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### Ellen G. White's Counsel to Leaders in Conflict

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Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

ELLEN G. WHITE'S COUNSEL TO LEADERS IN CONFLICT

A Thesis  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements of the Degree  
Master of Divinity

By  
Michael Thomas White

2015

ELLEN G. WHITE'S COUNSEL TO LEADERS IN CONFLICT

A thesis  
presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of the degree  
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Michael Thomas White

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The Seventh-day Adventist church has seen a variety of conflicts and is in the middle of some now. We have been blessed with a prophetic messenger and several key conflicts happened during her lifetime. She wrote tirelessly to give counsel and guidance yet her messages are often dismissed as irrelevant or ignored. I contend that her messages for erring leaders in the church during her lifetime can guide every one of us who disagrees with others in the church or who takes on any leadership role. While we do not have the prophetic gift that she had and thus cannot write directly to someone's errors as she did, we can still follow her example and teaching in earnestly seeking the best for an erring church member as a concerned friend.

At the heart of Ellen White's message for these leaders is a call to put aside pride in order to seek to follow Christ's example. This general principle, and the many lessons that connect with it, should be at the heart of how we address conflicts in the church. Instead of focusing only on the factual validity of varying views, we also need to focus on our own hearts and attitudes. A unity in the church such as Christ called for cannot be found outside of this inner reform that starts in our own hearts rather than in our so-called opponents.

### **Problem and Purpose**

How should we relate to people in the church who adamantly disagree with us personally or with a commonly accepted position? How do we support what is admirable about controversial leaders while still disagreeing with the way they express some of

their views? Deeper than just how we argue with people we disagree with, how do we deal with leaders who are simply disagreeable? Ellen G. White's own life and works show several examples of how she responded to church leaders in conflict, showcasing principles that we can use today to argue without being argumentative.

My goal for this paper is to distill principles from Adventist history that we can apply to Adventism in the present, relating to conflict and differing views. This is not about settling today's arguments nor about rehashing the arguments of the past but rather about framing the way we discuss current issues in ways that are helpful and supported by Ellen White's practice and teaching.

### **Delimitations**

Presuppositions include that the Bible is the rule of faith and practice for believers, that the Adventist church is worth following (and not 'Babylon' from which we should flee), and that Ellen White was a messenger of the Lord. Thus I will not be dwelling on any views that require one of these core Adventist beliefs to be discounted. I am also seeking a solution from the Bible and Ellen White rather than secular fields such as conflict resolution or conflict management as other secular studies are already involved in those fields. Instead I will focus on experiences in the life of Ellen White and how she responded to them.

This paper is not designed to thoroughly treat or refute the claims of the erring leaders involved. Other works have already been written defending against the charges leveled by the key people I will focus on and in some cases the people themselves later renounced their own charges. Instead the focus will be on the context of their conflicts and how Ellen White related to them both publically and in private correspondence.



## Methodology

I will focus on the writings of Ellen White to and about a set of key people who were in conflict with her personally, with others in the church, and/or with the church as a whole, to see how she handled varying viewpoints amongst believers. The key people I will focus on are D. M. Canright, G. I. Butler, and J. H. Kellogg. I will look at them through the lens of Ellen White's own writings up to her death in 1915. Each person's story will be explored for context and then Ellen White's counsel both to and about them will be examined.

I will search through the Ellen White Estate archives for letters or any other written works by Ellen White to or about G. I. Butler, J. H. Kellogg, and D. M. Canright. As Butler's story of the 1888 General Conference session is intimately tied to the lives of A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, I will also bring in writings to or about them and thus only focus on some of the key works regarding Butler to preserve a similar length to the other two sections. My goal is to ensure that each source document, barring duplicates (such as when a single letter was later published in multiple compilation works) and some references deemed too cursory or redundant, will be cited in this paper either as a direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. I will also consult biographies of Ellen White and other history texts to help set her writings and the issues involved within their historical context. The key area of my personal contribution beyond organizing the material will be to draw the connections between the various writings cited to help tell the story and explore the reaction of Ellen White in each of the three people's lives chosen for emphasis.

## **Significance**

While several of the conflicts brought up in the study of Ellen White's treatment of these three individuals are commonly studied and form a key part of Adventist historical courses, the personal relationship piece is often missing. History can be very helpful in showing us the winning side of an argument years later, but I believe that it is this relational aspect that we need to focus on while the arguments are still in progress. The lives examined in this study show how people who have been powerfully used by God can still make grave mistakes and fracture the unity of the church body. In order to prevent a fracture – either official, into another denomination, or unofficial into warring factions within the church – I propose that we need to learn the lessons of the past to better see both how to avoid pitfalls ourselves and how to relate to others who have fallen prey to the same traps where others have been caught in the past.

CHAPTER 2  
FROM CAMP MEETING PREACHER TO OUTSPOKEN CRITIC:  
WHITE’S COUNSEL TO AN UNSTEADY UNDERSTUDY

Dudley Marvin Canright was born in 1840 in a southern Michigan farming community. He accepted the Adventist message at a camp meeting, became a preacher at 21 with the personal help of James White, and became a main proponent of the Adventist message in print and in public speaking. Sadly, he rejected Ellen White’s counsels for him and let his doubts take him in and out of his ministerial work a few times before finally leaving for good in 1887.<sup>1</sup>

How did an evangelist, apologist, and article author go from strongly defending Adventism to being an outspoken critic? What so upset him in the messages that Ellen White wrote to him that he would later share his sense of harsh treatment at her hand even years later? How did Ellen White respond to this young man, even when he turned against her? As a worker in evangelism alongside James and Ellen White, Canright was in a position to know them personally and they were able to counsel him almost as a son. His rejection of the Whites’ counsel led to the sad end they had predicted – forsaking the church and living without peace.

**Camp Meeting Revival at Home and on the Road – 1859-1873**

The first mention of D. M. Canright in the *Review and Herald* is from October 14, 1862, where he is listed in the receipts section of the last page, showing that he had paid

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<sup>1</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (SDAE), 1996 ed., s.v. “Canright, Dudley Marvin.”

for (and thus presumably started reading) this Adventist publication.<sup>2</sup> By the summer of 1866 he shows up repeatedly. In one July 1866 issue, Canright had an article published with a parable-like story regarding the delay of Christ's return, shared some of his personal testimony to encourage new believers meeting rejection, appeared as a featured evangelist in a testimony of two women who accepted the Adventist message through the labors of Canright with another preacher, and displayed his current post office box address in South Norridgewock, Maine, for those who wanted to contact him.<sup>3</sup>

### **Finding Fault with James and Ellen White – 1873-1879**

Ellen White was busy during these years between her husband's poor health with related strokes, starting work in California, and involvement in Battle Creek. In 1873 she wrote her first extant letter to the Canrights.<sup>4</sup> This letter approaches ten thousand words and leads in with a strong message from the first paragraph, "I was shown that you were both deficient in essential qualifications and that if these are not obtained your usefulness and the salvation of your own souls will be endangered."<sup>5</sup> The whole letter unfolds in this direct and concerned manner and it addresses not only D. M. Canright but also his wife Lucretia.

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<sup>2</sup> "Receipts," *RH*, Oct. 14, 1862, 160, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18621014-V20-20.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> *RH*, July 3, 1866, 36, 37, 39, 40, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18660703-V28-05.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> This letter was published in 1885 as part of Ellen G. White *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1948), 3:304-329 using "Brother and Sister A" in place of the Canrights' names, but later Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages from the Writings of Ellen G. White: Significant and Ever-Timely Counsels Gathered from Periodical Articles, Manuscript Statements, and Certain Valuable Pamphlets and Tracts Long out of Print*, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958-1980), 2:162 noted that this letter was addressed to the Canrights.

<sup>5</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 3:304.1.

The opening message to Lucretia was that unless she changed her character and became less selfish and willful and started showing others respect then she was in danger of being lost.<sup>6</sup> Similarly D. M. Canright was told that he was too “headstrong” and unyielding, such that although he had accepted the “the truth of God” he still was not truly converted and transformed. He had even lost the humility that he had when he first started preaching, because he had been puffed up by his success as a preacher.<sup>7</sup> From here, Ellen White addresses what she had been shown was growing on their hearts – a jealous and critical attitude towards her and her husband which had led the Canrights to be doubtful and closed to her counsel and unhappy with her and James’s work.<sup>8</sup>

At this point in the letter, she delivers a strong and somewhat pointed but not necessarily unkind evaluation of Canright’s attitude, tying together his pride and his critical attitude about her husband James:

Had you had one-hundredth part of the experience in real labor, care, perplexity, and burden bearing in this cause that Brother White has had, you would be better able to understand his work and be better prepared to sympathize with him in his labors, rather than to murmur and be suspicious and jealous of him.<sup>9</sup>

This combined message of Canright’s own overinflated view of his own importance and how he simply was talking from inexperience without realizing it serves as the principal point of much of the rest of this letter. Ellen White spelled out warnings against pride and self-righteousness while calling for true conversion on the part of D. M. Canright, and also, at less length but not necessarily less earnestly, to Lucretia.

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<sup>6</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 3:305.1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:305.2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:305.3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:306.1.

One practical example that Ellen White focused on was how both of the Canrights had a tendency to focus on their own convenience and ease when traveling, not bearing any real concern for the people they stayed with, but placing themselves in a high position that took for granted the help others gave them.<sup>10</sup> Particularly to D. M., she urged an attention to “the little courtesies of life” not only to help grow and shape his own character, but also to be a blessing in the homes where he visited, thus lending a warmth and honesty to his message that would make his preaching more effective.<sup>11</sup> Mrs. White even extended an appeal to the Canrights to exercise more and eat less, as they tended to be received with large meals at the houses they visited, and at the same time avoided most of the chores around the home that would give needed exercise.<sup>12</sup> She urged, “Both of you need to cultivate a love for the practical duties of life.” and warned, “You think too much of what you eat.”<sup>13</sup>

Here Ellen White builds on her initial reproach for their faultfinding attitude. Noting how she and James had already been picked apart at Battle Creek, she says that if the Canrights had had the opportunity they would have been swayed by what they heard there. In that, as she put it, “God would test our fidelity and reveal the secrets of your hearts.”<sup>14</sup> She compared their harboring of bitter gossip against the Whites to the

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<sup>10</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 3:308-309.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:309.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:310.1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:310.3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:312.2.

children of Israel's treatment of Moses, and called some of the criticism she had received, such as about her clothing, as "picking at straws."<sup>15</sup>

Against this backdrop Ellen White gives a powerful summary of a key point of her letter:

Some are eagerly watching for something to condemn in Brother and Sister White, who have grown gray in their service in the cause of God. Some express their views that the testimony of Sister White cannot be reliable. This is all that many unconsecrated ones want. The testimonies of reproof have checked their vanity and pride; but if they dared, they would go to almost any length in fashion and pride. God will give all such an opportunity to prove themselves and to develop their true characters.<sup>16</sup>

She then gave Paris, Maine, as an example of another place where this attitude had settled in and addressed the main questions such people brought up regarding her work. She acknowledged that her messages often cut people, but defended herself against their backlash, saying, "This is exactly as God designed. He meant that they should feel. It was necessary that they should feel before their proud hearts would yield up their sins and they would cleanse their hearts and lives from all iniquity."<sup>17</sup> Here she laments that some people lack firmness and "seem to be without an anchor," stumbling from one extreme to another, and instead of fighting against Satan they instead start fighting within the ranks of the church.<sup>18</sup>

Returning to the point of how the Canrights did not respect or help the people they stayed with, Ellen White added how D. M. Canright's lack of experience, combined with his arrogance, led him to have no sympathy for her husband James and the heavy

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<sup>15</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 3:312.3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:312.4.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:314.2.

burdens he had borne for thirty years.<sup>19</sup> To help Canright see what he was carelessly overlooking, she painted the history of the movement in broad strokes with an emphasis on how people like Canright could pick up their work and easily run with it whereas she and the other original leaders had had to struggle both physically and spiritually in order to find and defend the truths he now took almost for granted. Nevertheless, that struggle had refined their faith and brought them deep joy in their work in the midst of the hardships.<sup>20</sup>

Drawing on the examples of Paul and Moses, she said of herself and her husband, “Our lives are interwoven with the cause of God. We have no separate interest aside from this work.”<sup>21</sup> Especially in the story of Moses she showed how God has used leaders to remind people of their past and of their faults in order to help lead them to where He wants them to be.<sup>22</sup> This she connected with a general denouncement of the arrogance of young ministers who think they know better, stirring up trouble through their pride and ignorance. With this group she included the specific case of the Canrights in order to call them to prayerful focus on God, to focus less on themselves, and to see their faults in the light of His character.<sup>23</sup>

At the start of this section of the letter regarding how they can mend their faults, Ellen White wrote, “You have neglected your duties to both God and man. Self-

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<sup>18</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 3:315-316.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:316.2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:317-318.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:319.1.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:320.1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:320-321.



knowledge you need so much.”<sup>24</sup> This recognition of their faults would not only protect them against many temptations and change their way of thinking but also improve Canright’s effectiveness as a minister and his sense of enthusiasm for the work so that his attitude would be tied to carrying out God’s task for him rather than to what others thought of him.<sup>25</sup> On a practical level, Ellen White urged Canright to tone down his severity when correcting others, shake loose of the doubts that plagued him, and trust in God who loves him so that even when messages come that he doesn’t want to hear he won’t be bitter about them.<sup>26</sup> After a warning from the example of Adam and Eve as to how small sin can seem at first, and an exhortation to press on firmly through the effort to overcome their shortcomings “in the name of the Conqueror who overcame in our behalf,”<sup>27</sup> she warned them against misplaced sympathies but encouraged them that, “God will give both of you precious victories if you surrender yourselves wholly to Him and let His grace subdue your proud hearts.”<sup>28</sup>

To conclude this letter, Ellen White again shared how God had been working through those who earnestly sought His guidance, how perseverance in the face of obstacles leads to deep joy, how we are in danger of being blinded by Satan to the truth, and especially how there is a need for strong messages of reproof to wake people from their spiritual slumber. Any misplaced sympathy that tries to shield people from that wake-up call is just as wrong as the angels who left Heaven with Satan because of their

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<sup>24</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 3:321.2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:321-322.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:323.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:324.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:325.2.

sympathy for his cause. Instead, sympathy should be placed on those who are called to deliver these hard messages.<sup>29</sup> The last two paragraphs focus on this problem that would come to plague Canright over the years—that, “Reproofs always hurt human nature” but they are necessary because, “There are many who profess to believe the truth who are blind to their own danger.”<sup>30</sup>

Canright’s reply to Ellen White’s letter showed that he felt her letter was too harsh with him and his wife. He would again refer to this sense of harsh treatment in a more public way years later. Rather than replying immediately, Ellen White again felt a growing need to write to the Canrights, but put it off until finally in November when she was in Battle Creek she felt impressed that she needed to write to them again.<sup>31</sup> She mentioned that Canright had written criticisms about her husband James and that these were part of what finally motivated her to write, but she hadn’t launched into a defense of her husband but rather waited a few weeks and then wrote again with many of the same points from her earlier letter.<sup>32</sup> This criticism of James White would finally reach a resolution before his death, but remained a point of contention for some time before then.

She started by addressing Canright’s explanation, in his reply, that he didn’t help his hosts with domestic chores because he hadn’t had the life experience to foster those qualities, and she flatly told him, “But your letter shows that you do not see the point.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 3:327-328.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:329.

<sup>31</sup> Ellen G. White to Elder and Mrs. D. M. Canright, November 12, 1873, published, in part, in *Manuscript Releases: From the Files of the Letters and Manuscripts Written by Ellen G. White*, 21 vols. (Silver Spring, MD: E. G. White Estate, 1981-1993), 15:231.

<sup>32</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 15:231.3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:232.1.

She acknowledged that their hosts had an obligation to help them but pointed out that they, too, had an obligation as guests that they had woefully neglected.<sup>34</sup>

This lack of reciprocal kindness regarding hospitality shown to the Canrights is then shown as a core piece of one of Ellen White's broader concerns. She explains that she brought that up because Canright had written to her about his plan to set out as a self-sustaining evangelist so that he could have a greater experience in exercising faith and trust in God.<sup>35</sup> Ellen White then explains, though, that he simply cannot have that experience he is picturing – the experience she and her husband James had gone through in the early years of the Advent movement – because “Times now have entirely changed” and what was once a small and rejected group earnestly seeking truth had grown into a relatively respected group with well-reasoned positions for their beliefs, ready to be shared by young preachers like Canright.<sup>36</sup> In his case, however, she feared that his focus on himself and his own comforts would further his tendency to take all the credit for the work God did through him and misuse the generous spirit of church members to support him.<sup>37</sup> Here she mentions a specific example from a letter that Canright had written to her asking what to do because he had rented an expensive hall to hold meetings in and he was worried he wouldn't get reimbursed for it.<sup>38</sup> He didn't press on in faith and in this letter now Ellen White berates him for letting the opportunity go, especially since it is in

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<sup>34</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 15:232.1

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:233.2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:233.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:234.2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:235.1.

line with what he claims he wants to do.<sup>39</sup> In this context she tells Canright that he gets too caught up in the size of the crowd there to hear him, feeling dejected when there are only a few people there, and she then tells both him and his wife, “You both need a thorough work done for yourselves before you are fit to labor for others.”<sup>40</sup>

With that closure to the first point in her letter, Ellen White turns to address how the Canrights were raising their child. She starts by pointing out that she had tried kindly sharing with them what God has revealed to her about ministers’ children, but they had spurned her advice and seemed offended that she would even offer it. Knowing that they don’t really want to hear what she has to say about their child, she continues, “Nevertheless, I shall trace upon paper my settled convictions.”<sup>41</sup> Then she states the heart of her concern – their child is fussy and prone to throwing tantrums if not given his way, so when they insist on taking him with them in their ministry work it piles on another hardship with the already disrespected people they stay with.<sup>42</sup>

Both of the Canrights, she wrote, would often let their child cry and make no effort to tend to him, apparently on the idea that they were helping to break him of the habit of crying but in fact making him worse, to say nothing of the effect this had on the families they stayed with.<sup>43</sup> Ellen White then brought up a time when she and James had been the hosts for the Canrights and it was by no means a pleasant memory. Based on that experience she warned, “You were both self-righteous and self-sufficient, exalted too

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<sup>39</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 15:235.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:235.4.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:236.1.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:236-237.

high in your own opinion. You have a work to do in governing your child, which you have sinfully neglected.”<sup>44</sup>

Here Ellen White adds how Canright tends to be overbearing, both with people he talks with in his ministry and also with his wife, and she calls that “wholly unbecoming a young minister of the gospel.”<sup>45</sup> In this context of his attitude towards others and especially his wife, she gives the pointed advice:

You need to consider that others have just as good a right to think and have an opinion of their own as you have; that if all were just like you, and did as you do, there would be a very sad state of things in a short time.<sup>46</sup>

She ties this to his selfishness and disregard for other people’s wants and feelings. Ellen White brings up the specific case of a Mrs. Hutchinson who had developed a strong bias against “Adventist Sabbathkeepers” because of Canright’s overbearing treatment.<sup>47</sup> To give the story some context, although she didn’t know the entire story, she explains,

She is now in deep affliction because of the death of her son, Fred. If you, a young man, could talk to my husband, a gray-headed, sick man, your father in the gospel, with such disrespect and with so little sense of propriety, I am fearful that you have given cause of complaint to Mrs. Hutchinson, a woman of gray hairs, a woman of influence.<sup>48</sup>

This is where her advice and rebuke comes to a practical point – Canright’s attitude was deeply hurting people who were already in hard times, including not only herself and her husband but also the very people Canright was trying to reach with his evangelism.

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<sup>44</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 15:237.3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:237.4.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:238.1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:238.2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:238.3.

