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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
INTERPRETATION OF TWO TIME PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL
- THE 2300 DAYS OF DANIEL 8 AND THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL 9.**

ASSUMPTION 23

The Leading of God during the development of this doctrine both with William Miller, the Advent Movement and then the Seventh-day Adventist Church proves that the SDA interpretation of the relation between the 70 weeks and the 2300 days is God-Inspired.

By Frank Basten

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The Purpose of this Assumption

This assumption, like Assumption 21, is a more global assumption than the bulk of assumptions covered in my papers. It is based more on a philosophical approach than the mere facts of Scripture. It is concerned with the divine endorsement of the relationship of the 2300 days with the seventy weeks through the experience of individuals and groups during and after the Advent movement. It is looking for some type of secondary endorsement rather than the mere conviction of a certain interpretation of the Scriptures on the topic. This secondary endorsement is found in the interpreted will and purpose of God, during and since, the Advent movement. “If God was with the Second Advent movement, and guided the pioneers in the formation of their doctrines, including the relationship between the 2300 days and the seventy weeks, who am I that I should question its validity?” is the sentiment behind this assumption.

With this assumption as a basis, even if unanswerable questions arise on the validity of the “landmarks” of the church, including the relation of the 70 weeks to the 2300 days as the centre of this belief structure, they will be clung to, though the heavens fall, because God has endorsed them in the past through Ellen White, the inspired authority God has given the church, so He will vindicate them in His time.¹ This assumption will be held by “the remnant” – a small minority of faithful Seventh-day Adventists – who will be the only ones standing firm on the traditional teachings during the ‘sifting’ times ahead for the church.

It is the leading of God and His providential guidance in the development of the understanding of the relationship between the 2300 days and the 70 weeks that, as a secondary source of confirmation, provides another important support for the SDA historicist’s belief structure. For them, it needs to be cherished and remembered so as not to abandon the traditional “landmarks” unique to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Says Paul Gordon, quoting Ellen White in his book The Sanctuary, 1844 and the Pioneers: “But we are not to forget our past. The prophetic voice in our midst has made that point very clear. ‘We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget

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the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.’ – *Life Sketches*, p. 196.” (Gordon, 1983a, p.124)

In this assumption we look at how these concepts limit the choices of a ‘faithful’ SDA historicist when confronted with a challenge like that presented in my papers, and what solution is possible for them.

The Method of this Assumption

Every generation of Adventist has had its publication endorsing this particular assumption. Books on the history of the Advent movement by such authors as J. Bates,² J. Loughborough,³ F.D. Nichol,⁴ L. Froom,⁵ W. A. Spicer,⁶ A. Spalding⁷ George Knight⁸ etc., reiterate that God was with the advent movement, and that the teachings spawned from it were inspired by God and are immutable. In the next few sections we read extracts firstly from the pioneers of the SDA church, and then secondly, from contemporary SDA writers and scholars.

1. Statements of the Pioneers.

William Miller

Sylvester Bliss records William Miller’s convictions that God led him to promulgate his views on the second coming:

He continued to make the Bible his daily study, and became more and more convinced that he had a personal duty to perform respecting what he conceived the Bible to teach on the nearness of the Advent. These impressions he thus describes:

“When I was about my business, it was continually ringing in my ears, ‘Go and tell the world of their danger.’ ...I did all I could to avoid the conviction that anything was required of me; and I thought that by freely speaking of it to all, I should perform my duty, and that God would raise

² The Second Advent Waymarks, (or High Heaps,

³ The great second advent movement: its rise and progress, Nashville, Tenn: Southern Publishing Association, c1905.

⁴ The Midnight Cry, Washington D.C., Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1944.

⁵ Movement of Destiny, Washington, D.C., 1971

⁶ Our Day in the Light of Prophecy, Washington, D.C., 1917.

⁷ Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists, Washington, D.C., 1962.

