I cannot more than hint here at any cogent answer to this reasonable question. But it is more likely that Ellen White simply repeated popular theology sanctioned by John Milton than that she borrowed it directly from England's highly renowned poet. For one thing, the impact of his epic, even upon music, is striking.³ For another, much of its theology had no evident impact upon her.⁴ For yet another, its archaic diction and convoluted theology are rather daunting. For example, the patient reader may wish to consider this difficult response, recorded in his Book 6, verse 3, to God's edict that his angelic warriors rout Satan and his host:

So spake the Sovran voice, and Clouds began
To darken all the Hill, and smook to rowl
In duskie wreathes, reluctant flames, the signe
Of wrauth awak't: nor with less dread the loud
Ethereal Trumpet from on high gan blow:
At which command the Powers Militant,
That stood for Heav'n, in mighty Quadrate joyn'd
Of Union irresistible, mov'd on
In silence thir bright Legions, to the sound
Of instrumental Harmonie that breath'd
Heroic Ardor to advent'rous deeds
Under thir God-like Leaders, in the Cause
Of God and his MESSIAH. On they move
Indissolubly firm; nor obvious Hill,
Nor streit'ning Vale, nor Wood, nor Stream divides
Thir perfet ranks; for high above the ground
Thir march was, and the passive Air upbore
Thir nimble tread; as when the total kind
Of Birds in orderly array on wing
Came summond over EDEN to receive
Thir names of thee; so over many a tract
Of Heav'n they march'd, and many a Province wide
Tenfold the length of this terrene: at last
Farr in th' Horizon to the North appeer'd
From skirt to skirt a fierie Region, stretcht
In battailous aspect, and neerer view
Bristl'd with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid Spears, and Helmets throng'd, and Shields
Various, with boastful Argument portraid,

The banded Powers of SATAN hasting on
With furious expedition; for they weend
That self same day by fight, or by surprize
To win the Mount of God, and on his Throne
To set the envier of his State, the proud
Aspirer, but thir thoughts prov'd fond and vain
In the mid way: though strange to us it seemd
At first, that Angel should with Angel warr,
And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
So oft in Festivals of joy and love
Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire
Hymning th' Eternal Father: but the shout
Of Battel now began, and rushing sound
Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
High in the midst exalted as a God
Th' Apostat in his Sun-bright Chariot sate
Idol of Majestie Divine, enclos'd
With Flaming Cherubim, and golden Shields;
Then lighted from his gorgeous Throne, for now
'Twixt Host and Host but narrow space was left,
A dreadful interval, and Front to Front
Presented stood in terrible array
Of hideous length: before the cloudie Van,
On the rough edge of battel ere it joyn'd,
SATAN with vast and haughtie strides advanc't,
Came towring, armd in Adamant and Gold;
ABDIEL that sight endur'd not, where he stood
Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,
And thus his own undaunted heart explores.

¹ My copy on line @ www.literature.org/authors/milton-john/paradise-lost.

² W. T. Rea, *The White Lie* (Turlock: M&R Publications, 1982), 33f., quoting E. Burgeson, "A Comparative Study of the Fall of Man as Treated by John Milton and Ellen G. White" (unpublished Master's thesis, PUC, 1957), 73. With no ready access to this valuable research, I am unable to follow her analysis, let alone absorb her conclusions, however.

³ E.g., Handel's famous oratio *The Creation*, penned in German, has the evocative line, "in long dimension crawls the worm", slightly adapted from Milton's Book 7, line 480.

⁴ E.g., angelology, owing a great deal indeed to the unbridled speculation of the Jewish intertestamental literature.

APPENDIX F

A Survey of Seventh-day Adventism's Last-ditch Defense of its Great Controversy Dogma

Strictly speaking, there is little room, if any, in a brief survey of Ellen White's theology to venture beyond her corpus. However, in seeking meticulously to express her crucial, Great Controversy theme *without her specific assistance*, one official Seventh-day Adventist tome provides implicit assessment of its authenticity.