Continuing on this practical level she urges Canright to be more thoughtful and less rash in his actions and to anchor his mood so that he isn't tossed up and down based on small circumstances.<sup>49</sup> She sums this up by calling on him to surrender to God and "Trust less in D. M. Canright, and more in the power of God's grace."<sup>50</sup> She goes on to encourage both of the Canrights to self-denial, to heed her message from God that they devote themselves to God's glory over their own, and surrender to God who alone can change and refine them.<sup>51</sup>

Before she sent this letter, Ellen White added on to it three days later on November 15, 1873. She gave an encouraging report of the meeting she was at and then turned to addressing the Canright's remarks about how the church was "hammered at" and that this was making it less prosperous.<sup>52</sup> Then she makes the interesting statement, "I was upon the point at the conference last spring of plainly stating in the conference what had been shown me in regard to you, but I did not feel exactly clear."<sup>53</sup> She then explained that others have started talking about the Canrights in a negative light so she didn't end up needing to bring it up, and especially their concern seemed to be about the way Canright preached so that, "in the very words used, 'He preached D. M. Canright

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<sup>49</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 15:238.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:240.1.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:241-242.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:242.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:242.5.

and not Jesus Christ.”<sup>54</sup> She wanted them to be aware of what others were saying and what negative influence they were having.<sup>55</sup>

Here she again brings up the Canrights’ conduct when they visited her and her husband James, such as D. M. Canright’s remark to James that he didn’t want to be bossed around like a boy or a servant, to which Ellen White here poses several pointed questions about just what he thought he was doing and what disrespect he had for the things the Whites had done for them while serving as their hosts.<sup>56</sup> She then rebuked their unyielding spirit even when the Whites prayed for them and in the midst of this rebuke she pleaded, “Consider me not an enemy because I tell you the truth. I long and pray that you may be found in your right mind sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning of Him.”<sup>57</sup>

She then turns towards specific charges that apparently Canright had brought up in his letter, all regarding the habits and conduct of the Whites, such as that they used too much butter (to which she argues that they hardly use butter for themselves but only set it out for guests), that yes they do use “a little milk and some sugar” but that they’ve never taught against doing so, and especially about cheese because Lucretia had bought cheese and the Whites had passed on her offer to eat some of it so finally they served it to some guests.<sup>58</sup> Similarly she defended herself saying that they haven’t used pepper in years and she had only asked Lucinda to get a little of it to treat some beans, and that it seemed

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<sup>54</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 15:243.1.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:243.3.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:243-244.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:244-245.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:245-246.

to her like Lucretia was trying to twist her own actions in bringing foods like cheese and pepper to the Whites' home into some accusation that the Whites were being hypocritical about what food they served.<sup>59</sup> Moving from food to dress, Ellen White wrote – apparently responding to Canright's mention of them – that she didn't wear corsets herself except to relieve bloating but she had not written against them and yes she did have a dress with steel springs in it but the things she wrote against hooped skirts using those was only about larger hoops (and she didn't even really like the dress she had with them anyways.)<sup>60</sup> There was even a mention that Canright had accused them of breaking the Sabbath, which Ellen White simply did not understand what he could possibly be referring to.<sup>61</sup>

Ellen White then compared the Canrights to the Pharisees trying to trap Christ in his words or actions but assured them in closing that, “I have spoken plainly but I assure you I have nothing but love and an earnest for you to come where God can use you to His glory.”<sup>62</sup> She ended her letter with directions on where to write back to her since they would be traveling.<sup>63</sup> It would take Canright a few years to finally address the way he felt about this letter with Ellen White, but his wife slowly came around to the warning message as her health faded.

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<sup>59</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 15:246.3.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:247.2.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:247.3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:248.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 15:248.4. Then she adds that if they want to write back to her they'll need to send it to Santa Rosa, California as they were leaving there soon. A final note from November 24 with a good report from the previous Sabbath ends the letter, so apparently the letter was finally mailed from California.



## Despondent Widower on a Wandering Journey – 1879-1881

In February 1879, Ellen White wrote a letter of encouragement to D. M. Canright's wife Lucretia who was in poor health. In this letter she reflects warmly on how Lucretia's feebleness has turned her heart back towards Christ.<sup>64</sup> Near the end of this poignant letter Ellen White brings up the way Lucretia had wandered in her faith but quickly assures her that those past mistakes needn't distress her now, saying:

Christ has been loved by you, although your faith has sometimes been feeble and your prospects confused. But Jesus is your Saviour. He does not save you because you are perfect, but because you need Him and in your imperfection have trusted in Him. Jesus loves you, my precious child.<sup>65</sup>

When this letter was reprinted in *Manuscript Releases*, volume 8, it adds a somber note that helps fit this letter in context – Lucretia (Cranson) Canright died just over a month after this letter was written on March 29, 1879.<sup>66</sup>

Canright is mentioned in church publications as a speaker at a temperance event at a new Adventist church in Camden, Ohio on December 28 and 29, 1879.<sup>67</sup> By this time he had become President of the Ohio Conference and this short article is signed off on by D. M. Canright as the President.<sup>68</sup>

Various issues of the *Review and Herald* from 1880 and 1881 list several books for sale for use in sharing evangelism and 4 books by D. M. Canright are listed covering

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<sup>64</sup> Ellen White to Lucretia Cranson Canright, Feb. 21, 1879, Letter 46, 1878, published in *Manuscript Releases*, 8:127.

<sup>65</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 8:127.2

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> D. M. Canright, "Ohio H. and T. Society," *RH*, Jan. 15, 1880, 44, accessed June 18, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18800115-V55-03.pdf>.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

the trustworthiness of the Bible as the Word of God, the role of angels, “the two laws”, and the Sabbath.<sup>69</sup>

The *Review and Herald* from April 15, 1880, sheds some light on the different ways Canright was regarded at the time. In this same issue, Canright was listed with other church leaders in contention like Dr. Kellogg and Elder Waggoner as men who need to be reached out to; was featured as a special guest for meetings to be held in New York, and himself published an article systematically surveying the uses of ‘forever’ to refer to hell in the New Testament. He argued that each text is misused when applied to a view of ‘eternal hell’ as most other Christians teach it.<sup>70</sup>

The September 30, 1880 issue of the *Review and Herald* gave a report of the Ohio Conference session and noted that Canright initially turned down the nomination to the presidency for another term, but when the other suggested candidate bowed out for health reasons, Canright finally agreed with the stipulation that he be allowed “the privilege of being absent from the Conference a share of the time,” as his own signed report phrased it.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *RH*, Jan. 15, 1880, 47, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18800115-V55-03.pdf>; *RH*, July 29, 1880, 95, accessed June 5, 2015, /1 [accessed June 5, 2015]; *RH*, Sept. 30, 1880, 239, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18800930-V56-15.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> N. Wardner, “Adventism,” *RH*, April 15, 1880, 242, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18800415-V55-16.pdf>; B. L. Whitney, “State Meetings for Penn and N. Y.,” *ibid.*, 256; D. M. Canright, “The New Testament on Endless Torment,” *ibid.*, 250.

<sup>71</sup> D. M. Canright, “Ohio Conference,” *RH*, Sept. 30, 1880, 238, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18800930-V56-15.pdf>.

By the spring of 1881 Canright seemed to be back into his former preaching ministry and shared a good report of the meetings he was with in Maine.<sup>72</sup> However, by his own later admission, Canright was drifting away from the Adventist church even as he was working in the middle of it, holding meetings and serving as a Conference president. In the middle of this bumpy road with the church, Ellen White wrote to Canright from Battle Creek. Her letter is dated October 15, 1880 and it starts with her sadness yet lack of surprise at what is only called “your decision” but presumably deals with his choice to leave the church – a decision that would prove to be one of a series of similar decisions during the 1880s.<sup>73</sup>

She is sorry to see him go (and her concern for him comes through more clearly, later in the letter), but she appeals to Canright, “for your own sake as well as for Christ’s sake: keep away from our people, do not visit them and talk your doubts and darkness among them.”<sup>74</sup> She cites his desire for recognition and position as one of the sources of his doubts and asks him firmly to keep those doubts to himself rather than let Satan use him to sow those doubts in others.<sup>75</sup> Not giving up on him, though, she appeals to the humble and humiliated life of Christ as the example that Canright needs to follow.<sup>76</sup> The Spirit of Christ could change Canright’s life and the lives of all Christ’s followers, she

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<sup>72</sup> D. M. Canright, “Maine,” *RH*, Mar. 29, 1881, 202, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18800930-V56-15.pdf>.

<sup>73</sup> Ellen White to D. M. Canright, Oct. 15, 1880, Letter 1, 1880, published in Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages from the Writings of Ellen G. White: Significant and Ever-Timely Counsels Gathered from Periodical Articles, Manuscript Statements, and Certain Valuable Pamphlets and Tracts Long out of Print*, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958-1980), 2:162.

<sup>74</sup> E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, 2:162.2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:163.1.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:163.

continued, if they would let that Spirit work through them, but alas she feared that Canright might have resigned himself too far from that Spirit to return.<sup>77</sup>

Despite her fear that Canright would not heed her message and come back, she urged him to carefully think about the decision he was making, comparing it to the temptation of Christ to gain “worldly honor and glory” at the cost of acknowledging Satan as lord.<sup>78</sup> She asked some pointed questions about what excuse Canright could render in the final judgment for his actions, and warned him that his path to return to God would likely be a long and difficult one because of the decisions he had made.<sup>79</sup> She called his faith “rootless,” saying, “If it does not sustain you in trial and comfort you in affliction, it is because your faith has not been made strong by effort and pure by sacrifice.”<sup>80</sup>

Perhaps surprisingly, she mentioned receiving a letter from Canright explaining his course of action. Some people close to her had encouraged her to read it but she refused because she didn’t want any doubt to creep in, comparing it to a “filthy stream” that could pollute her mind, and again urging him not to share those doubts with any other people.<sup>81</sup> She then pled with him to either completely leave the church and join those who believed like him, or repent and come back, but either way, not spread his doubt within the church.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, 2:164.2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:165.1.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:165.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:166.2.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:166.4.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:166.5.

Again she reminded Canright of the calling God had for him, a higher calling than any worldly fame he might chase after, but that part of that calling involved God's desire "to refine and ennoble" him.<sup>83</sup> She noted how the reward of that work would be far greater than any recognition or renown – "the peace and joy would come to your soul, purer, richer, and more satisfying than the conquerors in earthly warfare."<sup>84</sup> She again called him to make no delay in turning back to God, but "Let D. M. Canright be swallowed up in Jesus."<sup>85</sup> She painted a word picture of the paths to death and to Heaven, with pain and warnings on the lower path and joy and peace on the upper path.<sup>86</sup>

Ellen White ends her letter with a strong warning that Canright is walking on a perilous path, one that his own pride has pushed him down, even though he has been shown the danger in it.<sup>87</sup> In a sense, she notes how it is his desire to gain without sacrifice or hardship that is leading him astray.<sup>88</sup> She ends with an appeal to Paul's perseverance as an example that Canright should follow, pleading with him, "for your soul's sake grasp firmly again the hand of God, I beseech you."<sup>89</sup> Her own weariness here cuts the letter short, with her final prayer that God will rescue him.<sup>90</sup>

The exact effect this letter had on Canright is hard to gauge, but based on his later testimony he certainly thought about it a lot. It took several years before his attitude

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<sup>83</sup> E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, 2:167.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:168.1.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:168.3.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:169.1.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:169.2.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:169.3.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:169-170.

towards Ellen White and her letters was revealed. The new year of 1881 would see him reaching out to his former leaders and mentors within the church, but the year would also include the loss of the man who brought him into the Adventist faith. Some reconciliation, at least, would come his way, but would it be enough?

### **Reconciliation and Doubt with Lucy Canright – 1881-1886**

James White died in August, 1881, and D. M. Canright wrote a memorial piece about him in the *Review and Herald*.<sup>91</sup> He shared how Brother White had been the one to bring him to the Adventist message and then, five years after his conversion, had given him a set of charts and a Bible and mentored him as a preacher. Canright then focused on the last few months of James White's life, acknowledging that there had been a divide between them, but acknowledging that James had been quick to admit and ask for forgiveness for his mistakes and had welcomed Canright back as a friend. From his experience working with James White, Canright wrote of him as a "true Christian man" who bore many trials to his patience and who at the end of his life was focused on being more compassionate and tender with people, even as he was with Canright himself. At a personal level, he even said of James White that, "he has helped me as a father would help his son."

D. M. Canright himself outlined his falling away and re-joining of the Adventist church in a special article titled "Danger of Giving Way to Discouragement and Doubts" which was published in the *Review and Herald*, a couple weeks after his piece on James

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<sup>90</sup> E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, 2:170.1.

<sup>91</sup> D. M. Canright, "My Remembrance of Eld. White," *RH*, Aug, 30, 1881, 153, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18810830-V58-10.pdf>.

White, on September 13, 1881.<sup>92</sup> He was already back working for the church by the time this article was published – in fact, a few pages later in this same issue of the *Review and Herald* he is mentioned in connection with the first annual session of the new Conference of the Province of Quebec in Canada.<sup>93</sup> In his article he explained how discouragement that his work wasn't amounting to anything had been brought on by "personal trials in connection with the work which seemed to me to be more than I could bear."<sup>94</sup> He then thanked G. I. Butler and the Whites for meeting with him in Battle Creek in January to talk with him about his doubts, which he described as "all they could, and all I could ask, to assist me."<sup>95</sup> James White is specifically mentioned as doing "all a man could" to remove the "trial between" them, leading to the two preachers working together again for a few weeks. By his own account, this work helped put his discouragement and troubles in perspective for him and he came to regret his slipping away and wrote resolutely that, "I think I have learned a lesson by it which I shall not need to learn again as long as I live." He also apologized to anyone who was affected by the path he had taken and explained that he had tried to keep it hidden from everyone as best he could. He closed the article with a reaffirmation of the church's beliefs and that even though life brought trials, his work for God in the Adventist church brought him peace and joy.

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<sup>92</sup> D. M. Canright, "Danger of Giving Way to Discouragement and Doubts," *RH*, Sept. 13, 1881, 185, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18810913-V58-12.pdf>.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

By his own later report, however, Canright again started feeling unsatisfied with his work and upset with Ellen White and her testimonies. Three years later, in October 1884 he again wrote an article for the *Review and Herald* laying bare his struggle, this one titled “To My Brethren, the S. D. Adventists.”<sup>96</sup> He gets right to the point, explaining how he had left his former church work 2 years earlier (and thus about a year after his resolute article when he thought he had settled his doubts for good) and now he wanted to explain why, starting with a testimony he received “some twelve years ago” from Ellen White that, as he put it, he thought was “too severe, and that some of it was not true.” Thus he was likely referring to her letter, his response, and her second letter from 1873 where Ellen White had given pointed yet loving warnings and messages to both Canright and his late wife Lucretia. Here he admits that he should have pressed on in his work for God but instead he had quit preaching but later reconciled (presumably referring to the period explained in his 1881 article) but, he admits, he still “did not feel exactly right toward Sr. White, nor fully accept all the testimony.”

His story continued with another testimony “some five years since”<sup>97</sup> which he admitted similarly upset him, turned him against Ellen White, and led him to give up on his work. It is here in his article that we start to see his inner turmoil – he admits that he couldn’t find peace in giving up the work, so he went back to preaching, but he didn’t fully agree with everything the church taught (especially Ellen White’s testimonies), and his preaching didn’t go over too well as a result. Then he turned to farming for a while

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<sup>96</sup> D. M. Canright, “To My Brethren, the S. D. Adventists,” *RH*, Oct. 7, 1884, 633-634, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18841007-V61-40.pdf>.

<sup>97</sup> If “since” is an archaic synonym for “ago,” he means five years *before* the present article (1884 - 5 = 1879), not five years after the previously mentioned testimony (1873 + 5 = 1878).



but in that isolation his doubts grew. As he put it, “So it always is when a person lets go of one point of the truth, - he begins to drift he knows not whither.”<sup>98</sup>

His road to restoration came with his attendance to the Northern Michigan camp meeting which G. I. Butler was leading. Again, as in 1881, Canright and Butler talked and the doubts started to soften, so he went on to the Jackson camp meeting to continue talking with Butler and finally, by his own account, “Light came into my mind, and for the first time in years I could truly say that I believed the testimonies. All my hard feelings toward Sr. White vanished in a moment, and I felt a tender love towards her. Everything looked different.”<sup>99</sup> This article in the *Review and Herald* was, in a sense, part of his confession process for mistakes he had made in the past and a public resolution that he was on a road to be more humble and tender.

Here Canright brings up examples of discouragement from the Bible such as the people of Israel in the wilderness and the people who followed Jesus for His miracles but left Him for His teachings. He tied his experience to theirs as well as to Peter’s denial with the rooster crows, and noted how the Adventist church with the 3<sup>rd</sup> angel’s message should anticipate such shaking disappointments following in the pattern we see in the Bible. Unlike his 1881 article, this one pins his happy turning point just a few weeks prior to the article’s publication and he joyously wrote, “Friday, Sept. 26, while on the camp-ground at Jackson, Mich., I felt in my heart the most remarkable change that I ever experienced in all my life. It was a complete reversion of all my feelings.”<sup>100</sup> The article

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<sup>98</sup> D. M. Canright, “To My Brethren, the S. D. Adventists”

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

ends with his public confession that he believes in the testimonies now and with a call to devotion to God as the way to live a holy life.

Canright continued writing for the *Review and Herald* and of note is an article from September 7, 1886 which deals with suggested reading for children. In this article he naturally places the Bible first and includes some other church writings and Bible histories, but the part that Ellen White wrote to him about involved his recommendation (and sale at the Review and Herald office) of story books like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Robinson Crusoe*.<sup>101</sup> Shortly after this article was published, Ellen White wrote to Canright urging him to give more thought to what he was writing in church publications.<sup>102</sup>

Part of Ellen White's concern came from the material itself, as she explained, "I have repeatedly seen the evil of reading such books as you recommend, and have an article all prepared, cautioning our youth in this very matter."<sup>103</sup> Of more note to this study, however, is her concern for Canright himself. In the midst of her caution against such works of fiction for children, she notes, "You must be getting away from Jesus and His teachings and do not realize it."<sup>104</sup> She urged him to think and pray before writing, to not let his own ideas spill out as a guide to others but rather to humbly seek God's

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<sup>101</sup> D. M. Canright, "A List of Good Books for Young Folks," *RH*, Sept. 7, 1886, 570, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18860907-V63-36.pdf>.

<sup>102</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 5:516.1. The specific date of writing is unknown, but the testimony starts with "I have just read *the Review and Herald* and have seen your article giving a list of good books for our youth," which suggests that this was written in the fall of 1886.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:516.1.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:516.2.

message for His people.<sup>105</sup> She warned him strongly against the way he had been writing articles, saying, “If you become self-sufficient and self-confident, the Lord will certainly leave you to make some mistake.”<sup>106</sup> She urged him to focus on Christ and to be very careful not to damage the work of the church by his careless remarks in his articles.<sup>107</sup>

Ellen White didn’t leave him without encouragement – she thanked God for his part in the work and reminded him of Jesus’ love for him, but nevertheless she called him to prayer and a closer walk with God.<sup>108</sup> This counsel was not just for his own sake, but also for the sake of the other leaders who might have to work to correct the wrong ideas that he spread in error.<sup>109</sup> For both the young people who might be led astray by the books Canright had suggested and for Canright himself she urged a deeper study of the word of God and a closer relationship with Christ.<sup>110</sup> Regarding the books, she earnestly asked him to stop selling the fiction books he had suggested like *Robinson Crusoe* and *Aesop’s Fables*, saying that these would be a distraction for children when they really should be studying more about the Bible.<sup>111</sup>

To conclude this letter, Ellen White drew on the theme of the antitypical Day of Atonement in which the people of God should be ever more careful to seek after God in

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<sup>105</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 5:517.1.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:517.2.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:517.2.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:518.1.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:518.1.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:518-519.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:519.3.

humility and not be led astray by distractions.<sup>112</sup> This letter ends with a warm note, with her prayer, “May the Lord bless you with spiritual eyesight.” and then adds her personal concern, “I write this in love, seeing your danger. Please consider these things carefully and prayerfully.”<sup>113</sup>

### **Final Departure and Seventh-day Adventism Renounced – 1887-1889**

Canright left the Adventist church for the last time in early 1887 and by March was a preacher in a Baptist church.<sup>114</sup> By the spring of 1887, Ellen White was increasingly concerned about Canright’s path and she was even given a dream about him. She shared this dream with G. I. Butler and Uriah Smith in a letter from Basle, Switzerland dated April 5, 1887,<sup>115</sup> but she also wrote about it to Canright himself in an undated letter presumably from late March or early April. In her dream, she saw Canright on a boat in rough water and he decided he would leave the boat but the captain assured him the vessel was sturdy and bound for harbor. Canright insisted that he was sure he would drown on this boat and decided to take his chances on another boat he saw going by, but the captain urged him not to leave saying that the other boat was surely going to sink before it reached the harbor as it was in bad condition and headed for rocks. Her dream ended with the captain telling Canright, “If you had more knowledge you

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<sup>112</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 5:520.1.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> See Douglass, Herbert E., *Messenger of the Lord*, Chapter 21 “Dissidents, Within and Without,” accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/mol/Chapt21.html>.