⁸ A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists, Second Edition, Hagerstown, MD.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2004.

up the necessary instrumentality for the accomplishment of the work. I prayed that some minister might see the truth, and devoted himself to its promulgation; but still it was impressed upon me, 'Go and tell it to the world: their blood will I require at thy hand.' The more I presented it in conversation, the more dissatisfied I felt with myself for withholding it from the public. I tried to excuse myself to the Lord for not going out and proclaiming it to the world. I told the Lord that I was not used to public speaking; that I had not the necessary qualifications to gain the attention of an audience; that I was very diffident, and feared to go before the world; and they would 'not believe me nor hearken to my voice;' that I was 'slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.' But I could get no relief." (**Bliss, 1853**, p.92)

Not only did he believe he was led by God's will; he believed that his teachings rested solely on a solid exegesis from Scripture alone. Bliss records a letter from the pen of William Miller to the popular Protestant Churches to point out why those who believed his teachings were cast out of the congregations where they worshipped. His argument rested wholly on the evidence from Scripture. He asked them to persuade him from Scripture wherein the mistake in his belief was made. Ellen White recites a part of this open letter in The Great Controversy:

"What have we believed," he said, "that we have not been commanded to believe by the word of God, which you yourselves allow is the rule, and only rule, of our faith and practice? What have we done that should call down such virulent denunciations against us from pulpit and press, and give you just cause to exclude us [Adventists] from your churches and fellowship?" "If we are wrong, pray show us wherein consists or wrong. Show us from the word of God that we are in error; we have had ridicule enough; that can never convince us that we are in the wrong; the word of God alone can change our views. Our conclusions have been formed deliberately and prayerfully, as we have seen the evidence from the Scriptures." (**Bliss, 1853**, pp.250, 252, quoted in **White, 1950**, p.337)

Miller defended his position squarely on his understanding of the Bible. He had spent many years being his own devil's advocate after he had initially formed his opinion on the topic but had found that he could adequately answer every objection from the Scriptures. He was prepared, in the face of scriptural evidence to the contrary, to renounce his belief in the return of Christ at the end of the 2300 days.

Miller could say on 25th March, 1844:

Should time continue longer than I have expected, I mean to be governed by the providence of Him who will never err, in whom I think I have trusted, and have been supported by, during my twelve years of arduous labors, in endeavoring to awaken the churches of God and the Christian community, and to warn my fellow-men of the necessity of an immediate preparation to meet our Judge, in the day of his appearing.... (**Bliss, op.cit.**, p.255)

Writing to Brother Himes, he said on November 10, 1844:

I have been waiting and looking for the blessed hope, in expectation of realizing the glorious things which God has spoken of Zion. Yes, and although I have been twice disappointed, I am not yet cast down or discouraged. God has been with me in spirit, and has comforted me. I have now much more evidence that I do believe in God's word. My mind is perfectly calm, and my hope in the coming of Christ is as strong as ever.

I have done only what, after years of solemn consideration, I felt it my solemn duty to do.... And to this very day, my opposers have not been able to show wherein I have departed from any rule laid down by our old standard Protestant writers. ([Ibid](#), p.277)

I believe the ground we have formerly stood upon, as it regards the chronology of prophecy, is the only ground we can take; and if the defect is in human chronology, then no human knowledge is sufficient to rectify it with any degree of certainty; and I see no good that can be accomplished by taking a stand for any future period, with less evidence than we had for 1843-4. For those who would not believe with all the evidence we then produced, we cannot expect will now believe with much less evidence.

Again, it is to me almost a demonstration that God's hand is seen in this thing. Many thousands, to all human appearance, have been made to study the Scriptures by the preaching of the time; and by that means, through faith and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, have been reconciled to God. And those of us who have been familiar with the fruits and effects of the preaching of this doctrine must acknowledge that He has been with us in so doing, and His wisdom has in a great measure marked out our path, which he has devised for such good as he will accomplish in his own time and manner; as in the case of Nineveh by the preaching of Jonah. ...([Ibid](#), p.281)

The work of the Lord, which he had commanded us to do, was to make the vision plain, to write it on tables, to give the alarm, the midnight cry, and wake up the virgins; and while these things, and these things only, were attended to, our work prospered, and God was with us. ([Ibid](#), p.282)

Presented with evidence to the contrary, Miller was prepared to renounce the beliefs that he promulgated. His belief was a strictly Protestant one, anchored fair and square on the evidence from Scripture. When his teaching turned out to be incorrect, he accepted that his understanding of Scripture was incorrect though he could not find the Biblical reasoning for his error.