The Ford fiasco¹ galvanised the Seventh-day Adventist Church into a decade of world-wide, purportedly scholarly study between 1982 and 1992, to defend the sectarian dogmas constituting its very *sine qua non*.²

The tangible result was the seven-volume DARCOM apologia,³ although, by and large, the million-dollar project served little more than to give Church officials, mostly theologically illiterate, a psychological crutch,⁴ and their apologetic internet sites reference material.⁵ In fact, despite its various laudabilities,⁶ it is generally scorned amongst professional members as largely sciolism hardly worth the paper on which it is printed.⁷

Officially, however, so crucial was it deemed firmly to seal the lid on the cancerous Fordian heresy's coffin that, at their 1988 Annual Council, world leaders "authorized preparation of a volume to review carefully the *biblical* teachings undergirding the... Adventist movement."⁸ The resultant, final volume of its *Commentary Reference Series*⁹ therefore devotes a complete essay to each of its Fundamental Beliefs,¹⁰ carefully confined to the purported *biblical* evidence. The final article, "The Great Controversy,"¹¹ is of particular interest to this study, then, in that, if it succeeds in its aim, it will supply Ellen White's ministry with strong confirmation.

The Pertinent Portions of F. B. Holbrook's Argument

Origin of the "Great Controversy"

Holbrook offers his case for "this *foundational* teaching of Scripture"¹² in convenient chronological order,¹³ though his initial survey of God's prior provision of human salvation has no hint of any "Great Controversy."¹⁴

After outlining the evidence that in fact Christ was our Creator,¹⁵ Holbrook infers, mainly from appeals for obedience,¹⁶ that God placed intelligent beings under moral law, albeit serving him "from a genuine, loving appreciation of His character."¹⁷ Specifically, as such law is just and good,¹⁸ it is his first, reasonable **surmise**

that the moral beings brought into existence by a Creator whose very nature is love, would have possessed loving hearts themselves and would have delighted to obey any commands or requests of God.¹⁹

Holbrook views the Decalogue as "an adaptation of heaven's moral law into 10 precepts for guidance of the human race."²⁰ Since these may be summarised as our love, respectively, for God and our neighbour,²¹

We may **infer** that love's twofold principle expresses God's will for all orders of the intelligent creation, just as it lies at the heart of biblical religion: The creature's whole duty is to render supreme love to his Creator and impartial love to his fellow beings. We may also **infer** that this twofold principle is adapted in precepts suitable to each order of intelligent creation just as the Decalogue is an adaptation to the conditions of human beings. Therefore, since angels do not marry (see Matt. 22:30), the fifth and seventh precepts would have little meaning for them. On the other hand, Satan is accused of both murder and lying, violations of the sixth and ninth precepts (John 8:44).²²

Holbrook epitomises the biblical evidence that, before Sinai, humanity had an oral knowledge of God's Decalogue.²³ However, at least at this point, he merely states one of his chief **supposals**, *without evidence*:

The moral law... is central to the controversy that arose in the universe. God's authority, government, and the imposition of His will (the moral law) upon the intelligent creation became the matter of contention... leading to a wrenching estrangement between God and a large portion of the angels as well as the newly created order of humanity.²⁴

Issues in the Great Controversy

Because Holbrook appeals in regular style to Isa 14:14-21 and Eze. 28:12-19, which "indirectly describe the origin, position, and moral fall"²⁵ of Satan, I need not explore every detail of the structure which he erects upon the foundation of his primary **supposition**, with every appearance, at first sight, of complete validity:

In their primary setting these prophecies are addressed to pagan kings of Tyre and Babylon who lived in the times of Ezekiel and Isaiah, respectively. Although liberal scholars reject this long-standing Christian interpretation, **it seems evident** from even a casual reading that some of the details stated could be true only of a personage greater than those... rulers.²⁶

However, it is worth noting, in passing, that Holbrook labels this identification, in effect, as Bible typology:

the veil drops away for a moment to expose the features of Satan. For an example of this kind of phenomenon, see... Peter's argument that Psalm 16:8-11 refers to Christ and not to David, although David wrote... in the first person (Acts 2:25-36).²⁷

Moreover, for Holbrook, "Paul confirms this prophetic description" in touching on satanic pride, 1 Tim. 3:6.²⁸

Holbrook is worth hearing in some detail as he covers the main issues, as he sees them, in this conflict:

It is not likely the rebellion appeared in full strength immediately. It would have taken time to develop. Nor would the conflict have arisen without an apparent rationale to justify it...