<sup>115</sup> Ellen White to Brethren Butler and Smith, Apr. 5, 1887, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 16:282.1.

could discern between the spurious and the genuine, the holy and that appointed to utter ruin.”<sup>116</sup> This was the message that Ellen White conveyed to Canright in her letter.

In addition to her dream, she wrote about a feeling like Canright was in trouble and a letter she received, apparently from him, confirmed this.<sup>117</sup> She urged him to not make any hasty decisions, to stand still rather than stumble around in darkness, and to wait for God to make things clear for him.<sup>118</sup> As she had been working on the first part of *Great Controversy* at this time, she added a section about how the Fall of Adam and of Satan both were on her mind a lot and she warned Canright about how the devil often appears like an angel of light and misuses Scripture to confuse people.<sup>119</sup> She ended with a reminder that there isn’t much time left and that Satan knows his time is short so we need to stand firm in God and do His work lest we be caught up in the devil’s traps.<sup>120</sup>

A short time after this letter about her dream, Ellen White wrote again to Canright in what was apparently her last appeal for him to come back to the Adventist church. This letter shows her deep concern for Canright and her earnest pleas to shake him from his doubts.<sup>121</sup> She started by mentioning a letter he had sent to her and then by reviewing some of his history with doubt and restoration into the church, noting how his decision to largely keep silent about his doubts was admirable and how many had been praying for

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<sup>116</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 5:571.3.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:572.1.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:572.2.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:572.3.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:573.1.

<sup>121</sup> Ellen White to D. M. Canright, Apr. 20, 1887, Letter 22, 1887, published in E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 5:621-628, addressed to “Brother O” but confirmed as Canright in E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, 2:161-162 introduction to Letter 1, 1880.

him.<sup>122</sup> She then brought up a sober subject – the last time she was with Canright’s late wife before she died, and how concerned Lucretia had been that her husband might leave the faith and lead their children astray.<sup>123</sup> Ellen White shared how Lucretia Canright had told her about her original rejection of the letter Ellen White had written to them, but then Lucretia had come to see the truth and value in the warning given them, but she still was afraid that her husband’s doubt would continue.<sup>124</sup> On a more personal level, White brought up a certain camp meeting where Canright had apologized to her for saying mean things about her and she had told him she forgave him, assuring him that really his trouble was with the message and thus with God more than it was with her as the messenger. She reminded Canright that through that talk with her, he had felt convicted and felt like he “had been born again, converted for the first time.”<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, Ellen White knew then and was now proved right that he would have to struggle with this again.<sup>126</sup>

Here we see more of the compassion that Ellen White had for Canright. “My heart aches every time I think of you; my soul is sad indeed.” She shares her deep concern for the salvation of everyone, urging him to be “yoked up with Christ” to let Him shape his character.<sup>127</sup> She compares Canright’s case to that of the people of Capernaum, who had seen and known so much about Jesus but yet had not followed what they had

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<sup>122</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 5:621.2.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:621.3.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:622.1.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:623.1.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:623.2.

seen and known.<sup>128</sup> Here she concisely summed up his lifework: “The greater part of your life has been employed in presenting doctrines which, during the last part of your life, you will repudiate and condemn.”<sup>129</sup>

As in her previous letter, she brought up how she was working on the first part of *Great Controversy*. The fall of Adam and Eve as well as the earlier fall of Satan were both on her mind and she was deeply troubled to see people willingly rejecting God and His Law as in those first falls.<sup>130</sup> She plainly tells Canright that he is standing on Satan’s side in trying “to make void the law of God” and urging him to return to the upward path of following Him, not just for his own sake but for the sake of those whom he would lead astray with his new false preaching.<sup>131</sup> She further lays out how he and his present wife, Lucy, and children are not living the life they should, fooling people into thinking they are a good family and that he is a good man when really that isn’t true.<sup>132</sup> Acknowledging that this might come across as harsh she adds, “You may feel angry with me because I have thus put the case, but so it is, and so it will be with every transgressor of God’s holy law.”<sup>133</sup> Then she shares the basis for her concern – that in the Judgment, he will not have any excuse for his rejection of his old path and further his rejection of the Law.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 5:624.1.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:625.1.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:625.2.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:626.1.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:627.1.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:627.2.

She laments that so many, not just Canright but certainly including him, do not realize that they are being watched by God and the angels.<sup>135</sup>

This letter ends with a plain appeal for him to return to the commandments, which he knows well, and with an earnest plea as a friend.<sup>136</sup> She passionately writes, “I love your soul and the soul of your wife and the souls of your innocent children, and this is why I now address you.”<sup>137</sup> She then asked him to return to her the earlier letter she had sent regarding the dream, (presumably they had already discussed the reasons why she wanted it back), and ended her letter, “Yours with much sorrow and pity and love.”<sup>138</sup>

The *Review and Herald* published a special issue in December 1887 specifically focused on responding to Canright, with most of the articles written by G. I. Butler and Uriah Smith.<sup>139</sup> This “Extra” contained articles explaining Canright’s time in the church, directly refuting some of his claims such as that Adventism is ‘oppressive’ or that Canright was wronged by James and Ellen White. It also laid side by side articles written by Canright, previously for, but now against, key topics like the Law and the Sabbath. The editors placed the headings “Canright in the Darkness” over his newer articles, and “Canright in the Light” over his older articles. Mention was made how Canright had spread his ideas in religious publications that will listen to him such as the Michigan Methodist *Christian Advocate* and the Des Moines, Iowa, Disciples of Christ publication,

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<sup>135</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 5:628.1.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:628.2.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:628.

<sup>139</sup> “Reply to Eld. Canright’s Attacks on S. D. Adventists,” *RH*, Dec. 1887, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18871231-V64-50e.pdf>.



*Oracle*, as well as some others like the *World's Crisis* from Boston or the first-day Adventist *Bible Banner*.<sup>140</sup>

## Epilogue

Canright went on to write two books against his former faith. The first, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, was published in 1889. The second, published posthumously a few months after his death in 1919, was titled, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White – Her Claims Refuted*. D. W. Reavis later shared a memory in his autobiography that sheds some light on Canright's heart during these years. The two men had met around the time Reavis had graduated from the Battle Creek College and they had kept in touch now and then over the years as Canright drifted away from the church. In 1903 Reavis invited Canright to come to a church workers' meeting in Battle Creek and Reavis recalls how Canright seemed to be torn between joy and grief to be back with his church workers. After the meeting, Reavis met with Canright privately and tried to convince the former Adventist leader to repent and return but in the end Canright decided, through tears, that it was too late for him to come back. Even still, he left Reavis with the advice, "D.W., whatever you do, don't ever fight the message."<sup>141</sup> Even after he had published his book renouncing his former faith, he still had a torn heart and part of him wanted to return.

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<sup>140</sup> "Reply to Eld. Canright's Attacks on S. D. Adventists," 2.

<sup>141</sup> D. W. Reavis, *I Remember* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, n.d.), 117-120

## Summary and Conclusions

### Summary

D. M. Canright accepted the Adventist message with joy as a young man and, with the encouragement and eventual mentorship of James White, set out to be one of the leading evangelists of the Adventist church in its early days. He toured with the Whites to help with various evangelistic meetings and went on to be an evangelist in his own right. In the days before telecommunications media allowed for widespread recognition of a famous preacher, Canright was one of the most famous Adventist apologists and evangelists.

Despite his zeal for his work, Canright harbored an egotism that drove a wedge between his heart and his work. Ellen White saw this and wrote to him and his wife Lucretia, pointedly yet with deep concern for their well-being, in words that cut the couple to the core. Lucretia, by Ellen White's later account, came to accept the truth of the message of reproof and let the cutting words work to remove her pride. Sadly her husband left the wound open and years later he finally revealed how it had festered, turning him against Ellen White and her message, even to the point of making him doubt the whole Adventist faith. The Whites and a few other close leaders in the church helped him work through that painful doubt, and he thought he had finally closed the wound but thought he was able to make his peace with the Whites before James died, the wound broke open again a few years later.

This pattern of making peace with Ellen White and her message of reproof then later doubting it again and thus doubting all of what he was teaching cycled in and out

until it led him out of the denomination for good. The ebb and flow of his doubts seemed to continue even after that since he seemed torn over the death of Ellen White yet he still wrote a book against her which would be published after he died.

In the end, it seemed that Canright was tossed around without a firm anchor. He rose on swells of public favor over his work only to later drop into the troughs of poorly attended meetings and clouds of doubt. Ellen White tried earnestly to point him to the Rock and His example of humility that could calm his hectic life and level out his faith experience, but sadly he didn't follow her advice, at least not for long enough to help. Finally Ellen White had to write against him, but she waited until he had not only left the church and joined another denomination but also started writing against his former faith. Then she finally had to look after those left in the church who might be swayed by his message. Canright and Ellen White had been through a lot together and they had an almost mother-son relationship, but it was not enough to keep Canright from spreading his doubts to those who would listen in other denominations, turning him into one of the fiercest critics of the Adventist church.

### Conclusions

The legacy left behind by D. M. Canright shifted from that of one of Adventism's first great evangelists to one of its first major critics. Even as the shift was taking place and Canright himself teetered on the edge, Ellen White tried to reach him and bring him back into the church. He had allowed his sense of maltreatment under her pen to poison his thinking, but she was able, with the help of other church leaders, to bring him around, at least for a time. Most of his conflict was kept out of the public eye until it had passed

and he had been restored in the faith, then he shared his testimony as both an encouragement and a warning to others. One of the most striking points from this study for me personally was in how such a repentant man could still go on to stumble and fall again, greater than he had fallen before. I do not doubt his sincerity that he thought he had settled his doubts once and for good nor the efficacy of the Whites and others who tried to help him. He simply never allowed the Holy Spirit do the deep personal work on him that Ellen White had told him he needed. Instead, he went on to hurt some of those closest to him with his waffling journey.

Looking at Canright's relationship with the Whites, this is a tragic story of betrayal. Ellen White had a strong message for Canright but she delivered it with compassion. I believe that her approach is vindicated, that she did everything she could to help him, even though he eventually left the church. She expressed an earnest concern for his wellbeing and his work. Even though each of us do not have her prophetic gift and thus cannot speak to someone with the same authority she had, we can still show this deep compassion for an erring person's soul that Ellen White showed. If she could show that concern for someone close to her who had insulted her and cast her in groundless suspicion – to say nothing of the deplorable way he had treated her ailing husband – surely we can extend that same level of concern for anyone we feel to be in the wrong or who has hurt us.

James White was perhaps the person most hurt by Canright, and Ellen White certainly was hurt deeply by his attitude and behavior as well. Both were able to forgive him and reconcile with him. D. M. Canright and his first wife Lucretia both took to nitpicking, trying to find flaws in the Whites, and it hurt them both. Ellen White had firm

words to say to them about how wrong that was, but she did so with an attitude of redemption. She wanted to not only restore them in their walk with God but also reconcile with them personally, as did her husband. Fortunately, Lucretia reconciled with the Whites before her death and Canright was able to mend his relationship with James before he died. Other church leaders were also brought in to work with Canright and by his own admission they were very helpful and restorative. He was treated firmly yet kindly. This is how such people should be treated. Their behavior is wrong and it is hurting people, so it must be addressed, but it should be met with open warmth and not frigid revenge.

Sadly, Canright could not seem to stick with his commitments. Without deep roots to his faith, he went from being an outspoken apologist for Adventism to a dejected doubter to a reborn evangelist to finally a bold opponent to the church. Ellen White had tried to warn him about his lack of depth and had told him to look to Jesus and His humility as the focus in order to grow into that firm faith he needed. She had told him it would be a painful process but had pointedly told him it was one he needed to go through. He wanted to instead find that depth by trusting God's providence the way earlier leaders like the Whites themselves had needed to in the early days of the Adventist movement but she told him those days had past. Even when some opportunities did come his way to try to prove his faith, he fell flat. No matter how many people we share the Gospel message with or how understandably we present it in print, we still have to have the personal relationship with God to keep us rooted when the storms of life come.

CHAPTER 3  
THE “LOVE FOR SUPREMACY” IN THE WORK OF J. H. KELLOGG

**Background**

“I am inquiring what I ought to do or say that will change the condition of your mind. I have had the most intense interest in your behalf, and may the Lord guide my pen.”<sup>1</sup> This part of an introduction to an April 1899 letter from Ellen White to J. H. Kellogg in many ways summarizes her correspondence with him in the years before 1900 and especially in those that followed. She was a longtime friend and counselor for Dr. Kellogg and she readily acknowledged him as a chosen man of God and rebuked those who made his life difficult, but yet she also frequently wrote to him warning him against various pitfalls.

Over 20 years before his major confrontations with the church, Ellen White wrote in favor of Dr. Kellogg to those working in the Sanitarium at Battle Creek. In one published message addressed to those working at the Sanitarium she wrote:

I saw that Dr. Kellogg had been raised up to do a special work as God’s instrument, to be led, guided, and controlled by his Spirit. He is to answer the claims of God, and never to feel that he is his own property, and that he can employ his powers as he shall deem most profitable to himself. Although it is his purpose to be and to do right, yet he will most surely err, unless he is a constant learner in the school of Christ. His only safety is in humbly walking with God.<sup>2</sup>

To those agitating against Dr. Kellogg in Battle Creek a few years later she wrote, “Why do you delight in making your wicked speeches and indulging your wicked

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, April 17, 1899, Letter 73, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:339.2.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, “Admonitions and Warnings,” *Testimony for the Physicians and Helpers of the Sanitarium*, Nov. 23, 1879, 14.1.

feelings against Dr. Kellogg? Has he not sufficient burdens to carry?”<sup>3</sup> Even from early in his career as leader of the Sanitarium, Kellogg turned many people against him and Ellen White counseled them to give up their bitterness about Kellogg.

She tied the back-biting surrounding Dr. Kellogg with what wore down her own late husband.

Dr. Kellogg has made mistakes,—he has erred. His errors have injured my husband. Dr. Kellogg sees his mistakes and feels them, and has confessed them; while those who were more guilty than he is [were] abusing his mind in placing things before him in an exaggerated light, and relating as facts things which had no foundation in truth, led him to feel an assurance that his feelings were correct. His mind was kept stirred up by reporters, tattlers, mischief-makers, and false reporters. My husband was hunted to death, and those who have acted their part faithfully for Satan saw him in his coffin removed from the strife of tongues. He died of a broken heart, and the Lord let him rest. I hold no grudge against any one. I felt to the very depths of my soul over the treatment my husband received, and I have forgiven those who have done this work. I pray the Lord to forgive them. I warn you not to do to another as you have done to him. And when you begin your attacks upon one and then another that do not agree with your ways and please your fancies, I am determined to resist your influence and stand up for the oppressed. Will you send others to their death by your persecuting tongues, your suspicions, your envies, your jealousies?<sup>4</sup>

She didn't defend Kellogg as blameless, but she argued that he should be truly forgiven for the mistakes he made. In her mind, he had repented for what he had done and any attempts to keep bringing up his faults to throw them in his face were not only unkind but truly demonic. These mistakes and Ellen White's counsel both to him and to those who were upset with him will form the basis of this section of my historical study.

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<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Special Testimony to the Battle Creek Church, Read in the Tabernacle*, Nov. 30, 1882, 19.1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.1.

## **Raising Up Machines and Living Two Years in One – 1886-1889**

One of the main concerns Ellen White wrote to J. H. Kellogg about concerned how he treated his work at the Sanitarium. He was a capable and hardworking man, but he was reluctant to listen to advice or let others lead. In one of her earliest letters counseling Dr. Kellogg, Ellen White wrote:

Among a multitude of counselors there is safety. God would not have many minds the shadow of one man's mind. God has given men brains to use, intellect to cultivate, to employ to His glory; and He would be the One to mold, control, and fashion the minds after His own impress. Men are only men whatever may be their work. The more responsible the position, the more important that the one who stands in this position have no more honor or exaltation given him than is for his good.<sup>5</sup>

This advice to Kellogg privately was after she had already defended him publically, and she would continue to do so. However, this was just the beginning of her counsel to him privately.

She continues,

For several years as the matters of the Sanitarium have been opened before me, I have been shown that you were loading down yourself to your injury, and in thus doing were depriving others of an experience. Those connected with you so closely in the Sanitarium are ready to assent to every move you may make, and to any proposition, saying, Yes, but without using their individual judgment and without taxing their minds to hard thinking that they may have sound opinions and clear ideas, not borrowed but their own. Men in responsible positions have qualified themselves in this direction by just such a process as you and others have had to go through to be fitted for just such work. Now if you relieve these persons from this responsible part of the work they are only your machines. Your head plans, devises, turns the crank, winds them up to run down, to be wound up again. This is one of the reasons why we have so few brain workers today; and this is the reason why brain workers are dropping out of our ranks into their graves, because they are brains for others. I tell you plainly as a mother would a son, you have made a decided failure here.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, April 26, 1886, Letter 7, 1886, published in Ellen G. White, *Christian Leadership*, (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1985), 45.1.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, April 26, 1886, Letter 7, 1886, published in E. G. White, *Christian Leadership*, 46.2.



Ellen White was not interested in the church work at the expense of Dr. Kellogg's life and spirituality. On the contrary, she also wrote urgently about her concern for his health under the heavy load he struggled to bear alone. It was not only for the good of others that he needed to lessen his grasp on control of the medical work of the church, but also for his own good. She readily acknowledged to him that he was being mistreated and urged him to turn to Jesus during his troubles to learn to lean more and more on Him.<sup>7</sup>

While she cared about him and felt he was being mistreated, she did not let that excuse his strong independent streak. Just a few weeks after her letter expressing her hope that his trials would bring him closer to Christ, she wrote, "We have a noble captain and every soldier must obey orders. The meekness and lowliness of Christ always leads to unity and hence to strength in united action."<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps related to the earlier mentioned link of Kellogg's overwork and mistreatment to her own late husband's case, Ellen White was concerned from the beginning for his wellbeing, including basics like physical rest. In her own words, she said, "I feel deeply for you, and you must change your course of action. You are living two years in one, and I utter my protest against this."<sup>9</sup> This concern would grow as Kellogg tried to take on even greater responsibilities.

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<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, July 16, 1886, Letter 8, 1886, published in Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982), 211.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, c. August 2, 1886, Letter 62, 1886, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:373.4.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, February 23, 1887, Letter 10, 1887, published, in part, in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:240.3.

## Growing Concern for the Medical Work – 1890-1900

On Christmas Eve 1890, Ellen White wrote to J. H. Kellogg about her concerns for both the medical work and the publishing work of the church.<sup>10</sup> In particular, she expressed her concern that not only Kellogg himself but also other doctors and church leaders were thinking too highly of themselves.<sup>11</sup> This lengthy letter went on to denounce the selfishness in church personnel as a hindrance to their missionary work, and to call for unity without jealousy among physicians. She scorned the rich façade put up by church institutions to lure in employees who are in it for the money, and held up the disciple Matthew as an example of one who left his wealth to follow Christ. She condemned physicians who follow the worldly model of demanding very high fees for their work, warned against a lack of self-denial in the church institutions, pointed to Christ as the exemplary Physician, reflected on the great good that truly Christian physicians could do, expressed her concern at Kellogg's overwork, and finally encouraged a focus on heavenly riches over earthly.<sup>12</sup> These key issues of money, commitment to the church mission, and a proper attitude of self-denial all proved to be roots of Kellogg's eventual falling out with the Adventist church.