Three years after the Disappointment of 1844, William Miller had a dream whilst sleeping, which he relayed to his colleague Joshua Himes. This dream, according to the account by Damsteegt, was taken by both James White and David Arnold, both pioneers of the SDA church, to be a divine endorsement of the Millerite movement, and consequently of its teachings. ([Damsteegt](#)

, 1977

, p.133) The following is Miller's description to Himes of the dream:

I dreamed that God, by an unseen hand, sent me a curiously wrought casket, about ten inches long, by six square, made of ebony and pearls curiously inlaid. To the casket there was a key attached. I immediately took the key and opened the casket, when, to my wonder and surprise, I found it filled with all sorts and sizes of jewels, diamonds, precious stones, and gold and silver coins of every dimension and value, beautifully arranged in their several places in the casket; and thus arranged, they reflected a light and glory equaled only by the sun.

I thought it was my duty not to enjoy this wonderful sight alone, although my heart was overjoyed at the brilliance, beauty and value of its contents. I therefore placed it on a center-table in my room, and gave out word that all who had a desire might come and see the most glorious and brilliant sight ever seen by man in his life.

The people began to come in, at first few in number, but increasing to a crowd. When they first looked into the casket they would wonder and shout for joy. But when the spectators increased even one of them would begin to trouble the jewels, taking them out of the casket and scattering them on the table.

I began to think the owner would require the casket and jewels again at my hand; and if suffered them to be scattered, I could never place them back in their places in the casket again as before; and felt I should never be able to meet the accountability, for it would be immense. I then began to plead with the people not to handle them nor take them out of the casket; but the more I plead, the more they scattered; - and now they seemed to scatter them all over the room, on the floor, and on every piece of furniture in the room.

I then saw that among the genuine jewels and coin they had scattered an innumerable quantity of spurious jewels and counterfeit coin. I was highly incensed at their base conduct and ingratitude, and reproved the more they scattered the spurious jewels and false coin among the genuine.

I then became vexed in my very soul, and began to use physical force to push them out of the room; but while I was pushing out one, three more would enter; and bring in dirt, and shavings. And sand and all manner of rubbish, until they covered every one of the true jewels, diamonds, and coins, which were all excluded from sight. They also tore in pieces my casket, and scattered it among the rubbish. I thought no man regarded my sorrow or my anger. I became wholly discouraged and disheartened, and sat down and wept.

While I was thus weeping and mourning for my great loss and accountability, I remembered God, and earnestly prayed that he would send me help.

Immediately the door opened, and a man entered the room, when the people all left it; and he, having a dirtbrush in his hand, opened the windows, and began to brush the dust and rubbish from the room.

I cried to him to forbear, for there were some precious jewels scattered among the rubbish.

‘He told me to ‘fear not,’ for he would ‘take care of them.’

Then, while he brushed, the dust and rubbish, false jewels and counterfeit coin, all rose and went out of the windows like a cloud, and the wind carried them away. In the bustle I closed my eyes for a moment; when I opened them, the rubbish was all gone. The precious jewels, the diamonds, the gold and silver coins, lay scattered in profusion all over the room.

He then placed on the table a casket, much larger and more beautiful than the former, and gathered up the jewels, the diamonds, the coins by the handful, and cast them into the casket, till not one was left, - although some of the diamonds were not bigger than the point of a pin.

He then called upon me to ‘come and see.’

I looked into the casket, but my eyes were dazzled with the sight. They shone with ten times their former glory. I thought they had been scoured in the sand the feet of those wicked persons who had scattered and trod them in the dust. They were arranged in beautiful order in the casket, every one in its place, without any visible pains of the man who cast them in. I shouted with very joy, and that shout woke me.

The effect of this on my mind has been extremely consoling and happy.... (Bliss, 1853. pp.361-363)

Divine confirmation of Miller's efforts encouraged him for the next two years until his death in December 1849. The foundation of his faith however, remained, not in the dream, but in the validity of his position on the Word of God. He felt that some minor error in chronology would clear the whole matter up. Everything, to his way of thinking, was to be substantiated or eliminated on the basis of a "thus saith the Lord." Without a doubt, Miller believed in the leading of God in the Second Advent movement.