... No single passage directly states the specific questions Lucifer raised as, blinded by pride, he endeavored to usurp the divine prerogatives. However, we may safely **infer** from several biblical passages the nature of the issues involved.

a. God's law. The apostle John provides the simplest definition of the nature of sin. "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4, NIV)...

But sin is more serious than simple lawlessness. The Scriptures equate the principles and precepts of the moral law... with the Creator's personal will... When sinners knowingly transgress the moral law, they flaunt and spurn the Creator Himself.

When the Scriptures say, therefore, that "the devil [Satan] has sinned from the beginning" (1 John 3:8), we may rightly **infer** that Lucifer questioned the necessity for holy beings like the angels to be subject to God's moral commands. He would have considered the law of God as a restriction to angelic liberty. The apostle's statement indicates that Lucifer eventually rejected divine authority, threw off the yoke of submission to his Creator's government, and openly chose to violate the commands of His expressed will.

b. God's character. Behind the expressed will of the Lawgiver is His character. By calling God's law into question, Lucifer called the Creator's character into question. If—as Lucifer **apparently** argued—the moral law as expressed to angels was unnecessary and restrictive to personal liberty, then the Creator must have had ulterior motives in subjecting intelligent creatures to its guidelines. Thus, he **may** have reasonably argued among the angels that the Creator's motives were bad...

Jesus... implies Lucifer's misrepresentation of the divine character... [Jn 8:44 cited] Christ plainly accuses Lucifer of murder and lying, violations of the moral law. But whom did he kill or lie about in heaven before his expulsion?

Since both Jesus and the apostle John define "anger" and "hatred" as the heart roots of murder, the Master **evidently** is alluding to the strange feelings that Lucifer came to cherish and that prompted his actions. In the light of Jesus' statement we may **infer** that Lucifer, nursing an inward hatred toward the Deity, went about heaven misrepresenting God to the other angels. Only by subtle lying about the divine character and government could he ever have succeeded in persuading a large portion of the angels to cast their lot with him.

c. Autonomy of the creature. The first two issues concealed Lucifer's real desire: to be independent of his Creator. Since God is the source and sustainer of life, it follows that all created beings are dependent upon Him for their existence. The desire and attempt to be independent of God is the primary sin of the creature and is at the heart of the rebellion to challenge the divine government and to throw off the yoke of submission and obedience...

d. Divine justice and mercy. Lucifer **apparently** thought he saw an internal conflict in the divine character. The Scriptures describe Satan as "the accuser of our brethren . . . [sic], who accuses them day and night before our God" (Rev. 12:10; cf. Zech. 3:1-5). We may **infer** that Satan claims they, like himself, are transgressors of God's law, and he denies heaven's right to extend grace and forgiveness to them. The issue is How can the Creator be both just and merciful? If obedience to God's expressed will is so vital to the happiness of the intelligent creation, Lucifer **would** argue, then God can exercise justice only against sinners who violate it. It is unfair to show mercy to the violator. Justice and mercy are mutually exclusive attitudes, Lucifer **would** assert...²⁹

Now Holbrook's polemic waxes even bolder as he exchanges confident affirmation for mere supposition:

If we may judge by the situation on this planet, every intelligent being in God's created universe is subject to authority. Absolute freedom does not exist in the natural order or in human society. The question then is not how to escape authority, but rather under what authority will life be made the most meaningful—now and eternally?

The most useful spiritual authority in the universe would be one fostering the fullest development of the mental, physical, and spiritual powers of its subjects. Such an authority would be motivated by a genuine, loving concern for the governed, for only in an atmosphere of acceptance and appreciation could the governed develop to their full potential. This is the kind of authority that ruled the universe of God's creation.

But in the dawn of the Creation how could it be known whether the authority of God was really best? It was the only authority known. The created intelligences of the universe actually had only two options: (1) they could trust their Creator's word that His governance was best for the creation, or (2) they could submit to the rule of another authority...