During the 1890s Ellen White and J. H. Kellogg corresponded over his humanitarian work in Chicago, Illinois. In 1895 she wrote, "I am in full sympathy with the work that is being done there. I believe in helping along every line in which it is

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<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, December 24, 1890, Letter 41, 1890, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:89.1.

<sup>11</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:89.1-90.2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:90-97.

possible to help, following the steps of Christ.”<sup>13</sup> However, she had written earlier, “that there should be no mistakes made now to devote our powers too largely to the lowest class. There is work to be done for the higher classes, that they shall exert an influence in that line and be laborers together with God.”<sup>14</sup> Especially as she compared the work in Australia where she was living with the work in the United States, she wrote of how rich the facilities were in the States and that money should be handled better to support foreign missions, both within the organization and perhaps even more so amongst the church members who were spending their money on vanities.<sup>15</sup> She also wrote to Kellogg in the early 1890s about encouraging young people to be medical missionaries<sup>16</sup> and the great good that medical missionaries could do through following Christ’s example of healing for body and soul.<sup>17</sup>

During this same time she continued to encourage Kellogg during the conflicts he had with other church leaders. She wrote to him to show kindness rather than the hastily spoken words he seemed to feel their actions deserved.<sup>18</sup> As part of this she wrote and presumably shared how she had seen in vision the disunity at Battle Creek but someone in the vision appealed to the leaders there quoting Christ’s prayer for His disciples and it

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<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, June 14, 1895, Letter 43, 1895, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:131.1.

<sup>14</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, October 2, 1893, Letter 36, 1893, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:239.3.

<sup>15</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. and Mrs J. H. Kellogg, December 23, 1892, Letter 21b, 1892 E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 6:133.2.

<sup>16</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Kellogg, September 16, 1892, Letter 34, 1892, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:130-131.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, October 2, 1893, Letter 36, 1893, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:239-240.

was a powerful experience.<sup>19</sup> By late 1895 she was even encouraging Dr. and Mrs. Kellogg to go to Africa to build the medical mission work there in a strong way as well as to help bring them to humbly depend on Christ.<sup>20</sup> She was a strong supporter of health reform as a way to spread the gospel. As she put it in an 1896 letter to Kellogg, “I want to say that the Third Angel’s Message is the gospel, and that the health reform is the wedge by which the truth may enter. There are to be no abrupt declarations of any phase of our truth, but the truth as it is in Jesus is to be preached.”<sup>21</sup> She wrote to him about the need for the staff at the sanitarium to have “the best and most wholesome, strength-giving food,” including a vegetarian diet.<sup>22</sup> Although she encouraged him in the face of hardship, she also strongly warned him against his own pride, such as in a November 1896 letter where she calls him to look to the cross and humble himself.<sup>23</sup>

Even though she wrote about her objections to Dr. Kellogg’s work and character, she still wrote from Australia that “the work that is being done by Dr. Kellogg is not to be regarded as a strange work; for it is the very work that every church that believes the

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<sup>18</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, October 17, 1892, Letter 20, 1892, published in E. G. White, *Christian Leadership*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Ellen G. White, Untitled, October 27, 1894, Manuscript 64, 1894, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 6:228.1.

<sup>20</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Kellogg, November 17, 1895, Letter 113, 1895, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:161.2.

<sup>21</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, January 19, 1896, Letter 56, 1896, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:150.4.

<sup>22</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, July 10, 1896, Letter 54, 1896, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:294.

<sup>23</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, November 22, 1896, Letter 59, 1896, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 6:103.1.

truth for this time, should long since have been doing.”<sup>24</sup> She even went on to commend his work with the poor and encourage churches to get involved in reaching the poor in their area.<sup>25</sup> She wrote about this publically in November 1897, saying of the Adventist churches, “If they had done their part, Dr. Kellogg would have had only his proportionate part; but those who ought to have taken a large part in this line of work are content to watch and criticize and conjecture.”<sup>26</sup> A few months later in January 1898 she wrote in her diary that Dr. Kellogg was given a work by God but his dealings with ministers who tarried in accepting the health message led him be overly critical with them to the point that he placed higher value on the medical work than on the ministry.<sup>27</sup> Thus she insightfully summarized one of the root issues in his conflict with church leadership which would continue to escalate in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Despite the growing problems, just a few months later in May 1898, Ellen White defended Dr. Kellogg and his work in a letter to G. A. Irwin, even going so far as to say that ministers should be pursuing their work as zealously as Kellogg was pursuing his and that medical missionary work was an excellent ministry for young people to get into.<sup>28</sup> Writing to Kellogg that same month, she held up Daniel and his companions as examples

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<sup>24</sup> Ellen G. White, *To My Brethren in America*, March, 1897, published in *Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers – No. 10*, 2.2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.2, 5.3, 6.2.

<sup>26</sup> Ellen G. White, “Our Work at this Time,” *The Home Missionary*, November 1, 1897, Art. C, par. 15.

<sup>27</sup> Ellen G. White, Diary, “Medical Men and the Ministry,” January, 1898, Manuscript 175, 1898, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:373.1.

<sup>28</sup> Ellen G. White to G. A. Irwin, May 19, 1898, Letter 42, 1898, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:370.

of learned men who were humble and uncorrupted so God was able to use them in mighty ways.<sup>29</sup>

In January 1899 Ellen White wrote separate letters to Kellogg personally and to the Sanitarium Board and Councils, both urging them to be careful in how they spent their money, specifically in relation to outreach to the poor, lest they use up all the money that should also be used in spreading the Adventist message and helping new fields, such as where she was in Australia.<sup>30</sup> Just over a week later she wrote again to Kellogg exhorting him to be humble and receive the Holy Spirit to consecrate his work.<sup>31</sup> Later that month she again wrote to him of God's plan that everyone from every class and rank be faithful to God, thinking for themselves and not blindly following leaders, and ready to go wherever they are needed.<sup>32</sup> The next month she wrote to him using John 17 as the example of the commitment to unity that he was sorely lacking, even saying, "The work of God is not divided; it is one, and if there is any separation between the medical missionary work and the ministry, it will be because the Holy Spirit is not working upon hearts."<sup>33</sup> By the end of March she combined these two themes of the need to draw

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<sup>29</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, May 27, 1898, Letter 134, 1898, published in E. G. White, *The Upward Look*, 161.

<sup>30</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, January 5, 1899, Letter 3, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:239.1; Letter 4, 1899 (January 6, 1899 to Dr. Kellogg and All Who Are Connected With Him in the Sanitarium Board and Councils), E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:414-415.

<sup>31</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, January 14, 1899, Letter 10, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:32.3.

<sup>32</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, January 23, 1899, Letter 8, 1899, published in Ellen G. White, *This Day With God* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1979), 31.

<sup>33</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, February 23, 1899, Letter 40, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:133.1.

together in unity and a rebuke against overextending outreach for the poor to the point of using funds needed for the proclamation of Christ and the three angel's messages.<sup>34</sup>

In a letter from April 1899, which we previously looked at in the introduction, Ellen White wrote on the theme of the work of God as a building, with a warning that Kellogg had tried to be all of the work when he was only a part of it. "This warning God presents to me as essential in your case. He loves you with a love that is immeasurable. He loves your brethren in the faith, and He works with them to the same end that He works with you."<sup>35</sup> That summer she wrote to Kellogg about the disproportionate emphasis he had placed on the medical missionary work and especially on his work with the poor, stating for example, "My brother, I tell you in the name of the Lord that the medical missionary work is to be the arm, and not the body."<sup>36</sup> At the end of the summer she wrote again on the same theme (and on the destructive way Kellogg talked about ministers) urging him, "My brother, you are in danger. You are making many plans that you can never carry through."<sup>37</sup> A month later she again wrote to Kellogg of his misuse of funds, this time emphasizing that the money tied up in his work with the poor and at Battle Creek could have been used to great benefit in Australia, where she was writing from.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, March 24, 1899, Letter 55, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:59.3, E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 6:57.4.

<sup>35</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, April 17, 1899, Letter 73, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:341.1.

<sup>36</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, June 5, 1899, Letter 86, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:236.3.

<sup>37</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. Kellogg, August 29, 1899, Letter 135, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:132.2.

<sup>38</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, September 25, 1899, Letter 149, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:231-232.

On November 10, 1899, Ellen White wrote a long and concerned letter to J. H.

Kellogg with an introduction:

I have been shown that you are in danger, in great peril, of becoming just what the enemy desires you to be—unbalanced in mind. It is not pleasant for me to speak of this by letter, but the Lord has used me to do this work, and I dare not keep silent. If I did, I should be as one who saw your danger, and lifted not up his voice to warn you.<sup>39</sup>

This letter again stressed that he was placing too great an emphasis on the medical mission work and especially on his work in the slums. She also chastised him for taking on too many responsibilities to the point that he was overworked. Not only that, but she added that he was in charge of so much at Battle Creek that nobody would disagree with him, especially after he had rejected advice for a while. She feared that he considered her an enemy because she would tell him he was wrong, but she felt compelled to tell him as a true friend and as one with a message from God to help him. Again she brought up misappropriation of funds and how that money could have been better used elsewhere such as in camp meetings and also rebuked the wrong use of an even more precious resource – young people. They were, she straightforwardly told him, receiving a lopsided education that did not set the work of the church on a steady foundation. The theme of Kellogg's poor attitude about ministers was again denounced. She admitted that some of his mission work was good and did good things, but nevertheless told him that work like operating orphanages should be done by other organizations to free up time, money, and manpower for Adventists to spread their distinctive message, especially the three angel's

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<sup>39</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, November 10, 1899, Letter 232, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:422.3.



messages and the truth of the Sabbath. Finally, she called for reform of the management of the medical institutions.<sup>40</sup>

As 1899 came to a close and the new century started, Ellen White first wrote a series of letters to Kellogg, but then she wrote about him to the General Conference president and his wife. In the letters to Kellogg, she again acknowledged his appointment as a chosen physician,<sup>41</sup> flatly told him that a sanitarium should not be independent of the church,<sup>42</sup> and rebuked him for getting out of line using money on projects that took away money from the sanitarium.<sup>43</sup> She explained that a main reason why it wasn't good to lavish as much money as he had been doing on the work to help the poor, was that they could not easily grow in the truth to become workers in the church. More money needed to be invested in evangelizing people with immediate leadership ability.<sup>44</sup> She reminded him of her original call for a medical institution that focused on Bible principles with natural remedies,<sup>45</sup> allowed that some might be called to help the poor but they should seek funding from sources outside the church,<sup>46</sup> and finally called Kellogg as a head physician to set aside little responsibilities that sapped his time, so that he could focus on

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<sup>40</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:422-426.

<sup>41</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, December 10, 1899, Letter 206, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:406.1.

<sup>42</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, December 12, 1899, Letter 204, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:239.2.

<sup>43</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, December 14, 1899, Letter 215b, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:417.2.

<sup>44</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:420.1.

<sup>45</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, December 19, 1899, Letter 205, 1899, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:66.1.

<sup>46</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:421.3.

his work as well as his personal spiritual life.<sup>47</sup> On New Year's Day 1900, Ellen White wrote to the General Conference President G. A. Irwin and his wife, telling them that Kellogg was at fault for placing improper emphasis on the medical missionary work and that he had misused large amounts of money that should've gone to other causes – just as she had also written to him several times before; but more importantly, she wrote of her concern for Kellogg's own salvation. While admitting that Kellogg was making life difficult for President Irwin, she urged him, "Seek to save Dr. Kellogg from himself. He is not heeding the counsel he should heed."<sup>48</sup>

Even though she had written to Kellogg repeatedly on the same themes and asked the General Conference President to try to help him somehow, Ellen White by no means neglected her personal responsibility to minister to Kellogg. A few weeks after asking for Elder Irwin's help, she wrote to Kellogg again laying out his misuse of resources both in trying to reach the poor in such a big way and in making Battle Creek Sanitarium so large, and she then pleaded with him,

My brother, over and over again I have written you this. Why, my dear brother, have you refused to receive or hear the word of the Lord? Why have you pressed on in the face of the warnings that God has given? You have blanketed [covered up, hidden] the third angel's message, until to many it has lost its significance.<sup>49</sup>

Just over a month later she wrote again plainly stating, "The means spent in Chicago would have given to new fields advantages for doing the very work that God has

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<sup>47</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:68.2.

<sup>48</sup> Ellen G. White to Elder and Mrs. Irwin, January 1, 1900, Letter 3, 1900, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:427-428.

<sup>49</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, January 21, 1900, Letter 177, 1900, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:233-235.

designated should be done.”<sup>50</sup> She also wrote of a vision she received about the work in Chicago that showed a long list of people with a title “Consumers, but not producers.”<sup>51</sup> In this letter she also came back to an oft repeated rebuke of Kellogg’s attitude towards ministers and called him to respect their work.<sup>52</sup>

Kellogg had stirred up controversy in Battle Creek by working with some donors outside the church on the condition that the work at the Sanitarium be undenominational. In March 1900 Ellen White flatly rejecting that idea and nicely summarized her concerns with Kellogg:

The third angel’s message is virtually ignored by you. You have belittled the work of the gospel ministry, while you have made the medical missionary work disproportionately important. You have weakened where you should have strengthened. You would bear no restriction. You were determined, if you could, to set in operation the work you had planned, but this work God has never given you to do.<sup>53</sup>

Two days later she wrote to him again rebuking him for misusing money to help people outside the church yet not working together with those in the church, even going so far as to say that he was hindering the work by his misuse not only of money but also of workers, by assigning them to areas where they were not benefiting the work.<sup>54</sup> She also again rebuked him for, “working ‘undenominationally’ in a work which had taken

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<sup>50</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, February 27, 1900, Letter 33, 1900, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:241.1.

<sup>51</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:138.2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:143.5.

<sup>53</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, March 10, 1900, Letter 41, 1900, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:241.4, cf. E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:224-225.

<sup>54</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, March 12, 1900, Letter 45, 1900, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:433.

the money from a people who are decidedly a denominational people.”<sup>55</sup> These same concerns over misuse of money in a bottomless pit of work for the poor are the theme of another letter a few months later.<sup>56</sup>

In the summer of 1900 Dr. Kellogg sparked another controversy by trying to secure the rights to a health food project that he had worked on with a team so that the proceeds from these products could be kept by him and his medical branch rather than letting it go to the wider church. She wrote to him in July of the need to be unselfish,<sup>57</sup> again further denouncing his obsession with the work in Chicago as taking money away from the rest of the work of the church.<sup>58</sup> To the church at large, however, she showed appreciation for Kellogg’s work and softly encouraged him and his team to continue in faithful work. This is succinctly shown in a piece she wrote on February 16, 1901, which was published the next year as part of what is today known as *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 7. In a paragraph in the midst of this piece she writes:

With great skill, and with painstaking effort, Dr. Kellogg and his associates have prepared a special line of health foods. Their chief motive has been to benefit humanity, and God’s blessing has rested upon their efforts. If they follow in the counsel of God, if they walk after the example of Christ, they will continue to advance; for God will give skill and understanding to those who seek Him unselfishly. In many respects improvements can be made in the health foods sent out from our factories. The Lord will teach His servants how to make food preparations that are more simple and less expensive. There are many whom He will teach in this line if they will walk in His counsel, and in harmony with their brethren.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:242.4.

<sup>56</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, May, 1900, Letter 85, 1900, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:418.

<sup>57</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, July 2, 1900, Letter 92, 1900, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:189.1.

<sup>58</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:136.3.

<sup>59</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 7:127.3.

In this same section she acknowledges that Dr. Kellogg has a right to a reasonable return from his investment and hard work on these health food products and she tells everyone involved to not divulge the secrets of their preparation because doing so would rob the church of revenue from the sale of those products.<sup>60</sup> A few pages later she encourages people to learn and then teach good ways to prepare healthy food, not that they need to find Kellogg's trade secrets nor prepare foods just like his, but that they should prepare good and healthy meals with the foods available to them in their area.<sup>61</sup>

### **Plans for Reorganization at the General Conference – 1901-1902**

In April 1901 the General Conference was held in Battle Creek and, for the first time since returning from Australia, Ellen White was in attendance.<sup>62</sup> The *General Conference Bulletin* records her main presentations before the Conference and one of her manuscripts details a talk she gave in the Battle Creek College library on April 1 just before the Conference officially began.

Dr. Kellogg and the medical missionary work were a core topic of her talk on April 1, 1901. She acknowledged the talents God had given Dr. Kellogg while calling for unity between his work and the church work as a whole,<sup>63</sup> upheld the medical missionary work as the “right arm” of the gospel,<sup>64</sup> and called for people to stand “shoulder to

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<sup>60</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 7: 129-130.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 7: 132-133.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. A. L. White, *Ellen White: Woman of Vision* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 383, accessed June 18, 2015  
<http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=WV&pagenumber=383>

<sup>63</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 6:310.2.

<sup>64</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 6:310.2.

shoulder with Dr. Kellogg, who at times has been almost desperate and has almost lost his reason because of the positions taken by some.”<sup>65</sup> Then she shared how she had initially turned down Dr. Kellogg’s offer to stay at his home during the Conference, but then received a vision where a voice told her, “Accept the invitation of My servant, John Kellogg, to make his house your home. I have appointed him as My physician, and you can be an encouragement to him.”<sup>66</sup> She then apologized to Dr. Kellogg saying:

I thank God that Dr. Kellogg has not sunk into despair and infidelity, as I was afraid he would. Dr. Kellogg, it may be that I have written to you too strongly, but I felt that I must get hold of you, and hold you with all the power I had. I appreciate the work that is being carried on in medical missionary lines. How anyone can see this work, and not realize that God is working, is a mystery to me.<sup>67</sup>

To close this talk, she rebuked her audience for often acting like vultures, saying, “Attend to yourselves, and you will have all you can do.”<sup>68</sup> Finally she cautioned them not to simply quote her but instead to study their Bibles earnestly for themselves.<sup>69</sup>

On April 12, 1901, Ellen White spoke in front of the Conference about the medical missionary work. She described it as the main way to break down prejudice to allow the Adventist message to spread and told of how she had encouraged Dr. Kellogg in that line from the start.<sup>70</sup> Regarding the poor treatment he had received from some in the church she said, “Dr. Kellogg has been carrying too heavy a load, and our own people

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 6:310.3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 6:310.4-311.1.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 6:312.3.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 6:313.3.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 6:313.4.

<sup>70</sup> “Twelfth Meeting, April 11, 5:30 A.M.,” *General Conference Bulletin*, April 12, 1901, accessed July 20, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1901-01ex09.pdf>.

have been standing by, warring against him.”<sup>71</sup> Concerning all the strong things she had written to him privately, all she said was, “Cautions were given Dr. Kellogg, showing him that his work was to reach the higher classes by maintaining the very highest standard in the Sanitarium” and “I encouraged Dr. Kellogg all I could, and cautioned him when I saw that he was bearing too heavy a load; for what would the work do were he to drop out?”<sup>72</sup> She then again told of her initial refusal to stay with Dr. Kellogg for fear of what others would think and the vision this time relaying the words of the voice she heard as saying, “Respect the courtesy of Dr. Kellogg. I have appointed him as my physician, and I will be his helper if he will trust wholly in me. You can encourage him.”<sup>73</sup> As part of her appeal she urged, “God...wants those who have felt it their duty to circulate disparaging reports about Dr. Kellogg and the medical missionary work to be converted. Take hold of the gospel ministry as it really is.”<sup>74</sup> She then called for a close connection with Christ to be used by Him to heal others and spread the Gospel message.<sup>75</sup>

That summer Ellen White wrote to the leaders in the medical missionary work flatly condemning the signing of contracts that would “bind people to the institutions at Battle Creek” regarding the production of health foods.<sup>76</sup> She upheld that while God had used people like Dr. Kellogg to develop these foods, they were a gift from God and the

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<sup>71</sup> “Twelfth Meeting, April 11, 5:30 A.M.,” *General Conference Bulletin*, April 12, 1901, par. 11.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 11, 14.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 27.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 31.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 33.