Washington Morse.

Gordon quotes extensively from an article written by Morse in which he says: "I was permitted to take part in that blessed work from its beginning. In great power God set his seal to it by His Holy Spirit." (Gordon, 1983a, p.127) Morse believed God was leading the Advent movement.

James White

White believed God was leading the Advent movement. Writing in the *Review and Herald* in July 14, 1863, White says:

Every Adventist will admit that if God designs, previous to the coming of the Lord, to warn the world of that event, the great Advent movement of 1840-1844, in so far as it tended to arouse a slumbering world to the fact that we are living in the time of the end, and to warn them of the nearness of the close of probation, and the great consummation of all things, was in the order and purpose of God. He must therefore, still have a people on the earth, as the result of that movement; he must still have a truth bearing some relation to that great work; and there must be some correct explanation of the great disappointment in our past history. (Gordon, 1983b, p.202)

O. R. L. Crosier.

Crosier believed God was leading the Advent movement. Crosier writes on May 5, 1851 in the *Review and Herald*:

There is much importance attached to a correct and thorough understanding of the subject of the Sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of 2300 days. The correct view of this subject shows clearly that the days have terminated, harmonizes our past Advent experience, and show that the proclamation of the Advent which produces such happy and sanctifying effects up to 1844, was the work of God. (Gordon, 1983b, p.150)

Hiram Edson

Hiram Edson was the person who introduced an alternate explanation for the events predicted by William Miller. Miller had explained the event at the end of the 2300 days in terms of the second coming of Jesus. Edson proposed that the sanctuary was the key to the misunderstanding. His explanation pointed to a sanctuary in heaven as the

scene of the events predicted by the prophecy, not the earth, as so widely held. Miller was not alone in the belief that the earth was the sanctuary. This was a commonly held belief in religious minds and literature of the time. Edson claimed divine inspiration for the revelation:

“A second glance over past experience, and the lessons learned, and how when brought into strait places where light and help was needed by seeking the Lord He had answered by a voice and other ways, I began to feel there might be light and help for us in our present distress. I said to some of my brethren, ‘Let us go to the barn.’ We entered the granary. Shut the door about us and bowed before the Lord. We prayed earnestly, for we felt our necessity. We continued in earnest prayer until the witness of the Spirit was given that our prayer was accepted, and that light should be given -our disappointment be explained, and made clear and satisfactory.”

“After breakfast I said to one of the brethren, ‘Let us go and see, and encourage some of our brethren.’ We started, and while passing through a large field I was stopped about midway of the field. Heaven seemed open to my view, and I say distinctly and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, He for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary; and that he had a work to perform in the most holy before coming to this earth. That he came to the marriage at that time [as mentioned in the parable of the Ten Virgins]; in other words, to the Ancient of days to receive the kingdom, dominion, and glory; and we must wait for His return *from the wedding*...

“While I was thus standing in the midst of the field, my comrade passed on almost beyond speaking distance before missing me. He inquired why I was stopping so long. I replied, ‘The Lord was answering our morning prayer, by giving light with regard to our disappointment.’”(Nichol, 1944, pp. 479f.)

Although some would discount the experience of Edson because he later denied his belief in his own explanation, it was endorsed by James White and Joseph Bates, and later by Ellen White, and was incorporated into the SDA interpretation of the Disappointment. (Nichol, 1944, p.482f). At the time, Edson believed God was leading the Advent movement.