Lucifer's questions and eventual insurrection **forced** the issues to a decision among the angels. Heaven's highest angel directly **challenged** the Creator. God's moral law and government were **rejected**, His character and motives questioned and **besmirched**. Satan **asserted** the so-called right of the creature to be independent and free from the Creator's control. Furthermore, the exercise of both justice and mercy on the part of God was **challenged** as incompatible with His essential holiness. God **could not change** the mind-set of Lucifer and associates, so they were expelled from heaven and their positions...

In the ensuing centuries of this conflict on earth, two great truths regarding authority **are being tested** before the intelligent beings of God's universe: (1) A governing authority based on love is unselfish... (2) Any other authority, by the nature of things, will be an authority motivated by selfishness...³⁰

Holbrook now surveys four passages which treat the expulsion of "Lucifer" and his angels from heaven, though Lu. 10:18³¹ may be ignored here completely, with minuscule loss to our appreciation of his polemic:

b. Revelation 12:7-9. [cited]

It is not unusual for a Bible writer to blend two distinct events as though they were one. For example, Matthew records Jesus' presentation of His second coming and the executive phase of the final judgment as a single event, although the latter takes place at the close of the Millennium—1,000 years later (Matt. 25:31, 32; Rev. 20:11-15). The apostle Peter also describes "the day of the Lord" as the Second Coming, extending it, however, to the re-creation of the earth (2 Peter 3:10-13).

It would **appear** that the expulsion of Satan and his angels described in Revelation 12 is a similar kind of blend, involving both the original expulsion from their positions in the heavenly courts and their later spiritual casting down of Satan at the cross, the latter being the primary emphasis of the passage.³²

Holbrook proceeds to argue that Michael is in fact "God the Son, so described in his preexistent state".³³

... **Thus**, the presence of Michael in the passage indicates that the original, physical expulsion of Satan is being blended with the later spiritual fall he experienced when at Christ's death, he was fully exposed to the universe...³⁴

c. 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6. Why didn't God destroy Lucifer and his followers at the outset of the conflict? These passages, which touch on the expulsion, begin to answer this question... [both verses cited]³⁵

Holbrook devotes three paragraphs here to claim that both apostles speak of Satan and his minions being cast to the earth.³⁶ But what counts most is his grasp of the delay in judgment also twice mentioned:

From the biblical data we may **infer** that the period of probation for the fallen angels manifests the character of God. In order to be fair to the intelligent Creation the Creator **must** give time for the principles of self-centeredness and transgression against His will to develop and mature so that all free moral beings may make their decisions about whom they will serve, with a full understanding of the issues. And so... "we have become a spectacle... to the world, to angels and to men" (1 Cor. 4:9)—just so the principles of sin and of righteousness, with all their enormous, overwhelming consequences, are being played out on the stage of this earth... And we, the watching creation, must choose which antagonist is right...³⁷

Although Holbrook's sweeping study may be evaluated with profit right to its conclusion, it must suffice here to close with his initial comments and deductions concerning humanity's temptation and fall in Eden:

Like the angels, Adam and Eve were created free moral agents. The prohibition against eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil placed a simple test before them, providing an option to obey God because they loved Him or to disobey by asserting their own wills in opposition to His. When Satan confronted Eve through the guise of a serpent..., he intended to plant seeds of doubt about God's integrity in her mind so that she would be deceived into disobeying Him. In response to Eve's admission that they could eat from all the trees but were not to touch or eat the fruit of this particular tree, Satan injected his poison with clever assertion and reasoning... [Gen. 3:4f. cited]

Eve accepted Satan's lie and doubt, quickly forgetting what she knew about her Creator. She **may have reasoned** that if God's motives behind the prohibition were questionable, then the prohibition and death threat might not be true at all. With these supposed facts firmly embedded in her thinking, her final act was to assert her autonomy—to exercise her will and to disobey God's command. Eve clutched the fruit and ate it, later persuading Adam to eat it also (verse 6).