<sup>76</sup> Ellen G. White “To the Leaders in the Medical Missionary Work”, July 5, 1901, Letter 192, 1901, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:306.2.

funds from them should not stay just in the sanitariums but should go to church work in general.<sup>77</sup> Then she denounced any attempt to make this food business into a monopoly as “the principle of wealthy worldly men” which makes the poor suffer and is not part of God’s plan.<sup>78</sup>

A few weeks later she wrote to Dr. Kellogg directly and told him plainly regarding the health foods he was working on, “The Lord is not to be hindered in His workings by any monopolies.”<sup>79</sup> She wrote against his plan to work with lawyers to forge contracts that would restrict workers in that industry and she generally told him that while he was set up to be a leader who should be respected as a counselor, no human being has power from God to “set up and to cast down” as he had been doing.<sup>80</sup>

In January 1902 Ellen White wrote against eating meat and in favor of health reform in the *Review and Herald* and she specifically mentioned Dr. Kellogg:

We should now come into line with health reform principles. There is a work to be done, and we want to unite with Dr. Kellogg in doing this work. He knows what he is talking about; and we want to take the light from the word of God, and form ourselves into companies to work for others. God will help us do this work.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:306.2-307.1.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:307.2.

<sup>79</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, July 28, 1901, Letter 180, 1901 E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:243.3.

<sup>80</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:242.

<sup>81</sup> Ellen G. White, “An Earnest Plea,” *RH*, Jan. 7, 1902, 5, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19020107-V79-01.pdf>.



The next month she also wrote to G. I. Butler saying that while the health foods should not be considered one person's property or idea, nevertheless the copyrights and patents of Dr. Kellogg shouldn't be violated.<sup>82</sup>

On February 18, 1902, the Battle Creek Sanitarium was destroyed in a fire.<sup>83</sup> Following Ellen White's lead from other projects, Elder Daniells and Dr. Kellogg made arrangements for Kellogg to write a basic health book which could be sold and the proceeds used to rebuild the Sanitarium. In reading over drafts of this book, Daniells saw themes of pantheism that he had also been starting to hear of in Battle Creek. He set a committee to review Kellogg's work and delayed the publication of the book. This would finally come to a head the following year, but in the meantime other steps were taken to secure funding.

In the fall of 1902, Kellogg invited a group of non-Adventists from Battle Creek to come review the Sanitarium, especially its financial records, in order to secure a donation from them. At a council held at her Elmshaven home in October 1902, Ellen White claimed that, "Dr. Kellogg has linked himself with the world" and compared his opening of the books for review by non-Adventists, to Hezekiah's display of the riches of the temple to the Babylonians.<sup>84</sup>

Despite her increasing difficulties with Kellogg, she wrote to him in November 1902 saying:

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<sup>82</sup> Ellen G. White to G. I. Butler, February 26, 1902, Letter 27, 1902, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:243.1.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. *Woman of Vision* 436, <http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=WV&pagenumber=436>.

<sup>84</sup> Ellen G. White, Council at "Elmshaven," report of October 19, 1902. Manuscript 123, 1902, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:146.2.

I have the tenderest feelings toward you, Dr. Kellogg. There is no one on earth who understands you as well as I do, and no one else who will tell you of your dangers. When the Lord gives me a message for you, I shall surely give it to you.<sup>85</sup>

### **Pantheism and Living Temple – 1903**

As Kellogg got more and more caught up in his pantheistic message in *Living Temple*, Ellen White was deeply distressed at the way his path was going and she earnestly tried to bring him around. The committee set to review *Living Temple* recommended to accept it, but W. W. Prescott wrote a minority position opposed to its publication and his view won out at the General Conference Committee.<sup>86</sup> This increased tensions and put a strain on Ellen White. In March 1903 she wrote, “I have been afraid that I should not have the strength to write to you thus plainly, for to do it takes hold of every fiber of my being. It is indeed as if I were writing to my own son.”<sup>87</sup>

The 35<sup>th</sup> General Conference session was held in Oakland, California, in late March through early April, 1903. Medical missionary affiliated doctors, including Dr. Kellogg, gave small presentations in the evenings on health topics<sup>88</sup> and there was discussion from people like W. C. White about organizational structure of Battle Creek,<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, November 11, 1902, Letter 174, 1902, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:407.4.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. *Woman of Vision* 439; <http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=WV&pagenumber=439>.

<sup>87</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, March 5, 1903, Letter 180, 1903, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 1:27.6.

<sup>88</sup> “Thursday, April 2, 1903,” *General Conference Bulletin*, April 2, 1903, 60, accessed July 20, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1903-04.pdf>.

<sup>89</sup> “Tenth Meeting, Friday, April 3, 1903, 9:50 A.M.,” *General Conference Bulletin*, April 6, 1903, 73, accessed July 20, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1903-06.pdf>.

but the underlying concern Ellen White had for Kellogg's views and direction was presented without publically sharing how much she had written to him privately.

On Monday March 30, 1903, Ellen White gave a talk in the afternoon about King Josiah<sup>90</sup> and a few hours later Dr. Kellogg warmly acknowledged her message and gave his own presentation defending and explaining, to some degree, the medical mission work.<sup>91</sup> He expressed his commitment to the Adventist message, admitted his work had had failings, recounted the story of the founding of the Battle Creek Sanitarium under Ellen White's guidance, lamented the critical attitude he had faced, and assured that there was no "awful crisis" at Battle Creek as some had been saying.<sup>92</sup>

That Friday, April 3, although he freely admitted he was not a delegate, Dr. Kellogg spoke up during the discussion of a resolution to further implement church control of church-related institutions. Kellogg asserted that if all church-related organizations should be put under church control, it was just as reasonable that all private property owned by Adventists be put under church control, thus arguing that the resolution was unreasonable.<sup>93</sup> After discussion, he summarized his point saying that those in favor of the resolution argued that it only meant ownership, not control, but Kellogg warned this was a "snare." When A. G. Daniells, as chairman, tried to bring him

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<sup>90</sup> E. G. White, "Lessons from Josiah's Reign," *General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1903, 29, accessed July 20, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1903-03.pdf>.

<sup>91</sup> J. H. Kellogg, "Talk by Dr. J. H. Kellogg, Monday, March 30, 1903, 6 P. M.," *General Conference Bulletin*, April 6, 1903, 82, accessed July 20, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1903-06.pdf>.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 82-84.

<sup>93</sup> "Tenth Meeting, Friday, April 3, 1903, 9:50 A.M.," *General Conference Bulletin*, April 6, 1903, 74, accessed July 20, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1903-06.pdf>.

around Kellogg flatly replied, “Ownership always means control; and when you say that ownership doesn’t mean control, you don’t know what you are talking about.”<sup>94</sup>

That same Friday in the afternoon, Ellen White talked about the medical mission work, the growth of Battle Creek Sanitarium, and how she had encouraged Dr. Kellogg along the way. She brought out good things like how they had built a chapel at Battle Creek and how there at least used to be chaplains who read the Bible with patients—all with Dr. Kellogg’s approval.<sup>95</sup> In this context she said:

After the meeting at Minneapolis, Dr. Kellogg was a converted man, and we all knew it. We could see the converting power of God working in his heart and life. But as the institution has grown in popularity, there has been danger that the reason for which it was established would be lost sight of. Repeatedly I have given the instruction that was given to me,—that this institution should not be conducted after the manner in which worldly medical institutions are conducted.<sup>96</sup>

She then spoke well of Kellogg as one hard pressed yet helped by God to be a sure-handed physician and light for his patients. She rebuked those who had made Dr. Kellogg’s work needlessly difficult—especially over health reform, which she admitted had made Dr. Kellogg abrasive and irritable—and also those who had purposefully avoided going to the Battle Creek Sanitarium when they needed medical care.<sup>97</sup> With these positive things said about Kellogg and his work, though, she closed with a warning that “spurious scientific theories” were dangerous because they “spiritualize the doctrines of present truth until there is no distinction between the substance and the shadow.”<sup>98</sup> As part of her concluding remarks, she also admonished, “Let not men fasten themselves to

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>95</sup> J. H. Kellogg, “Talk by Dr. J. H. Kellogg, Monday, March 30, 1903, 6 P. M.,” 86.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

documents, saying what they will do and what they will not do. Let them fasten themselves to the Lord God of heaven.”<sup>99</sup>

Just after the General Conference session ended, Ellen White wrote a strong letter to Dr. Kellogg warning him to turn from his path of questionable dealings, strange ideas, and “kingly authority,” earnestly pleading with him to pray and surrender to God.<sup>100</sup> She flatly said that he was wrong in placing such a high opinion in his teachings and that he had led others astray.<sup>101</sup>

In 1903 Ellen White published the first of what would become two *Special Testimonies* volumes titled *Letters to Physicians and Ministers* numbers 1 and 2.<sup>102</sup> Both of these volumes presented letters she had written to individuals or small groups, encouraging medical workers to follow high Christian standards, teach the Adventist message in the Sanitariums, and shake off worldly snares such as greed. The first volume touched issues with Kellogg and pantheism only in broad strokes, such as in the section titled “A Danger to be Guarded Against,” which says, “Medical missionary work is not to be drawn apart and made separate from church organization.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> J. H. Kellogg, “Talk by Dr. J. H. Kellogg, Monday, March 30, 1903, 6 P. M.,” 87.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>100</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, April 15, 1903, Letter 55, 1903, published in E. G. White, *The Upward Look*, 119.

<sup>101</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:242.5

<sup>102</sup> E. G. White, *Letters to Physicians and Ministers*, 3;  
<http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=STSB&pagenumber=3>

<sup>103</sup> E. G. White, *Letters to Physicians and Ministers*, 10.2.

During the 1903 Autumn Council, Ellen White was convicted in vision that the time had come to confront the growing following of the “new light” in Battle Creek.<sup>104</sup> In October she wrote to David Paulson, a doctor who had presented on health topics at the 1903 General Conference session along with Dr. Kellogg.<sup>105</sup> She wrote to him of three visions she had been given, one which showed Dr. Paulson himself writing and a being was telling him he was in danger and another that showed Dr. Kellogg being led around by beings that looked like “angels of light” but were in fact fallen angels leading him “to speak words of pompous boasting”, and another vision that showed Satan dressed “in a most attractive disguise” talking with Dr. Kellogg.<sup>106</sup>

Later that month she also wrote to the officers of the International Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association about the need to “counteract the centralizing influences that have developed round the medical work in Battle Creek.”<sup>107</sup> Then, regarding Dr. Kellogg, she wrote, “At various times Dr. Kellogg has been presented to me as walking in a false show, desiring to have the credit of being the first in medical missionary work.”<sup>108</sup> She added regarding God’s use of Dr. Kellogg, “It is His purpose

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<sup>104</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, “The Times of Volume 8,” 8:6; <http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=8T&pagenumber=6>

<sup>105</sup> “Thursday, April 2, 1903,” *General Conference Bulletin*, April 2, 1903, 60, accessed July 20, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/GCSessionBulletins/GCB1903-04.pdf>.

<sup>106</sup> Ellen G. White to David Paulson, October 14, 1903, Letter 220, 1903, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:190.

<sup>107</sup> Ellen G. White to the Officers of the Int. M. M. & B. [International Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association], October 25, 1903, Letter 256, 1903, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:52.1.

<sup>108</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:52.3.

that Dr. Kellogg shall give close attention to the work devolving upon him, and that he shall leave his brethren free to do their appointed work as the Lord shall direct them.”<sup>109</sup>

A few days later Ellen White again wrote to Dr. Kellogg describing some of the visions she had seen regarding him, such as one that portrayed him as trying to push a car up a hill which “represented the food business as a commercial enterprise, which has been carried forward in a way that God does not commend” and another that showed him on a horse carrying a banner of the Adventist message which he let fall and get trampled while men of the world surrounded him.<sup>110</sup>

In mid-November, 1903 Ellen White wrote to Dr. Kellogg again, this time plainly denouncing his “new light” ideas saying, “Pantheistic ideas regarding God in nature are framed by Lucifer, the fallen angel.”<sup>111</sup> She then called his mind to the love and glory of God, especially as seen in the concrete act of sending His Son to die for us.<sup>112</sup> Two days later she wrote to him again, this time about how his pantheistic ideas clashed with the Adventist understanding of the atonement and heavenly sanctuary, pointing to the high and exalted nature of God which Kellogg had carelessly trampled on.<sup>113</sup> She then set out what she would have to do if he continued to refuse to change, and her reluctance to do it. She wrote:

I have hesitated and delayed about the sending out of that which the Spirit of the Lord has impelled me to write. I did not want to be compelled to present the satanic

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, October 28, 1903, Letter 239, 1903.

<sup>111</sup> Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, November 18, 1903, Letter 253a, 1903, published in E. G. White, *The Upward Look*, 336.2.

<sup>112</sup> E. G. White, *The Upward Look*, 336.

<sup>113</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, November 20, 1903, Letter 253, 1903, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2:320-321.

influence of these sophistries. But unless there is a decided change in yourself and your associates, I shall have to do this, to save others from following the path that you have been following I shall have to obey the command given me of God, “Meet it. Meet it!” This is the only thing that I can do.<sup>114</sup>

She went on to tell him that she must speak against his book *Living Temple*, that his theories were endangering people, and that he had been given guidance about all this for years but yet he had rejected it.<sup>115</sup>

### **Testimonies volume 8 and the Public Rejection of Kellogg’s Ideas – 1904**

*Testimonies for the Church* volume 8 came out in March 1904 and the pantheism controversy centered at Battle Creek was likely a cause for its hastened publishing.<sup>116</sup> In their introduction for the newer printings of this volume, the Ellen White Estate Trustees argue that the letters she wrote to small groups like the autumn council helped settle the matter against pantheism for the leaders but *Testimonies* vol. 8 is what settled it for church members at large.<sup>117</sup>

Later in 1904 Ellen White released another *Special Testimonies* volume as a follow up to the 1903 *Letters to Physicians and Ministers*. This second volume had somewhat more pointed words regarding Dr. Kellogg and Battle Creek, especially in a section titled “Our Youth Not to Go to Battle Creek.” “I have been instructed,” she wrote, “that there are in Battle Creek men who are or have been connected with our institutions, who have rejected light, and chosen their own perverse way,” She also shared her own

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<sup>114</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:59.3.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:59-61.

<sup>116</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 8:5.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:7.



personal anguish over how the situation had turned out.<sup>118</sup> The section titled “An Opportunity” focuses more personally on Dr. Kellogg. It shares a letter originally written to Daniells and Prescott, May 20, 1904:

Yesterday a very strong impression came upon me that now is our time to save Dr. Kellogg. We must now work with determined effort. We must not prescribe the precise steps he must take, but we must lay hold of the man himself, and let him see that the Spirit of God and the spirit of soul-saving are in us.<sup>119</sup>

She continues with an encouraging tone befitting the title of this section with statements like, “There is a work that Dr. Kellogg is educated to perform as no other man in our ranks can perform it; and if he will draw nigh to God, God will draw nigh to him.”<sup>120</sup> She also shared a vision of the reconciliation that God wanted and she called for unity with this plea:

Unify; come into the sanctifying circle of truth. Draw together; walk humbly with God; and be subject one to another, according to the light of the word. Let no man seek to be the greatest. This has been an offense to God. Press together, and heed every word of God; that will create oneness. Avoid all fault-finding and dissension. Perplexing matters will adjust themselves if each one will walk circumspectly.<sup>121</sup>

In a letter to an unnamed concerned brother, August 7, 1904, she talked about *Living Temple* at some length, including this noteworthy statement:

It will be said that “Living Temple” has been revised. But the Lord has shown me that the writer has not changed, and that there can be no unity between him and the ministers of the gospel while he continues to cherish his present sentiments. I am

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<sup>118</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers: Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists*, 22.5-23.1.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.1.

<sup>120</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers: Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists*, 30.2.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.2.

bidden to lift my voice in warning to our people, saying, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked.”<sup>122</sup>

In this volume she also published a letter of November 17, 1903, describing her dismay that various secular newspapers were printing stories about a fight between herself and Dr. Kellogg for control of the Adventist church.<sup>123</sup> She responded that she had been given a work by God since 1844 to spread His message and that Dr. Kellogg had been given his work as a chosen physician, but neither of them were in any way called to be the leader of the church as the papers had presented it and there was no such controversy going on.<sup>124</sup>

At the end of this volume, as she concluded the last chapter titled “The Foundation of Our Faith,” Ellen White wrote of her deep concern over Dr. Kellogg and how she had spent sleepless nights praying for him and thinking of ways to help him, finally resolving, “I must bear the messages of warning that God gives me to bear, and then leave with the Lord the results. I must now present the matter in all its bearings; for the people of God must not be despoiled.”<sup>125</sup>

About this time, even though she was finally speaking out more publically against Kellogg, she still wrote to him returning to an old theme—that he had separated the

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 49.3.

<sup>123</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 8: 236.1.

<sup>124</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies*, 8:237-238.

<sup>125</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers: Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists*, 58.2.

medical missionary work from the gospel outreach work and the two needed to go together.<sup>126</sup>

## Epilogue

At the General Conference Session of 1905, held in Washington D.C. during late May and early June, Ellen White again addressed the case of Dr. Kellogg. The descriptions of her talks are less detailed in the *Bulletin* for that year,<sup>127</sup> but one of her manuscripts preserves a main part of her message about Kellogg. She held out some hope that he would finally take the messages of the last twenty years to heart and change his ways, but he would also need to show honest and straightforward wording explaining his converted view.<sup>128</sup> She then told of how even while James White was still alive, Dr. Kellogg had told her about some of his pantheistic-leaning ideas and she had flatly told him he was wrong and he should never teach such views, leaving him somewhat dazed.<sup>129</sup>

By this time Ellen White had already officially rejected Kellogg's ideas presented in *Living Temple* and under her counsel the main institutions of the Adventist church left Battle Creek. The Adventist college was moved from Battle Creek to Berrien Springs, Michigan as part of this series of events, but Kellogg wasn't quite done yet. He set out to

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<sup>126</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, September 23, 1904, Letter 289, 1904 E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:136.

<sup>127</sup> E.g., "Thirty-fourth Meeting," *General Conference Bulletin*, June 8, 1905, 20, accessed June 18, 2015, <http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/GCB/GCB1905-05.pdf>. "At this point, Sister E. G. White came into the conference, and read and spoke with reference to dangers abroad to-day in the specious deceptions and sophistries of spiritualistic philosophy."

<sup>128</sup> Ellen G. White, "A Message of Warning," a talk at 1905 General Conference, Manuscript 70, 1905, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:278.3.

reopen the Battle Creek College as part of the Battle Creek Sanitarium.<sup>130</sup> In response to Dr. Kellogg's advertising to the youth of the denomination to come to his college, Ellen White had a strongly worded *Special Testimonies* volume published, one which she had printed so it displayed "Published for the Author" so as to avoid any fallout from it hitting any of the Adventist institutions.<sup>131</sup> This volume carried the lengthy and descriptive title *Testimonies to the Church Regarding Our Youth Going to Battle Creek to Obtain an Education, Being Extracts from Addresses Published in the General Conference Bulletin, from Articles Published in the Review and Herald, and From Many Letters to Physicians and Ministers* and is known as *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 6.

In October, 1905 she also wrote to her nephew, Franklin E. Belden, a hymn writer who got tangled up with problems at the Review and Herald and against her counsel was going to court over it. She explained that she had not read some of his letters, just as she had also not read some of Dr. Kellogg's letters because when she wrote against the Review and Herald she didn't want Belden or Kellogg to claim that her message had been swayed by their letters to her.<sup>132</sup>

In November she again wrote to J. H. Kellogg insisting that she had no desire to be called the leader of the Adventist church, and that his assumptions or assertions that

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<sup>129</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:278-279.

<sup>130</sup> Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies*, Series B, 5.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ellen G. White to Frank Belden, October 20, 1905, Letter 301, 1905, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 2: 190.2 cf E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, 3:63.3; for more on F. E. Belden's case see E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:419-421.

she was fighting to be the leader were simply not true.<sup>133</sup> Then in December she wrote again, warning of a great apostasy to come, strongly rejecting any notion that we should not pray for the sick, and generally encouraging Kellogg to “Keep praying and working for souls.”<sup>134</sup>

In 1906 Ellen White published another *Special Testimony* volume about the deteriorating situation in Battle Creek, but this one was focused on people living in or directly connected to Battle Creek and thus only 1000 copies were published.<sup>135</sup> It carried the title *Testimonies for the Church Containing Messages of Warning and Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists Regarding Dangers Connected With the Medical Missionary Work*. She also wrote a letter addressed to the leaders at the Battle Creek Church as well as “our ministers and physicians throughout the field” that spoke against the worldly commercialization of the medical missionary work and particularly described the work in Chicago as a misuse of funds.<sup>136</sup> Regarding Dr. Kellogg and his involvement in that work, she continued, “God did not lay upon Dr. Kellogg the responsibility of doing so much of this kind of work. The Lord declared, ‘He is my physician.’”<sup>137</sup>

In 1907, Dr. J. H. Kellogg finally severed ties between the Adventist church and his Battle Creek institution by removing the property from church ownership and made

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<sup>133</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, November 21, 1905, Letter 320, 1905, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:439.1.