John Loughborough

An Advent pioneer in his own right, Loughborough says in his book on the history of the advent movement:

In calling to remembrance the Lord’s dealings in the advent movement, it is well to note that it has ever been the design of God that his people should remember the manifestations of his providence and power in their behalf. In giving the reasons for the backsliding of Israel from the God, the psalmist says, “They forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea. [Footnote: Ps.103:2] If it was good for Israel to call to remembrance the leadings of the Lord with them, is it not good also for us?... In all ages, the Lord has had important truths, calculated by his grace, to lead out a people from the bondage of sin, and fit them for an entrance into the heavenly Canaan; and it is profitable to consider the dealings of the Lord with those who have proclaimed these truths. (1905, pp.33f)

The thirteenth chapter is entitled “Tokens of Divine Guidance” wherein Loughborough points out that the greatest token of divine guidance in the advent movement was the gift of the prophetic gift in Ellen White. Says Loughborough:

If ever there was a time since the Savior’s resurrection when his sorrowing and disappointed followers needed to be comforted by his presence and cheering words, it was at that time when some of the sad and persecuted believers were holding on by steadfast faith after the “midnight cry” of 1844; and if in mercy God ever communicated directly to sorrowing souls, it would seem that it would certainly be at such a time, and to such a people.

The Lord chose his own instrument for this purpose, selecting as his agent one who had not only surrendered all for him, but whose life trembled in the balance, “the weakest of the weak.” Within two months after the passing of the time, Miss Ellen G. Harmon, of Portland, Maine, then only about seventeen years of age, began to receive revelations from the Lord.

Not only have we seen that the Lord’s providence has opened the way for the spread of the truth, and his signal blessing has attended the efforts made to move in the ways of his providence, but in the rise and progress of the third angel’s message he has communicated with his people through the gift of prophecy. This has not been in the form of a new revelation to take the place of the Bible, not in a manner to pervert the Scripture teachings, but to show where, in this age, there is danger of departing from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ, where the people are in danger of falling under the tendency of the age, being satisfied with a form of godliness without the power. (*Ibid*, p.199, 202, 466)

Ellen White

Commenting on the end of the 1844 movement in The Great Controversy, Ellen White says:

The feelings of those who still believed that God had led them in their past experience are expressed in the words of William Miller: ‘Were I to live my life over again, with the same evidence I then had, to be honest with God and man I should have to do as I have done.’...God did not forsake His people; His Spirit still abode with those who did not rashly deny the light which they had received, and denounce the advent movement. ...That this admonition is addressed to the church in the last days is evident from the words pointing to the nearness of the Lord’s coming: “For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” And it is plainly implied that there would be a seeming delay and that the Lord will appear to tarry. The instruction here given is especially adapted to the experience of Adventists at this time. The people here addressed were in danger of making shipwreck of faith. They had done the will of God in following the guidance of the Spirit and His word; yet they could not understand His purpose in their past experience, not could they discern the pathway before them, and they were tempted to doubt whether God had indeed been leading them. At this time the words were applicable: “Now the just shall live by faith.” As the bright light of the “midnight cry” had shone upon their pathway, and they had seen the prophecies unsealed and the rapidly fulfilling signs telling that the coming of Christ was near, they had walked, as it were, by sight. But now, bowed down by disappointed hopes, they could stand only by faith in God and in His word. The scoffing world were saying: “You have been deceived. Give up your faith, and say that the advent movement was of Satan.” But God’s word declared: “If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.” To renounce their faith now, and deny the power of the Holy Spirit which had attended the message, would be drawing back towards perdition. They were encouraged to steadfastness by the words of Paul: “Cast not away therefore your confidence;” “ye have need of patience,” “for yet a little while, and he that shall

come will come and will not tarry.” Their only safe course was to cherish the light which they had already received of God, hold fast to his promises, and continue to search the Scriptures, and patiently wait and watch to receive further light. (1950, pp.407f)

...the appointed time had passed, and the Lord had not appeared. The believers knew that God’s word could not fail; their interpretation of the prophecy must be at fault; but where was the mistake? Many rashly cut the knot of difficulty by denying that the 2300 days ended in 1844. No reason could be given for this except that Christ had not come at the time they expected Him....to deny that the days ended at that time was to involve the whole question in confusion, and to renounce positions which had been established by unmistakable fulfillments of prophecy.