Satan deceived Eve into reasoning as she did, but Adam chose openly to violate the will of his Creator after Eve's decision (1 Tim. 2:14). He **evidently** accepted Eve's view of the matter and was reluctant to lose her as well. As the head of the race, however, Adam is held accountable for implicating the race in sin (Rom. 5:12-19).³⁸

Evaluation

Holbrook's theology basks in the plausibility, even on philosophical grounds, of the premise that our universe is governed by benevolent laws. And it is a viable deduction from the evidence that the principles of Yahweh's Decalogue were understood clearly, albeit orally, long centuries before his epiphany at Mt. Sinai.³⁹

However, its credibility faces the impenetrable hurdle of an utter dearth of decisive evidence in the entire Word of God of **any** controversy, especially in heaven, about his moral law and its manifest implications.⁴⁰

Holbrook is correct that Holy Writ appeals at times to typology. However, typology is not in the eye of the beholder. It illumines a passage **only** if it can be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that it was in the mind of its inspired author. And in both Isa 14:14-21 and Eze. 28:12-19, typology is extremely dubious on two related grounds, at least. First, some of the very details which invite us to look beyond their human foci do not remotely apply to Satan! Secondly, their ready source is on hand in the relevant mythology, especially when God's authors caught their audience's attention at times via familiar mythology, without endorsing it.⁴¹

In other words, sacred Scripture throws no clear light whatever even upon the origin of Satan, our arch enemy. Nor does Holbrook find **any** details of the origin of evil by lifting the veil from our Lord's enigmatic sentiments in Jn. 8:44. Above all, he is struggling effete with his recourse to the rare noun *ἀνθρωποκτόνος* (*anthrōpoktonos*) behind *murderer* in applying the sentiments anger and hatred, which breed slaughter, to Lucifer's hatred of God! If anything, most likely Jesus had in mind the disaster detailed in Gen. 3:17, when, in effect, sinful mankind became the offspring of Satan, the **theme** of Jesus' stinging rebuke. Indeed, here in 4 is the pristine lie for which Satan may rightly be called "the **father** of lies." And here, in duping Eve to

ignore God's dire warning, "you will surely die", Gen. 2:17, in this single, simple, alluring denial, 3:4, in effect Satan surely became "a murderer from the beginning, *not holding to the truth*, for there is no truth in him."

Holbrook is on slightly firmer ground with Satan's accusations. For theology has struggled long and hard with the seeming dichotomy between divine justice and mercy. Indeed, to some extent the NT majors in this enigma, especially in clarifying God's superlative Plan of Salvation.⁴² However, Holbrook has no cause whatever to extrapolate it to any "Great Controversy",⁴³ especially when Satan is so shadowy an OT figure.⁴⁴

This is forcefully confirmed by a candid appreciation of the major, fatal flaw in Holbrook's entire theology: not even in those few passages in which the inspired record treats the ethereal battle between good and evil, either directly or manifestly implicitly, is there a single hint of *any* "Great Controversy" as he perceives it, especially preceding Creation. First, John of Patmos issues Holbrook with no invitation whatever to include Rev. 12:7-9 among the biblical passages seeming to "blend two distinct events as though they were one."⁴⁵ Even if he correctly identifies Michael as Christ, the Cross is not merely "the primary emphasis of the passage":⁴⁶ Context dictates that this is John's *exclusive* focus.⁴⁷ Moreover, Holbrook is delinquent in ignoring a pivotal statement by Christ which John's forecast clarifies most persuasively: "*now* the prince of this world will be driven out", Jn. 12:31. For Jesus' verb ἐκβάλλειν (*ekballein*) is cognate with John's βάλλειν (*ballein*).⁴⁸

As for 2 Pet. 2:4 and Jude 6, suffice it to say that these seeming allusions from the intertestamental, apocalyptic literature sit rather awkwardly in the NT, raising more questions than they settle.⁴⁹ Nor do they offer Holbrook any foundation whatever for his philosophy of a divinely ordained delay in order that the cosmos may fully grasp the issues in the "Great Controversy". For one thing, their fallen angels are totally confined, awaiting judgment. *No cause for the assumed delay is given or even implied.* For another, most often when Holy Writ treats the delay in God's program, especially Jesus' punitive Parousia, as in 2 Pet. 3,⁵⁰ the crucial concern is the saints' spiritual welfare. *Never is there any hint of any "Great Controversy" in the background.*