<sup>134</sup> Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, December 22, 1905, Letter 338, 1905, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 6:379.1.

<sup>135</sup> Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies, Series B*, 6.

<sup>136</sup> Ellen G. White to “The Elders of the Battle Creek Church, and to Our Ministers and Physicians Throughout the Field”, June 28, 1906, Letter 218, 1906, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 4:138.1.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

no complaint when the church removed his name from its books. One of Ellen White's manuscripts from June, 1907 recounts a vision she received in which Dr. Kellogg was enthusiastically presenting his pantheistic views to a large group of physicians and ministers. As she watched, a being told her "that the evil angels had taken captive the mind of the speaker."<sup>138</sup>

## **Summary and Conclusions**

### Summary

From Kellogg's early years as a doctor, Ellen White had been shown that he had a mission from God for the medical work of the church. As his work caught on and he rose to a position of major influence, however, she had to repeatedly remind him of that calling and try to get him back to it. He worked tirelessly, but he was often merely spinning his wheels, pouring resources into projects that were not the ones he was meant for. His leadership was effective in its own way, but did not truly involve his team members. Dr. Kellogg's personality did not win him many friends in church leadership, especially because he grew to look down on pastors for not practicing the health message he was championing. Ellen White feared that he was heading for the same fate as her late husband, overworking and harangued by critics. Nevertheless, she earnestly wrote to him to quell his independent streak and humble himself.

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<sup>138</sup> Ellen G. White, "A Warning Against Deceptive Teaching," June 23, 1907, Manuscript 64, 1904, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:376.1.

As the medical work grew, so too did Kellogg's pride, independence, and distrust of the church leadership. He tried to distance himself and his work from the church through questionable legal and business dealings, particularly concerning the Battle Creek Sanitarium and the rights to the vegetarian food products he had helped develop. During this time he also became heavily involved in outreach work in Chicago that, while admirable in some ways, was decried by Ellen White as a work that he had not been entrusted to do and which wasted resources. She wrote repeatedly about his misuses of time, money, and manpower as well as his critical attitude toward pastors and church leaders.

These problems were coming to a head as the Adventist church went through a reorganization process at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Dr. Kellogg was an outspoken critic of further church control—even if only on paper—of the various institutions, and especially of his medical branch. He had certainly not followed Ellen White's advice to make amends with church leaders and humble himself. Even as this trouble was brewing and her letters urging change seemed to go unheeded, Ellen White nevertheless upheld Kellogg and the medical missionary work of the church against criticisms in public settings like the General Conference session. When the Battle Creek facility burned to the ground and Dr. Kellogg worked with groups outside the church for funding to rebuild it, Ellen White declared in private council meetings on the matter that he had overstepped his bounds and tied himself to worldly things, but she did not give up on him yet.

When Dr. Kellogg followed Ellen White's advice concerning publishing a book with the proceeds pledged to a cause, in this case to rebuild the Battle Creek medical facility, his seemingly admirable goal brought his case to a turning point. His book,

originally meant to be a general purpose medical book for the laity of the church to apply in their lives, turned into a platform for his views of God which came to be seen as pantheism or a type of ‘spiritism’ that went against core parts of the Adventist message. Ellen White had to write against him, but she still defended him and his work in public and did not widely share how much she had been working with Kellogg privately.

Finally, though, after a few more years of unheeded reproof, Ellen White had to write against Dr. Kellogg and his views to larger and larger groups within the church, leading to localized books and pamphlets for medical staff and for those around Battle Creek and eventually for the church at large in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8. Dr. Kellogg drifted further and further away over the next uneasy couple years until he finally broke ties with the Adventist church both personally and professionally. He severed the Battle Creek medical facility from denominational ownership and did not object when the church expelled him from its membership.

### Conclusions

Dr. J. H. Kellogg was a brilliant man called by God to His work and advised by Ellen White on his courses of action, yet somehow he still drifted further and further from the church until he finally broke his ties. This process took at least ten years, during which he was generally well respected within the church and appreciated by Ellen White herself for some of the things he did. If this man can fall away, anyone can. His core problem seemed to be his extreme self-reliance. That is a problem that can strike any of us, especially those most involved in the work.



While his dogged pursuit of his work is admirable to a degree, Ellen White wrote to him about the need for rest (both to lighten his load, and to help his team members get more involved), and of the need to stick to the tasks he had been given by God rather than sink his energy into his own pet projects. Dr. Kellogg was great at what he did, and probably nobody else could do it better, but the problem is that he thought that, too. He didn't want to relinquish any control and, despite all of Ellen White's warnings to the contrary, he became both increasingly involved in his work and increasingly detached from the church leadership. Even great leaders need to have people around them who will disagree with them, and Ellen White saw that she was left to fill that need for Kellogg, against his wishes.

Riding on the wave of his fame with the church, Dr. Kellogg was able to somehow carefully pull operations like the Sanitarium and vegetarian food secrets under his control all while seemingly working within the heart of Adventist leadership. He had his own agenda, but that wasn't revealed for several years until he finally dropped his last ties to the church and came away with the rights to all of his work. Combined with his lack of enthusiasm for the Adventist gospel message, which Ellen White repeatedly wrote to him about, Dr. Kellogg inched away from both the church as an organization and as a faith community, finally leaving the church in both ways, drifting away professionally and spiritually.

So what could have been done to keep him? I argue that Ellen White did more than her share to try to bring him back to the church. She was firm yet sincere with a motherly concern for him. She brought in support from other leaders to try to reach him after a long period of personal contact went unheeded, but even after he had published his

book and rebuilt the Battle Creek facility, both against her strong counsel, she still tried to reach out to him. It wasn't until she felt compelled to help quell his unsettling views within the church that she finally started to write against him in more public settings. It grieved her to have to write against him. I argue that such a persistent desire to see not only the behavioral change but also the overall well-being of a wayward brother is exactly the type of attitude we should have with each other. Dr. Kellogg's eventual departure from the church was not a failure on Ellen White's part; she had tried unflinchingly to help him.

CHAPTER 4  
THE “BITTER FRUIT” AND “PHARISAISM” OF G. I. BUTLER  
AND THE “LAW IN GALATIANS” CONTROVERSY

George Ide Butler was born in 1834 to a family with Baptist roots who accepted the Millerite message and he was not yet 10 years old when the Great Disappointment hit. He was not a very religious man in his youth but at the age of 22 he was led by J. N. Andrews into the movement that would later call itself the Seventh-day Adventist church. By 1865 he was elected the President of the Iowa Conference and a few years later in 1871 he was elected General Conference President. During his time as President, lasting until 1888 with a break from 1874-1880 to allow James White to be President again, he was involved with D. M. Canright’s waffling and eventual denouncement of the church as well as the establishment and temporary closing of the Battle Creek College that would become a major part of Dr. J. H. Kellogg’s work. Beyond these connections to the other men studied in this paper, Butler is the focus of his own section due to his view of his leadership and how he related to his Ellen G. White’s response to his argument with A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner over the meaning of the Law in Galatians 3. G. I. Butler was not re-elected after the 1888 General Conference session and he left church work for about a decade afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner’s controversial views in the late 1880s spurred the church into re-emphasizing righteousness by faith. While Ellen White affirmed their cause, she rebuked them for their methods and generally expressed displeasure at the way things proceeded in the arguments over the Law in Galatians leading up to the 1888

General Conference. She compared the increasingly entrenched views on both sides of the Galatians debate to idols and rejected that they were “landmarks”, as some claimed. Nevertheless, this was the historical setting for a reawakening to the truth of salvation as a gift of God. Since Seventh-day Adventism still faces debates today, it is worth heeding the warnings of the past to learn lessons for today’s debates.<sup>2</sup>

While the controversy came to a head at the 1888 General Conference session, the seeds of this conflict went back to before G. I. Butler had become an Adventist. This chapter will outline the development of the Law in Galatians and righteousness by faith debates and then carefully look at Ellen White’s letters and other statements about these debates, including those regarding the 1888 General Conference session and the roughly two years of fallout after it and the years building up to it, with a particular emphasis on her writings to G. I. Butler. The chapter will focus on the way the debate was carried out and what upset Ellen White about the debate. The historical period covered in this paper focuses on the years around the 1888 General Conference session, but it reaches back to 1851 and forward into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to provide context. This time period has been broken up into sections based on pivotal events.

### **Groundwork for the Law in Galatians Controversy – 1851-1857**

Perhaps the earliest discussion of the Law in Galatians 3 in an official Adventist publication took place in 1851 and arose from a critic named H. E. Carver writing to the

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<sup>1</sup> The Ellen G. White Estate, “George Ide Butler: 1834-1918,” accessed July 19, 2015 <http://www.whiteestate.org/pioneer/butler.asp>.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis see the Ellen White Estate library collection titled “Minneapolis Conference 1888,” accessed June 9, 2015,

*Review and Herald* in an attempt to show that the Law had been abolished. J. N. Andrews, the same man who a few years later would bring G. I. Butler into the church, wrote a detailed response to Carver's questions and particularly to Carver's statement that Galatians 3:19 and 25 show that we are no longer under the Law, tying Law to the 'schoolmaster' in these verses. As part of his response, Andrews wrote, "Had the law been abolished at the death of Christ, it could not have been a schoolmaster many years afterward to bring the Galatians to Christ."<sup>3</sup> He then pulls in Paul's explanation of the Law as the revealer of our sinful state in places like Romans 4:15.<sup>4</sup> Thus this early statement affirmed how the whole Law – and especially the 10 Commandments, which Carver was trying to argue had been abolished – were the 'schoolmaster' which leads us to Christ.

While this topic was touched on in places by others, it was mainly expounded on by J. H. Waggoner. His 1854 book "The Law of God" brought in both New and Old Testament texts on the concept of God's Law and of particular note for this study is his treatment of Galatians 3. He argues against those who say that the Law itself was a curse, claims that Galatians 3:21 counters such a view, and concludes that transgression of the Law *is* the 'curse' referred to. "If this law had been kept by all, none would have been under its curse; and then no mediator would have been needed to secure to man the

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<http://library.ellenwhite.org/taxonomy/term/13822#document>; A. L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Lonely Years: 1876-1891* vol. 3 1984, chapters 30-32.

<sup>3</sup> J. N. Andrews, "Reply to H. E. Carver," *RH*, Sept. 16, 1851, 29, accessed June 9, 2015, [http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH18510916-V02-04\\_\\_B.pdf](http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH18510916-V02-04__B.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. James White, "Justified by the Law," *RH*, June 10, 1852, 24, accessed June 9, 2015, [http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH18520610-V03-03\\_\\_B.pdf](http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH18520610-V03-03__B.pdf). White refers to Romans 3 and Galatians 5 to show that "God's law convicts of sin, and shows the sinner exposed to the wrath of God, and leads him to Christ, where justification for past offences can be found alone through faith in his blood."

blessing of God.”<sup>5</sup> At the heart of this explanation is a key quote, “The law was added to serve as a school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified through faith: justification by the law being impossible by reason of transgression. Here it is evident that he refers to the moral law; for none but a moral law could bring us to Christ.”<sup>6</sup> He then continues to refer to the Law in Galatians 3 and 4 as only the moral Law.

Thus if we are simply looking for the oldest Adventist view on the Law in Galatians 3 it would be that it at least included the moral Law. J. N. Andrews’ approach left it open to what else might be included under the title of ‘schoolmaster’ but J. H. Waggoner made it quite clear that it was only the moral Law. This emphasis on *only* the moral Law led to the rejection of J. H. Waggoner’s view, but caused confusion as to just what was wrong with his view.

### **J. H. Waggoner Rejected, New Era with S. Pierce’s Answer – 1857-1884**

Looking back, church leaders and Ellen White herself could agree that she had written against J. H. Waggoner’s interpretation of the Law.<sup>7</sup> The confusion was over exactly what she had said and thus what specifically about J. H. Waggoner’s view was condemned. What is clearer is that around this time in October of 1857, Stephen Pierce wrote an article responding to the question of a Bro. Merriam as to what the Law in

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<sup>5</sup> J. H. Waggoner, *The Law of God : An Examination of the Testimony of Both Testaments* (Rochester, N.Y.: The Advent Review Office, 1854). This is reproduced in *Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis*, 13, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=MMM&pagenumber=13>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Uriah Smith letter to W. A. McCutchen Aug 8, 1901; G. I. Butler to Ellen G. White from Battle Creek, Michigan Oct 1, 1888; Ellen White to E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones, Feb. 18, 1887. Letter 28, 1887, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:325.1; Ellen White to Elders G. I.

Galatians 3 referred to. Pierce explored the various uses of the word ‘law’ in the New Testament but his general point is stated from the beginning,

He [Bro. Merriam] asks, "Can the Law there spoken of, refer to the Ten Commandments?" I think it cannot; but that it refers to the law-system, as a system; or, the dispensation of law, as such; or, the whole embodiment of law. Some will here ask, if in verse 19 the Moral Law is not referred to; and others, if the typical, or ceremonial law is not referred to. We answer, no more than any particular sticks of timber which are constituent parts of an edifice, are referred to when only speaking of that edifice, as such. But that great system, or dispensation, or embodiment of law, of which these were constituent parts, is only referred to; and as a system, as a dispensation, as a whole, it was added.<sup>8</sup>

Thus Pierce affirmed that the Law in Galatians 3 was the whole Law system and not just a part of it, yet he also edged away from calling the Ten Commandments alone the ‘schoolmaster.’ Over the next three decades this distancing from identifying the Law in Galatians 3 with the Ten Commandments would generally increase, but with a few exceptions and in varying ways.

Meanwhile, in 1859 G. I. Butler was in his 20s and he was becoming involved in his local Adventist church in Iowa. When the Treasurer and President of the Iowa Conference left the church, Butler was elected the new Conference President and he started work to reunite the Conference that had been split over the defection of its leaders.<sup>9</sup> As James White’s health faded over the 1870s, G. I. Butler was elected as General Conference President, stepping aside when James White was in better health and returning to the position when James’ health faded again.

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Butler and Uriah Smith, Apr. 5, 1887, Letter 13, 1887, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:325.4.

<sup>8</sup> S. Pierce, “Answer to Bro. Merriam’s Question Respecting the Law of Gal. III,” *RH*, 8 Oct. 1857, 180-181, accessed June 9, 2015, [http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH18571008-V10-23\\_\\_B.pdf](http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH18571008-V10-23__B.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> See the Ellen G. White Estate online library articles, Ellen G. White Estate, “George Butler,” accessed June 5, 2015, <http://library.ellenwhite.org/content/person/george-butler>.

In 1860 R. F. Cottrell wrote against the idea of Christ somehow fulfilling the Ten Commandments and instead argued that the Ceremonial Law had been done away with.<sup>10</sup> Moses Hull argued in a series of articles that the Ceremonial Law had been added because the Israelites had not obeyed the Ten Commandments.<sup>11</sup> Uriah Smith wrote against T. M. Preble's articles which declared that the Law was our "old 'dead schoolmaster'" with his own publication published in 1864. In it he responds to Preble's argument that Adventists preach 'another gospel' by writing,

God's great standard of righteousness, the ten commandments, shows that we are sinners. He knows, then, that being convinced of sin, we fly to the gospel for the remedy, and look for redemption and salvation to Jesus Christ. How is this perverting the gospel of Christ, or preaching another gospel, and so subjecting ourselves to the curse.<sup>12</sup>

Surprisingly (given his later resistance to any such implications), Smith here defends the idea that the Ten Commandments lead us to Christ in a style similar to J. N. Andrews over a decade earlier. Just a few pages later in this publication, however, Smith gets back to a view more similar to Pierce's when he writes,

But to speak definitely on Gal. 3:24, Paul does not mean by the word school-master, the ten commandments. What is there in the ten commandments to lead us to Christ? True, they reveal sin, and show us that we are transgressors; but they point out no way of escape, and lead us to no Saviour. What law then did lead to Christ? Answer, That law system by which the sacrifice and priestly work of the Saviour was so

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<sup>10</sup> R. F. Cottrell, "'Condensed' Moral Law," *RH*, Feb 16, 1860, 101, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18600216-V15-13.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Moses Hull, "The Two Laws, and Two Covenants," series in *RH* from *RH*, Apr 22, 1862, 165-166, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18620422-V19-21.pdf>. through *RH*, May 13, 1862, 189, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18620513-V19-24.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Uriah Smith "Both Sides On the Sabbath and the Law" [Battle Creek, Michigan] 1864, 48 accessed June 16, 2015, <http://www.andrews.edu/library/car/cardigital/digitized/documents/b14454889.pdf>.



clearly shadowed forth. By this it was continually foreshown that a sacrifice was to be made which could take away sin, and a genuine Saviour provided for the world.<sup>13</sup>

In 1867 D. M. Canright entered the fray with an article arguing that there was only one Law and thus no Law had been abolished.<sup>14</sup> By 1869 J. N. Andrews again wrote on the Law but his emphasis was on God ‘writing His Law on our hearts’.<sup>15</sup> H. A. St. John defended that Gentiles and Jews alike were ‘under the Law’ and that it was not strictly a Jewish thing.<sup>16</sup> In 1872 H. M. Van Siyke argued that the Levitical Law had been abolished<sup>17</sup> while that same year D. M. Canright wrote against A. Campbell with a notable point that the Law – particularly the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment – had not been abolished.<sup>18</sup> By the end of that same year Albert Weeks was arguing that all Law was a ‘teacher’ for the new believer.<sup>19</sup> M. Kilgore argued that the Moral Law had been magnified by Christ but the Ceremonial Law had been abolished.<sup>20</sup>

In 1875 D. M. Canright took another look at Galatians 3 and concluded that the “book” of Gal 3:10 must mean what else Moses wrote contrasted with the “stone” aka 10

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 51-52.

<sup>14</sup> D. M. Canright, “The Two Laws,” *RH*, May 7, 1867, 258-259, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18670517-V29-22.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> J. N. Andrews, “The Righteousness of the Law – The Purpose of the Gospel,” *RH*, Feb. 9, 1869, 49-50, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18690209-V33-07.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> H. A. St. John, “The Law of God to the Gentiles,” *RH*, Jul. 9, 1872, 29, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18720709-V40-04.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> H. M. Van Siyke, “The Two Laws,” *RH*, Aug. 20, 1872, 75, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18720820-V40-10.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> D. M. Canright, “The Law not Abolished,” *RH*, Sept. 10, 1872, 101, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18720910-V40-13.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Albert Weeks, “The Law of God,” *RH*, Dec. 10, 1872, 207, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18721210-V40-26.pdf>.

Commandments. “But what does the moral law say about Christ? Nothing at all. It points out man’s duty, but does not point to Christ.”<sup>21</sup> The next year J. Clarke defended that the whole Law points to our need for forgiveness<sup>22</sup> but a few years later Canright asserted that the Ceremonial Law had been abolished.<sup>23</sup>

While Adventist opinion in print shifted towards the view that the Ceremonial Law was the schoolmaster that had been abolished, there were certainly contrasting opinions with a notable contingent asserting that all Law – including Ceremonial Law and Moral Law – pointed to Christ. During the mid and late 1880s, some like G. I. Butler would try to show that the Ceremonial Law view was the majority but even they had to admit that this view was not universally held (as we shall see in his lengthy letter to Ellen White just before the 1888 General Conference session.) This back-and-forth discussion would come to a head when E. J. Waggoner – the son of J. H. Waggoner – started teaching and writing about his father’s ideas in the early 1880s.