But God had led His people in the great advent movement; His power and glory had attended the work, and He would not permit it to end in darkness and disappointment, to be reproached as a false and fanatical excitement. He would not leave His word involved in doubt and uncertainty. (Ibid, pp.409-410)

The passing of time in 1844 was followed by a period of great trial to those who still held the advent faith. Their only relief, so far as ascertaining their true position was concerned, was the light which directed their minds to the sanctuary above. Some renounced their faith in the former reckoning of the prophetic periods and ascribed to human or satanic agencies the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit which had attended the advent movement. Another class firmly held that the Lord had led them in their past experience; and as they waited and watched and prayed to know the will of God they saw that their great High Priest had entered upon another work of ministration, and following Him by faith, they were led to see also the closing work of the church. (Ibid, pp.431f)

"These books contain clear, straight, unalterable truth and they should certainly be appreciated. **The instruction they contain is not of human production.**" (Letter H-339, Dec. 26, 1904)

"These books, **giving the instruction that the Lord has given me** during the last sixty years, contain light from heaven, and will bear the test of investigation." (*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 35, 1906)

"When I went to Colorado, I wrote many pages to be read at your camp meeting. . . God was speaking through clay. You might say this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, . . . I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. **I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision** - the precious rays of light shining from the throne" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 63-67).

Clearly the sentiment that the leading of God was in the advent movement is unmistakable here, and we see in these statements the essence of this assumption. By trusting in God’s hand in the movement, they were able to study and research until they found a proper understanding of the meaning of the movement more clearly. Though they did not have the Biblical evidence they were to have faith in God’s leading, and the answers would eventually come, after the believers had endured the test of their patience.

Those who proclaimed this warning gave the right message at the right time. But as the early disciples declared, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand,” based on the prophecy of Daniel 9, while they failed to perceive that the death of the Messiah was foretold in

the same scripture, so Miller and his associates preached the message based on Daniel 8:4 and Revelation 14:7, and failed to see that there were still other messages brought to view in Revelation 14, which were also to be given before the advent of the Lord. As the disciples were mistaken in regard to the kingdom to be set up at the end of the seventy weeks, so Adventists were mistaken in regard to the event to take place at the expiration of the 2300 days. In both cases there was an acceptance of, or rather an adherence to, popular errors that blinded the mind to the truth. Both classes fulfilled the will of God in delivering the message which He desire to be given, and both, through their own misapprehension of their message, suffered disappointment.

Yet God accomplished His own beneficent purpose in permitting the warning of the judgment to be given just as it was. The great day was at hand, and in His providence the people were brought to the test of a definite time, in order to reveal to them what was in their hearts. The message was designed to for the testing and the purification of the church. They were to be led to see whether their affections were set upon this world or upon Christ and heaven. They professed to love the Savior; now they were to prove their love. Were they ready to renounce their worldly hopes and ambitions, and welcome with joy the advent of the Lord? The message was designed to enable them to discern their true spiritual state; it was sent in mercy to arouse them to seek the Lord with repentance and humiliation.’

The disappointment also, though the result of their own misapprehension of the message which they gave, was to be overruled for good. It would test the hearts of those who had professed to receive the warning. In the face of their disappointment would they rashly give up their experience and cast away their confidence in God’s word? Or would they, in prayer and humility, seek to discern where they had failed to comprehend the significance of the prophecy? (1950, pp.352f)⁹

In the next statement from Selected Messages book 1, Ellen White makes it abundantly clear that there will never be any change in the position of the church in regard to the immutability of the teachings promulgated in the Second Advent movement:

The leadings of the Lord were marked, and most wonderful were His revelations of what is truth. Point after point was established by the Lord God of heaven. That which was truth then, is truth today. But the voices do not cease to be heard – “this is truth. I have new light.” But these new lights in prophetic lines are manifest in misapplying the Word and setting the people of God adrift without an anchor to hold them. (p.104) (quoted by [Gordon, 1983a](#), p.139)

Interestingly, one of the tests used to ‘test new light’ in the church is whether it contradicts the old teachings or not. Gordon quotes from Selected Messages again:

Many will honestly search the Word for light as those in the past have searched it; and they see light in the Word. But they did not pass over the ground in their experience, when these messages of warning were first proclaimed. Not having had this experience, some do not appreciate the value of the truths that have been to us as waymarks, and that have made us as a peculiar people what we are.

⁹ It is a significant point here that Ellen White has the disciples understanding that there would be the development of a new kingdom at the end of the seventy weeks, and presumably a kingdom of God of some sort, or at least a kingdom favouring the Jews.