Regardless, of most concern is Holbrook's repeated recourse to sheer surmise. Time and time again his rhetoric lapses into this extremely effete chorus: "*apparently...*"; "We may (safely/rightly) *infer...*"; "It would *appear...*"; "*evidently...*"⁵¹ Indeed, one is reminded of a large slice of Swiss cheese riddled with holes! Worse, at times Holbrook resorts to mere *affirmations devoid of biblical support!* In all gravity, though, the question should be posed: Why? And for anyone familiar with the paramount, Ellen White theology of a "Great Controversy", the answer is perfectly transparent: *Holbrook is penning a virtual apology for that very theology, as it were, almost as if he had her purportedly inspired accounts open before him, searching sacred Scripture for corroboration of each point. Therefore, in those frequent, embarrassing cases when Holy Writ is quite mute, he is forced to fill the void with sheer surmise, despite his Handbook's claim: sola scriptura!*

The corollary is as crystal clear as it is tragic. The Seventh-day Adventist Church laudably harnessed the talents of a group of trusted theological professionals⁵² to state their Fundamental Beliefs in *biblical* terms alone. In the event, however, they themselves – not merely their many critics – have demonstrated beyond quibble that *Ellen White cannot have been inspired* in penning her paramount, "Great Controversy" theology – *unless God utilised a non-canonical seer to clarify major theology his every Bible author left unexplored!!*

¹ See my n. 146, main essay.

² Especially the historicism by which it defends its claim to be the Remnant Church purportedly forecast by John of Patmos, Rev. 12:17, to complete the Gospel Commission, thereby ushering in Jesus' Return and God's Eternal Kingdom.

³ See my Information page prefacing my main essay.

⁴ From personal experience, many are dismissive of critics, simply stating that the DARCOM series has fortified their Church's sectarian dogma. However, few and far between are those who have studied it in much detail, let alone plumbed its often scholarly depths!

⁵ E.g., "Chapter 23: Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary" @ www.oakwood.edu/ocgoldmine/sdoc/27fb/chapter_23 applauds the DARCOM apologia in nn. 12, 14, 18, 23, 32, 36-39, 42.

⁶ E.g., J. Paulien, "Interpreting Revelation's Symbolism", *DARCOM 6*, 73-97, shares an excellent grasp of the *theory* of biblical source criticism. However, this is not to concur with his every purported *application* of that theory to John's enigmatic prophecy.

⁷ By far the majority of the Church's professional theologians are tacitly appalled that a core of them consented to bestow scholarly authority upon largely scientistic apologia at their leaders' "political" behest. A sample of such profound concern is accessible in R. F. Cottrell, "The 'Sanctuary Doctrine' - Asset or Liability?," @ www.jesusinstituteforum.org/AssetOrLiability.

⁸ G. W. Reid, "Foreword", *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown: R&H, 2000), ix, stress supplied.

⁹ For a typical bibliography, see my n. 28, main essay.

¹⁰ Full text, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown: R&H, 2000⁶), 9-19.

¹² *Ibid.*, 969b, stress supplied.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 972.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 973.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 973bf.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 974b.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 976bf.

³³ *Ibid.*, 977bf.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 978b.

³⁹ *Supra*, 17.

⁴² See especially Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

⁴³ Likewise 1 Tim 3:6. Major doctrine *never* depends on *isolated, enigmatic* references!

⁴⁵ *Supra*, main essay, @ my n. 32.

⁴⁸ Employed four times: 9 [*bis*], 10, 13.

⁵¹ Cf. 981a, 986b, 992a, 993b, 994.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 973a.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 973b.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 974a.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 977.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 978a.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 979a.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ F. B. Holbrook, *Handbook*, 969-1009.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 970-972.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 975f.

³² *Ibid.*, 977b.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 978.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 979.

⁴¹ *Supra*, 13.

⁴⁴ *Supra*, 14.

⁴⁷ *Supra*, 16.

⁵⁰ N.b. – in close proximity to 2:4!

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Supra*, 16.

⁵² In the main.