### **E. J. Waggoner Reawakens His Father’s Ideas, Meets Reproach – 1884-1888**

In August of 1884, E. J. Waggoner wrote an article in the *Signs of the Times* (a West Coast publication for which he was the editor) that was the first of many

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<sup>20</sup> R. M. Kilgore, “The Two Laws,” *RH*, Mar. 24, 1874, 115, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18740324-V43-15.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> D. M. Canright, “The Law in Galatians Examined,” *RH*, June 10, 1875, 188-189, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18750610-V45-24.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Jos. Clark, “The Law,” *RH*, Apr. 6, 1876, 109, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18760406-V47-14.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> D. M. Canright, “The Law in Galatians,” *RH*, Jan. 31, 1878, 33-34, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18780131-V51-05.pdf>.

reintroducing his father's views on the Law in Galatians.<sup>24</sup> In 1886 he wrote a series of nine articles titled "Comments on Galatians 3" and in the final article he referred to Wesley's three functions of the Law and wrote, "Indeed, each is continually sending me to the other – the law to Christ, and Christ to the law."<sup>25</sup> He was also teaching these views to his students at Healdsburg College in the early 1880s.

This agitation of old views upset General Conference President G. I. Butler. He wrote a book in 1886 with the descriptive title "The Law in Galatians: Is It the Moral Law or Does Refer to That System of Laws Peculiarly Jewish?"<sup>26</sup> A paragraph from his introduction provides a good look at Butler's views and his reasons for holding (and defending) them.

Leading brethren have been on both sides of the question. In the early history of the work, it is probable that quite a majority of them accepted the view that the moral law was the main subject of Paul's consideration in the book of Galatians. But there came quite a change in this respect at a later period, when some of our leading brethren, to whom our people have ever looked as safe counselors in questions of perplexity, gave up the view that the moral law was mainly under discussion, and took the position that it was the ceremonial law. Many others who have come later to act a part in the work, have accepted the latter view with strong confidence. It would be quite difficult to ascertain the comparative strength in numbers on either side; but to the best of the writer's judgment (and his opportunities of forming a fair opinion have not been meager), he would say that at the present time at least two thirds of our ministers hold the latter opinion.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> E. J. Waggoner, "Christ the End of the Law," *Sings of the Times*, Aug. 7, 1884, 473.

<sup>25</sup> E. J. Waggoner, "Comments on Galatians 3, No 9," *Signs of the Times*. Sept. 2, 1886, 534, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/ST/ST18860902-V12-34.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> G. I. Butler, *The Law in the Book of Galatians : Is It the Moral Law, or Does It Refer to That System of Laws Peculiarly Jewish?* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review & Herald, 1886), 31, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=MMM&pagenumber=31>

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

Note how Butler acknowledges that many early Adventists viewed the Law in Galatians as the Moral Law, but defends the majority who now hold that this actually refers to the Ceremonial Law. Also of interest is his argument that reliable leaders have held this view and thus we should, too. Perhaps hinted at here is a point that will become a major concern for him around 1888 – he believed that Ellen G. White, in rebuking J. H. Waggoner, had shown that the Law in Galatians couldn't be the Moral Law. Another part of Butler's concern was that E. J. Waggoner was now teaching the views for which his father had been rebuked.

At the 1886 General Conference session, Butler gathered enough support against E. J. Waggoner to get this resolution passed:

...not to permit doctrinal views not held by a fair majority of our people to be made a part of the public instruction of said schools, or to be published in our denominational papers as if they were the established doctrines of this people, before they are examined and approved by the leading brethren of experience.<sup>28</sup>

While no specific mention of Waggoner or the Law in Galatians is made, this statement does address publication and teaching in schools (both of which Waggoner was doing.) Dave Fiedler notes that this resolution was only narrowly passed 5-4 and he suggests that Butler didn't want to reveal how close this was divided and thus opted to leave Jones and Waggoner unnamed so as to leave the resolution more vague.<sup>29</sup> Whatever Butler's reasons, it's also noteworthy to see the condition that must be met in this resolution – 'leading brethren of experience' had to approve a view in order for it to be taught or published.

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<sup>28</sup> "General Conference Proceedings: Twenty-fifth Annual Session," *RH*, Dec 14, 1886, 779, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18861214-V63-49.pdf>.

During this time Ellen White was away in Europe and not closely connected with the brewing controversy. In January of 1887 she wrote a piece called “Unity in the Church” that Butler likely took as supporting his cause.<sup>30</sup> A month later she wrote from Switzerland to Jones and Waggoner urging them to stop quibbling over minor points and to instead present a unified front (both at the General Conference meetings and in the *Signs of the Times*.)<sup>31</sup> In it she reproved Jones and Waggoner for publishing their views in an official paper, compared their approach to unfortunate one used by people like Martin Luther that slowed the work of the Reformation, explained how some people tend to get fixated on speculations or knowing things that others do not know to the point that Christ Himself withheld some teachings knowing that such people would fixate on them. Similarly she wrote a few months later to Butler:

The principles that you refer to are right; but how this can harmonize with your pointed remarks to Dr. Waggoner, I cannot see... The matter now has been brought so fully before the people by yourself as well as Dr. Waggoner, that it must be met fairly and squarely in open discussion. I see no other way; and if this cannot be done without a spirit of pharisaism then let us stop publishing these matters and learn more fully lessons in the school of Christ. I believe now that nothing can be done but open discussion. You circulated your pamphlet; now it is only fair that Dr. Waggoner should have just as fair a chance as you have had.<sup>32</sup>

This letter also talks about how she can't remember what the manuscript (regarding J. H. Waggoner) said. Thus, early on, Ellen White was upset at both sides for making a big

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<sup>29</sup> Dave Fiedler, *Hindsight : Seventh-Day Adventist History in Essays and Extracts* (Harrah, Okla.: Academy Enterprises, 1996), 69.

<sup>30</sup> E. G. White, “Unity of the Church,” *RH*, Jan. 25, 1887, 49-50, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18870125-V64-04.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> Ellen White to E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones, Feb 18, 1887, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 15:18-22.

<sup>32</sup> Ellen White to Elders G. I. Butler and Uriah Smith, Apr. 5, 1887, Letter 13, 1887, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 8:311 and E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:325.3.

deal out of a minor point but since it had been done and people were talking about it, she tried to manage the conflict in a way that was fair to both sides.

In August of 1888 Ellen White wrote a broad letter to those who would attend the upcoming General Conference session. In it she argued that “the truth can lose nothing by close investigation.” She condemned those who simply believed someone else’s interpretation without investigating it for themselves and she offered the hopeful call to love and respect each other and by so doing resolve misunderstandings and controversies in prayerful Bible study.<sup>33</sup> George Knight suggests that it was because of this letter that Butler allowed for a committee to study these debated issues, but Knight is also quick to note that this did not ease Butler’s mind on the subject.<sup>34</sup>

G. I. Butler wrote a lengthy letter to Ellen White which reflects how the two had been writing back and forth to each other. After an explanation of his poor health and how it would keep him from coming to the General Conference session, he launches in to a wandering discussion of his concerns with Jones, Waggoner, and their Law in Galatians message. After talking about his activities relating to this for a bit he starts a paragraph with “I have not, Sister White, been able to see the justice of your letter of April 5, 1887, and never expect to. This remark may sound unbecoming in me, but I

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<sup>33</sup> Ellen White, “Dear Brethren who shall assemble in General Conference,” Aug. 5, 1888; cf. Fiedler, 70, for how she had been urging for individual study and against enforcement of an interpretation from leaders.

<sup>34</sup> George R. Knight, *Angry Saints : Tensions and Possibilities in the Adventist Struggle over Righteousness by Faith* (Washington, D.C. ; Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Association, 1989), 31. For other signs of growing unease about Ellen White leading up to the 1888 General Conference session, especially on the grounds that she was allegedly influenced by the leaders of the West Coast since she had been out on the West Coast, see Letter 14, 1889, about a meeting just before the 1888 General Conference session: “They thought the law in Galatians would come up and they would go armed and equipped to resist everything coming from those men from the Pacific Coast, new and old.” Dec 9, 1888, Letter 7, 1888, “Because I came from the Pacific Coast they would have it that I had been influenced by W. C. White, Dr. Waggoner, and A. T. Jones.”

shall give you my reasons for it, which I trust you will at least fairly consider.”<sup>35</sup> He then explains how he thinks he has been handling this issue well and has been calm and collected when dealing with people he disagrees with. Then he picks up with her comments against his article in the *Review*, and part of the letter he quotes I have already quoted above such as, “Now, my brother, things that you have said many of them are all right. The principles that you refer to are all right, but how can this harmonize with your pointed remarks to Dr. Waggoner, I cannot see.”<sup>36</sup> Still referring to her letter,. Butler brings up another quote about ‘pharisaism’ and how ‘Dr. Waggoner should have just as fair a chance as you have had.’ Butler replies, “With the moral advice and statements of what we should be I have no trouble. It is right. But with the attitude in which you place my efforts in this matter I cannot see the justice.”<sup>37</sup> He defends himself saying that he was *not* “too sharp” with Waggoner and Jones, pointing out that she herself had been “sharper” with them in her letter to them, which he had a copy of, dated February 18, 1887.

Then he recaps J. H. Waggoner’s earlier writing on the “added law” in Galatians and recounts the meeting in Battle Creek that, in his mind, settled this issue. “Eld. Andrews held about half and half between Eld. Waggoner and the views held by the rest of us. But the time came when your testimony was brought in, and it weighted heavily in favor of the view held by us, that the added law was not the

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<sup>35</sup> G. I. Butler to Ellen White from Battle Creek, Michigan Oct. 1, 1888, 6.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

Ten Commandments, but referred to those laws peculiarly Jewish.”<sup>38</sup> He then defends the time after this meeting by saying, “The view was considered settled by the larger part of our people, yet those of us who have held this view have tried to refrain from pressing our brethren who may have entertained different views, though they are largely in the minority.”

After citing her February 18, 1887, letter in which she said she had been shown that J. H. Waggoner’s views were not correct, Butler stated emphatically,

These words I believe to be the exact truth, and if they do not show beyond all question that Eld. Waggoner’s position on the added law was incorrect and untrue, I should fail to know how human language could make a point clear. There have been simply two views held on this subject of the added law, the one Eld Waggoner has held that the added law refers to the moral 10 Commandments the other that the added law referred to the laws particularly Jewish. These two positions are the only positions held on the subject... When you condemned in the testimony, as you did, Eld. Waggoner’s position on the added law, you unmistakably condemned the principle that the 10 Commandments are the added law. There can be no escape from this conclusion. That this was settled then and there, and should have remained settled in quiet is too self-evident to me to need argument... The opening up of this question as it has been on the Pacific coast during the last four years is fraught with evil and only evil. I firmly believe it will be found to be the cause of unsettlings of many of our people, and breaking down their faith in the work as a work of unity, and that souls will be lost and give up the truth because of this, and that it will open a wide door for other innovations to come in and break down our old positions of faith. And the way it has been managed will tend to break the confidence of our people in the testimonies themselves.”<sup>39</sup>

He then explains his surprise to see this view being taught at Healdsburg College when he went there in 1886 and explained that conference leaders in the Northern Pacific Conferences were uneasy about sending people to Healdsburg because of it, so that is why he had pushed to keep them from teaching such things. Then he takes up issue with

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<sup>38</sup> G. I. Butler to Ellen White from Battle Creek, Michigan, Oct. 1, 1888, 10-11.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.



E. J. Waggoner's 1886 Sabbath School lessons and writes of their "evil effects"<sup>40</sup> He defended his efforts saying it was his duty as General conference president (16), berated her for not answering his requests for guidance on the Law (17), blamed W. C. White for sustaining this movement (17-18), accused his opponents of stirring up strife by "endoctrinating" people (19), and expressed outrage that Waggoner "must not have his feelings hurt" but people of his own camp were hurt and never received an apology (20). In light of all this, he scolded EGW for her censuring his "little pamphlet," especially since he three times asked her for guidance before publishing it (21). He defended his pamphlet since it was not to be widely circulated outside the church (22), berated Jones and Waggoner as 'young fledglings' who think they 'can attack any point of faith....no matter how long it had been settled" (23), expressed doubt that a discussion could sort this out (24), and claimed that this resurgence of an old false 'pet opinion' has brought nothing but contention (25). He brought up other similar pet views with alarm and blamed "this movement on the Galatians question" as "the opening wedge by which this deluge has been let in" (26)<sup>41</sup> He ended his letter sure that Ellen White will censure him for what he had said, yet still trying to convince her that he truly bore her no ill will.

Thus even though G. I. Butler was not able to attend the 1888 General Conference session due to his poor health, we have quite a bit of material regarding his views at this

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<sup>40</sup> G. I. Butler to Ellen White from Battle Creek, Michigan, Oct. 1, 1888, 15.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 16-26. He further brought up Dr. Kellogg as a main example. Butler thought EGW's statements to him about the Kellogg issue were 'a public slap before the General Conference' (26-27). Then he outlined the Kellogg issue as he saw it (27), detailed his concern for stockholders in light of Kellogg's plans (28), recommended setting up a committee to look into Kellogg's plans—and of Kellogg's outrage at this (28). He further reviewed how EGW had talked with him about not bringing up the Kellogg issue in public (29), how Butler has come to think this was instigated by Kellogg stirring up suspicion against him (30), how he took EGW's public statements against public rebuke of Kellogg as directed at him, his appreciation for, yet strong concerns about, Kellogg (32),

time. His growing discontent boiled over in this letter and this provides a look at what was going on beneath the surface with this controversy. With this bigger picture we can make better sense of the events of the 1888 General Conference session, especially since documentation of the session itself is less detailed than we might like.

### **1888 and Two Years of Aftermath – 1888-1890**

The 1888 General Conference session was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota beginning in October. As Butler (who was not present for this session) had handed out his book, *The Law in the Book of Galatians* at the 1886 General Conference session, so E. J. Waggoner handed out his *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians: A Review* at the 1888 session. This was written as a letter replying to points Butler brought up in 1886 and it has a preface explaining that although he wrote this in 1887 he had held off on publishing it until now.<sup>42</sup> Fiedler suggests this delay was because of the February 18, 1887, letter from Ellen White regarding the need for a ‘united front’ mentioned above in the previous section.<sup>43</sup> Waggoner also gave various talks at the meetings and although we don’t have copies of these talks, we do have notes which confirm that they generally stayed in line with his earlier writings and with this book, *The Gospel in Galatians*. Iowa Conference President J. H. Morrison gave several presentations saying Waggoner was “overstressing” things and expressing concern that Waggoner’s views would displace the

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his view of Kellogg’s “reforms” as “exaggerated” [extreme] and thus harmful (33), and how he is through with putting up with all that Kellogg says (34).

<sup>42</sup> E. J. Waggoner, *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians: A Review* (Oakland, Cal.: [s.n.], 1888).

<sup>43</sup> Fiedler, 71.

Adventist understanding and emphasis on the Law.<sup>44</sup> There appear to also have been presentations against Waggoner's views by Kilgore and Smith, which presentations Ellen White was not pleased with.<sup>45</sup>

Much of what we can see in the writings of Ellen White about this meeting comes in the two years after the meeting. Looking back on this time around a decade later she would remark, "Two years of opposition were brought in, and at two general conferences a spirit prevailed among some of our leading men which was not inspired by God."<sup>46</sup> Commenting in 1888 on the message E. J. Waggoner presented, she wrote, "Dr. Waggoner has spoken to us in a straight forward manner. There is precious light in what he has said. Some things presented in reference to the law in Galatians, if I fully understand his position, do not harmonize with the understanding I have had on this subject; but truth will lose nothing by investigation..."<sup>47</sup> This brings in two broad points about her treatment of Waggoner's message – that it was not in line with what Adventists had been teaching before and that it wouldn't hurt to investigate his view.

Ellen White had a dream and she wrote about it to Butler in October 1888. In it she saw an angel "[stretch] out his arms toward Dr. Waggoner and to you, Elder Butler, and said in substance as follows: Neither have all the light upon the law; neither position

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<sup>44</sup> Knight, 34.

<sup>45</sup> Ellen White, "Looking Back at Minneapolis," c. Dec. 1888, Manuscript 24, 1888, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:220.3 calls these presentations "not after God's order. It was human but not divine."

<sup>46</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:221.1; cf. A. L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Lonely Years: 1876-1891* 474.4.

<sup>47</sup> Ellen White, "A Call to a Deeper Study of the Word," Nov. 1888, Manuscript 15, 1888, published in Ellen G. White, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), 163.2.

is perfect.”<sup>48</sup> She continues that all should study the Scriptures for themselves, fighting against Butler’s emphasis on having church leaders study out a position for others to accept on their authority.

In late 1888 she also had to defend against two types of outcries. A few weeks after the session she wrote emphatically correcting those who were saying that “If our views of Galatians are not correct, then we have not the third angel’s message, and our position goes by the board; there is nothing to our faith.”<sup>49</sup> This was a large part of the concern raised by Butler’s camp about this new teaching—that it overturned a core part of Adventism or, as he put it, a ‘landmark.’ She wrote against such a view and, as she had before 1888, viewed the Law in Galatians itself as a small matter that had been blown out of proportion.

The other main outcry she addressed regarded her prophetic gift and how she seemed to have “changed her mind.” As in Butler’s letter just before the session, some in his camp viewed Ellen White’s reproof of J. H. Waggoner decades before as a clear rejection of the Law in Galatians as having to do with the Moral Law and thus they thought Ellen White was going back on her word by saying E. J. Waggoner had a valid message. In late 1888 she wrote against those who said that she must no longer be speaking for God because her views had changed.<sup>50</sup> In December she wrote to William Healey on how her view had not changed and how it was wrong to try to squash attempts

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<sup>48</sup> Ellen White to G. I. Butler, Oct. 14, 1888, Letter 21 1888, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:217-218.

<sup>49</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:219.2.

<sup>50</sup> Ellen White, “Talk at Minneapolis”, Oct. 24, 1888, Manuscript 9, 1888; cf. E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:223.1. About Ellen G. White’s own inner pain at having to deliver this message, as she described it, “I had a message of reproof and warning for my brethren, I knew. My

to examine our beliefs. Regarding this ‘spirit’ of the 1888 session she wrote, “I have not the least hesitancy in saying it was not the spirit of God. If every idea we have entertained in doctrine is truth, will not the truth bear to be investigated? Will it totter and fall if criticized? If so, let it fall, the sooner the better...”<sup>51</sup> Again in January 1889 she wrote a letter affirming that she had not, in fact, changed her position at all but instead her words were being twisted.<sup>52</sup> She was driving at a deeper issue than just whether or not a prophet can change her mind – she was getting at how people in Butler’s camp were taking her statements, applying them, and refusing to let others see them differently.

Things had not cooled down by June of 1889 so she wrote a rebuke to those continuing in bitter dissention.

Shall there be with the people of God the cropping out of the very same spirit which they have condemned in the denominations, because there was a difference of understanding on some points – not vital questions? Shall the same spirit in any form be cherished among Seventh-day Adventists – the cooling of friendship, the withdrawal of confidence, the misrepresentation of motives, the endeavor to thwart and turn into ridicule those who honestly differ with them in their views...<sup>53</sup>

This summarizes her reaction following the 1888 session – she still didn’t view this as a major issue but she rebuked the way people were arguing so bitterly over it.

As she put it in her diary sometime in or 1890,

The same spirit of resistance is to be found even among those who claim to believe the truth for this time...any pet theory, any human idea, becomes of the gravest

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soul was pressed with anguish. To say these things to my brethren causes me far greater anguish than they caused those to whom they were addressed.”

<sup>51</sup> Ellen White to W. M. Healey, Dec 9, 1888. Letter 7, 1888, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:216.4.

<sup>52</sup> Ellen White to Brother Underwood, Jan. 25, 1889 Letter 3, 1889, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:150.

<sup>53</sup> Ellen White, “Experience Following the Minneapolis Conference,” c. June 1889, Manuscript 30, 1889, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:331.4.

importance and as sacred as an idol to which everything must bow. This has verily been the case in the theory of the law in Galatians...<sup>54</sup>

Likewise she wrote about how people were misunderstanding what ‘landmarks’ are and how this was contributing to the ongoing hostilities, saying:

The law in Galatians is not a vital question and never has been. Those who have called it one of the old landmarks simply do not know what they are talking about. It never was an old landmark, and it never will become such. These minds that have been wrought up in such an unbecoming manner, and have manifested such fruits as have been seen since the Minneapolis meeting, may well begin to question whether a good tree produces such evidently bitter fruit.<sup>55</sup>

Here she starkly contrasts the “fruit” of those who claim this is a matter of a “landmark” with the “fruit” of those like Jones and Waggoner spreading this ‘new’ view.

In February of 1890 Uriah Smith – a main proponent of Butler’s camp – wrote to Ellen White admitting that he wasn’t entirely against Waggoner’s message but that he was flatly against his interpretation of the Law in Galatians because, in Smith’s mind, this was already settled. As he put it in his letter, “I supposed the question of the law in Galatians was settled away back in 1856 when Brother Pierce came on from Vermont to have an investigation of the position which Brother J. H. Waggoner took in his first book on the law, namely, that the law in Galatians was the Ten Commandments...”<sup>56</sup> At least at this point Ellen White’s efforts to convince Smith and others that her view had not changed and that they’d been understanding her rejection of J. H. Waggoner’s view incorrectly was not getting through to people.

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<sup>54</sup> Ellen White, “Perils of Trusting in the Wisdom of Men,” no date, Manuscript 55, 1890, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:183.1.

<sup>55</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:183.2.

<sup>56</sup> Uriah Smith to Ellen White, Feb 17, 1890 (responding to a letter from EGW that is now lost).

In March 1890 Ellen White held a meeting with various leaders in Battle Creek with the goal of resolving this issue and bringing them around to repenting for the way they had been arguing. She wrote to her son and daughter-in-law about how she had rebuked them saying, “You have been weighing every precious heaven-sent testimony by your own scales as you interpreted the law in Galatians. Nothing could come to you in regard to the truth and the power of God unless it should bear your imprint, the precious ideas you had idolized on the law in Galatians.”<sup>57</sup> Near the end of another letter about this she writes, “Now brethren, I have nothing to say, no burden in regard to the law in Galatians. This matter looks to me of minor consequence in comparison with the spirit you have brought into your faith. It is exactly of the same piece that was manifested by the Jews in reference to the word and mission of Jesus Christ...”<sup>58</sup> Even though Ellen White strongly supported the spreading of Waggoner’s message, she was even stronger in her opposition to the ‘spirit’ that was brought in over it. She yet again defended her prophetic work in the face of those who said she must no longer be a prophet because she ‘changed’ and she rebukes them for the way they have been so bitterly arguing for the last few years.

Also from March 1890 we have an article in the *Review and Herald* from Ellen White where she summarizes her emphasis of ‘the 1888 message’.

You will meet with those who will say, “You are too much excited over this matter. You are too much in earnest. You should not be reaching for the righteousness of Christ, and making so much of that. You should preach the law.” As a people, we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in

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<sup>57</sup> Ellen White to Willie and Mary White, Mar. 13, 1890, Letter 83, 1890, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:225.1.

<sup>58</sup> E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:226.2.

the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God. We must not trust in our own merits at all, but in the merits of Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>59</sup>

A key part of the message of Jones and Waggoner for her was the emphasis on Jesus and His grace to help balance out how much we preach the Law. This was of great importance to her, but the actual matter of how to interpret the Law in Galatians 3 was not. As George Knight notes, there were differing views of what the 1888 message was, stemming from concern over Sunday laws and slipping on the Adventist understanding of the Law on the traditionalist side and concerns like those Ellen White mentions here on the ‘new’ side of Jones and Waggoner.<sup>60</sup>

### **Epilogue – 1891-1902**

While eventually these wounds would heal and Jones and Waggoner would go on to become major evangelists and writers on the theme of righteousness by faith, I want to dwell a bit longer on the areas of the conflict that lingered.<sup>61</sup> Arnold Wallenkampf notes how a main cause for the delay in acceptance of the 1888 message was the resistance of a group of Battle Creek leaders.<sup>62</sup> Ellen White wrote a letter about the General Conference President O. A. Olsen who got caught up with this group of leaders.

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<sup>59</sup> E. G. White, “Christ Prayed for Unity Among His Disciples,” *RH*, Mar. 11, 1890, 146, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18900311-V67-10.pdf>; cf. Arnold Valentin Wallenkampf, *What Every Adventist Should Know About 1888* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub., 1988), 13, on how Ellen White repeatedly used this phrase about the aridness of the ‘hills of Gilboa’ before and after 1888.

<sup>60</sup> Knight, 40.

<sup>61</sup> This is to keep in line with the purpose of this paper, namely, to explore Ellen White’s writings on this conflict in their contexts, not to present the story of the 1888 General Conference session per se. The conflict lingered after 1890 and thus there might be more lessons to be learned from that conflict.

<sup>62</sup> Wallenkampf, 65.



I am distressed beyond any words my pen can trace. Unmistakably, Elder Olsen has acted as did Aaron, in regard to these men who have been opposed to the work of God ever since the Minneapolis meeting. They have not repented of their course of action in resisting light and evidence. Long ago I wrote to A. R. Henry [manager of the Review and Herald Publishing Association], but not a word of response has come from him to me. I have recently written to Harmon Lindsay [the treasurer of the General Conference] and his wife, but I suppose he will not respect the matter sufficiently to reply.<sup>63</sup>

Sadly, this summarizes how leaders persisted in resisting Ellen White's counsel and continued in their bitter defense of their entrenched positions to the detriment of those around them.

Amidst this resistance, G. I. Butler's own story is one of encouragement through trials. Butler was not re-elected as General Conference President and he moved to Florida in somewhat poor health. His wife had her own health challenges so he drifted out of the spotlight to take care of her and mend his own health. On June 13, 1893 G. I. Butler published an article in the *Review and Herald* to inform those who were concerned about his wellbeing, both spiritually and physically. In this article he expressed his interest in the changes that had been going on in the church during his absence and affirmed that he had always believed in righteousness by faith and that he could not keep the Law on his own.<sup>64</sup> Then addressing the 1888 General Conference session more specifically he continued:

I freely admit that for a period I stood in doubt in regard to the agitation of these subjects I have here so freely indorsed. I did not attend the General Conference at Minneapolis, where differences were agitated, being at the time sick in Battle Creek.

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<sup>63</sup> Ellen White to O. A. Tait, Aug. 26, 1896, Letter 100, 1896, published in E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 5:452.1.

<sup>64</sup> G. I. B[utler], "Personal," *RH*, Jun. 13, 1893, 377, accessed July 17, 2015, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18930613-V70-24.pdf>.

But for a variety of reasons not necessary here to refer to, my sympathies were not with those leading out in bringing what I now regard as light, before our people.<sup>65</sup>

He adds some Bible verses about trial and chastening that have been meaningful to him and as part of his final paragraph adds, “I make no excuses for manifold mistakes and errors which may have been seen in my life.”<sup>66</sup> He then ends his article with an affirmation of his faith in Jesus and a hope to be able to continue to help in His work.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

### Summary

J. H. Waggoner’s emphasis on the Law in Galatians as the Moral Law caused quite a stir in the 1850s, displacing earlier views where the ‘schoolmaster’ was the whole Law. Ellen G. White’s reproof of his views was misinterpreted and for the next three decades Adventist publications tended to drift towards calling the Law in Galatians the Ceremonial Law but this was by no means a unanimous opinion. By the time E. J. Waggoner re-introduced his father’s views in print and in his teaching during the 1880s there was enough misunderstanding about the precise nature of the problem with J. H. Waggoner’s writings that the son’s work was viewed as going against the counsel of Ellen G. White and the tradition of the church.

G. I. Butler and Uriah Smith put such concerns in print and discussed them at the 1886 General Conference session. As this was brewing, Ellen White was away in Europe but she started writing to Jones and Waggoner and to Smith and Butler reproving them

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<sup>65</sup> G. I. B[utler], “Personal.”

<sup>66</sup> G. I. B[utler], “Personal.”

for the way this debate was being handled. She didn't want this division to be printed, thus "airing our dirty laundry," but she also wanted to be fair to both sides. To complicate things, she couldn't find nor precisely remember what she had said about J. H. Waggoner. What did become clear to her was that this minor issue was being blown out of proportion and it was being argued over with an unchristian spirit. She urged Jones and Waggoner to be more gentle but she also rebuked Butler for his insistence that these young fledglings were going against church tradition.

As the 1888 General Conference session ended and its aftermath lingered, Ellen White brought out some key points. First, this issue was not over a "landmark" or core doctrine. Second, Jones and Waggoner's message brought back an emphasis on Christ that had been lost in Adventism's "dry" emphasis on the Law. Third, every person should study things for themselves because truth can handle scrutiny. Fourth, arguments should not tear friendships apart and lead to a spirit of "pharisaism," like that of the Jewish leaders who followed Jesus with the intent of trapping Him in His words. Fifth, pet opinions become idols when we make everything else bow down to them. Sixth, it is wrong to try to nitpick about a prophet, especially when it is our interpretation (not what was actually said) that ends up being wrong. Finally, she showed in her actions the tender heart we are to have for our bitterest enemies.

### Conclusions

These lessons from Ellen White's writing regarding the 1888 General Conference discussion and the arguments leading into it as well as resulting from it can serve as both guidance and encouragement as the church continues to face controversial issues as a

church body. While God is apparently able to keep working in spite of our bitter attitudes towards our opponents, I want to see what He can do when we keep up a Christian love for those we disagree with. 1888 was neither the first nor the last time when a minor issue would be blown out of proportion because of larger issues boiling underneath. Let's get those issues out in the open where we can deal with them.

We should not try to squash those who question what we believe – if our views are true, they can withstand the scrutiny. Tradition and the opinion of church leaders or scholars is not a sufficient reason for a church member to believe a view – we need to be convicted of what we believe from our own study. Similarly, we need to be clear on what we have thought about a topic and what the Bible or even Ellen White actually say about it – there is always the possibility that we have been misinterpreting things.

G. I. Butler was, I believe, trying to defend the truth as he understood it, both in matters of doctrine and in the honor of Ellen White as a prophet. He was convinced that the issue of the Law in Galatians 3 had been settled by Ellen White decades before the 1888 session and that any efforts to stir ideas to the contrary were heretical. Ellen White responded to this with an openness to let new ideas be entertained even though they go against earlier understandings, even if those understandings involve her own messages. She seemed to feel that the truth is worth defending, yet that it doesn't need our protection – it can stand for itself, and is not harmed by re-examining it.

What we need more than anything is the humble, prayerful spirit that Ellen White desperately urged delegates to have during the 1888 General Conference session. If we would listen to the leadings of the Holy Spirit, we might very well find that both sides of an argument have some truth to them. In our defense of what we hold to be true, let us

never turn our back on the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. May God continue to lead and guide this church as He has in the past and may we make it easier for Him than we have tended to do.

## CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### **Summary**

During her lifetime Ellen White had to deliver many messages of reproof and warning, some of which were sadly ignored or explained away by those who received them. The cases and people analyzed in this study show how she had an earnest desire to help those who were faltering and how she often felt burdened by her message yet discharged her duty faithfully in delivering it. A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, G. I. Butler and Uriah Smith, Dr. J. H. Kellogg, and D. M. Canright each stood in need of some reproof and each displayed some characteristics in common with the others. There are some similarities in her messages as seen in this study and these themes provide a relevant insight not only for their original readers but for modern readers as well.

D. M. Canright's story is heart-breaking, a man who was encouraged by the Whites to reach others for God but yet wanted the spotlight for himself. His attempts to have both, led him to flounder between faith and doubt. And when Ellen G. White tried to help show him a stable path for his life he alternated between lashing out at her and admitting that she was right. Dr. J. H. Kellogg is a tragic story of a man who was called by God and blessed with great talents who could do his work better than anyone else, and he knew it. While he would give some replies to Ellen White's letters trying to direct him back to the path he was called to walk, he ended up using his great gifts to his own advantage and pushed aside any who tried to correct him. G. I. Butler tried to over-reach his power as General Conference President to quell any discussion of views that he

thought undermined Ellen G. White's authority as a prophet. While his incorrect view of power led him into a bitter fight that left a mark on the church, his story has a happy ending as he came to see the value in the message he had fought against.

Pride was perhaps the single greatest obstacle that Ellen White had to write against. Each man she wrote to was sure his position was correct, and, furthermore, each was sure that his way was the best way. Especially as leaders in the church this pride hindered their work and usefulness. Ellen White pointed each of these men to Jesus as the example of humility and encouraged less dependence on their own efforts and more dependence on Him.

Likely due to this pride, each man had some trouble receiving Ellen White's reproof. There is, in a sense, a continuum of responses amongst the men in this study, from least to most severe against Ellen White and her writings. Jones and Waggoner were more subdued in their response to her counsel. Smith and Butler felt that they were holding to the unfailing validity of her message to J. H. Waggoner and thus felt that Ellen White's opposition to their defense of their view was a dire sign, indeed, that meant the prophet was going back on her word. Dr. Kellogg tended to reply to Ellen White's strong letters but yet he didn't really make the changes she called for. At the far extreme, Canright waffled between bitterness and acceptance of her message for him until finally he wrote a book against his former denomination and another book specifically against her.

In the midst of their errant views, Ellen White told each of these men not to spread their ideas within the church. For Jones and Waggoner this meant not setting out their views in response to the criticism already published against them by Butler, leading

to a more controlled discussion yet still focused on areas that Ellen White deemed non-crucial and certainly not ‘landmarks.’ Butler and Smith held on to their views for some time, agitating them in their own circles, and finally Ellen White worked with both of them to stop stirring things up. Dr. Kellogg had shared his pantheistic views with Ellen White years before his book spread them, and from the beginning she had denounced such ideas until finally she had to write against him and his views to quell the damage he was causing. Canright finally heeded part of Ellen White’s advice to either join up fully with the Adventist church or leave it completely—when he left for good and started spreading his criticisms of his former faith in other denominational circles.

To some degree, each of these men had tried to forcibly spread their own ideas and power by quelling any opposition around them. Dr. Kellogg is perhaps the most extreme case since Ellen White had long warned him against surrounding himself with people who would not disagree with him and overworking himself at the expense of letting others learn to lead. Butler, as General Conference President, also bolstered his side with people like Smith who agreed with him as an authority. He rebuked opponents like Jones and Waggoner for going against his authority and established church tradition. Even Jones and Waggoner had formed their own camps and worked to spread their views as a faction in print and in their classes. Canright didn’t seem to build up a strong following but Ellen White did write against his overbearing attitude both with those he was trying to reach and with his own wife.

Even though she spoke out privately against some of the things these men were doing, in every case she defended them in public, at least until they no longer wanted to stay with the Adventist church and she had to address that. From Jones and Waggoner’s



message, to Kellogg's medical work as chosen by God, to Canright's evangelistic work, she affirmed the good in them in public. When they wouldn't heed her repeated counsel she might address those around them, like the leaders at Battle Creek Sanitarium in the case of Dr. Kellogg, but she didn't start there and she generally seemed reluctant to do so. Finally, especially with Kellogg and Canright, she did have to write against their false views to defend the rest of the church body from further harm, but even then she was still strongly working with them personally to try to get them to come back around.

Despite their treatment of her and her message, Ellen White cared about each of these men and wrote earnestly with a desire to help them. She often felt deeply troubled by their cases and showed her concern in her letters. Her sense of calling compelled her to share the messages she received for them in the hope that they would hear her message and turn from their ways. Especially with Canright and Dr. Kellogg, she knew they wouldn't like her message but wanted to share it as their friend, a true friend who would tell them what they needed to hear and not just agree with whatever they said. Even when they turned against her, she still firmly yet earnestly tried to bring them back into the church.

### **Conclusions**

Although Ellen White passed away a century ago, her advice still has relevant points for the church today. This study has shown some of the ways she interacted with people who caused conflicts within the church during her lifetime. As the church continues to face internal conflicts, I argue that her principles should be applied today to better handle these conflicts.

Some of the conflicts raised involved false views like pantheism and an abandonment of the Adventist message that had to be addressed publically, but Ellen White worked with those men for years before their final falling out with the church. Following the Biblical model of Matthew 18, Ellen White worked privately with men like Canright and Dr. Kellogg and when that didn't work she worked with small groups of people closely involved with them before finally, after years of unheeded counsel, she had to write against them publically to protect the church from them. It's worth noting that she kept her criticism out of the public eye until that point, however, and she even defended them in print and in meetings even while she was writing to them privately that they needed to make changes. Similarly today I fear that there might come times when people within the church go far enough in their errant views that they must be dealt with publically, but this should only be after repeated attempts privately and then in smaller groups to bring the erring member back.

Others of the conflicts, surprisingly, involved views that were correct, but that were presented in unhelpful ways. This is especially the case with Jones and Waggoner's message about Galatians 3, which Ellen White held as a minor point that had been blown out of proportion, not only before 1888, but even after the now-famous General Conference session. This can also be seen in some of the ideas of the other men in this study like Kellogg pushing the health message and medical work yet at the expense of the Adventist message, even belittling the pastoral ministry arm of the church for the way they treated him and his health work. Even valid points can be presented in wrong ways, and especially with a wrong spirit. While Ellen White affirmed the righteousness by faith message that came out of Jones and Waggoner's teaching as something that had been

lacking in the ‘dry’ message of Adventism at the time, she would much rather have had them spread this message in better ways with a less antagonistic spirit. The aftermath of the 1888 session took years to settle down and left its scars. I argue that the truth was given, but not in love. This led to an acceptance of that truth, for it was indeed true, but in ways that set the work back and took years to untangle. Similarly today I argue that true ideas, new or rediscovered, within the church can be presented in helpful ways or in ways that cause damage within the church that—even though the message is eventually accepted—leave scars that could have been avoided.

Ellen White’s call to these leaders to let other people think for themselves and even question long-held beliefs is based on principles that are as true now as they were then. Nobody can think for another, and the truth can still stand up against scrutiny. As she herself showed, this doesn’t mean that any heretical idea can be entertained at great length, and she earnestly called men like Canright to keep his doubts to himself or a small group rather than spreading them far and wide in the church. There is a place for doubts and questions, for disagreeing with leaders and traditions, but that place is not in the center of the spotlight. These questions, when answered well, can reaffirm the faith of the questioner, but they can also shake the faith of the unsure. They should neither be squashed nor spread. She denounced attempts by church leaders to form an official position that must be accepted on the authority of the church leaders; people must always study for themselves to be convinced in their own minds. Some examples, like the views of Waggoner and Butler over Galatians 3, called for dialogue as both sides had a measure of validity yet also lacked completeness. She was particularly adamant that such discussions should not be carried out under the public eye, instead calling for a united

front in the Adventist contact with the wider world. I argue that as a non-creedal church we need to provide areas for people to have questions and share their doubts—great lessons can and have come from this—but it also should not be a soapbox or gossip fountain to spread these questions before they can be thought over. Even when some of these questions are finally deemed necessary for the larger church body, they should be presented kindly and fairly, not sensationally or with animosity.

At times Ellen G. White was accused of changing her mind or of shaking a core “landmark” of the Adventist faith, especially by Butler and his supporters. She repeatedly rebuked any claims that minor points should be held as all-or-nothing pillars of belief. She especially opposed the idea that if these minor points should be proven incorrect, the whole system of beliefs would fail. While some, like Butler, misused her own words by misinterpreting them and not allowing anyone to argue with them, she herself urged for a more reasoned look at what she had said that allowed for new understandings of her messages from the Lord. This is not to say that she was never firm on any points, as she indeed had to take a firm stand against Kellogg and Canright. Instead it shows her view of her own ministry and of what was truly important regarding the “landmarks” of the church.

For me personally, the more cutting applications of this study come not in the realm of church-wide conflict, but instead in the personal lives of leaders in the church. The same pride that kept men like Butler and Kellogg from accepting Ellen White’s earnest warnings, that even led them to doubt her ministry, can easily creep into my own heart. By cutting myself off from anyone who would give me words of caution or correction, I could end up in the same place they did. This is not just a problem for the

church at large or for well-known leaders; this is part of the human struggle that reaches all of us. Just as Ellen White called for these men to humble themselves, with Christ as their example, so too must we humbly seek Him.

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