They do not make the right application of the Scriptures, and thus they frame theories that are not correct. It is true that they quote an abundance of Scripture, and teach much that is true; but truth is so mixed with error as to lead to the wrong conclusions. Yet because they can weave Scripture into their theories, they think they have a straight chain of truth. Many who did not have an experience in the rise of the messages, accept these erroneous theories, and are led into false paths, backward instead of forward. This is the enemy's design. – *Ibid*, pp.110, 111 (see also manuscript, 32, 1896) (**Gordon, 1983a**, p.139)¹⁰

Anything that is different to the teaching of the movement is thus truth mixed with error. That is the criterion. The test for 'new light' is no longer, as Miller asked, "What does Scripture say," but the test now is "Does it align with the messages forged out in the early days of the SDA church?" Since God led these pioneers to establish these truths, these truths are still valid today. In the words of Ellen White, "the truths that have been unfolding in their order, as we have advanced along the line of prophecy revealed in the Word of God, are truth, sacred, eternal truth today." **Selected Messages, book 1**, p.103. And as for changing these:

When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No after suppositions contrary to the light God has given are to entertained (Loma Linda Manuscript, No.150, quoted in **Ratzlaff, 1996**, p.187)

This is the position she also took with the publication called *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* by Uriah Smith. Indeed, some have taken Ellen White's counsel so literally on this that they prefer to use only the edition of that book she spoke about.¹¹ Here is an extract from a website upholding White's counsel on this book, which readers have noticed throughout these papers, have many fatal flaws:

He first printed this book as two separate volumes. *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* was published in 1867. While *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Daniel* was not printed until 1873. These were combined into one book and were edited several times during Smith's life, and were altered extensively thereafter. The oldest edition of this book that we have been able to find is 1912, which is why we use this edition.

The reason why so many people hold this book in such high regard can be found in the following quotes by Ellen White, God's last day messenger:-

"Especially should the book Daniel and the Revelation be brought before people as the very book for this time. This book contains the message which all need to read and understand. . . . By reading it many souls have come to a knowledge of the truth. . . . The Lord has shown me that this book will do a good work in enlightening those who become interested in the truth for this time. Those who embrace the truth now, who have not shared in the experiences of those who entered the work in the early history of the message, should study the instruction given in Daniel and the Revelation, becoming familiar with the truth it presents.

¹⁰ In this statement, only those who experienced the events of this advent movement are qualified to propose any new idea of the Scriptures, an impossibility today.

¹¹ For example, read the site http://biblicalstudies.qldwide.net.au/egw_on_dr.html .

"Those who are preparing to enter the ministry, who desire to become successful students of the prophecies, will find Daniel and the Revelation an invaluable help. They need to understand this book. It speaks of past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein. Those who will diligently study this book will have no relish for the cheap sentiments presented by those who have a burning desire to get out something new and strange to present to the flock of God. The rebuke of God is upon all such teachers. They need that one teach them what is meant by godliness and truth. The great, essential questions which God would have presented to the people are found in Daniel and the Revelation. There is found solid, eternal truth for this time. Everyone needs the light and information it contains." 1 Manuscript Release, pages 60, 61.

"The truth for this time has been brought out in many books. Let those who have been dealing in cheap sentiments and foolish tests, cease this work and study Daniel and the Revelation. They will then have something to talk about that will help the mind. **As they receive the knowledge contained in this book,** they will have in the treasure house of the mind a store from which they can continually draw as they communicate to others the great, **essential truths of God's Word.** **"The interest in Daniel and the Revelation is to continue as long as probationary time shall last. God used the author of this book as a channel through which to communicate light to direct minds to the truth.** Shall we not appreciate this light, which points us to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, our King?" 1 Manuscript Release, pages 62, 63.

"The students in our schools should carefully study Daniel and the Revelation, so that they shall not be left in darkness, and the day of Christ overtake them as a thief in the night. **I speak of this book because it is a means of educating those who need to understand the truth of the Word.** This book should be highly appreciated. It covers much of the ground we have been over in our experience. **If the youth will study this book and learn for themselves what is truth, they will be saved from many perils.** . . . (Ms 174, 1899, pp. 1-8. {"Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation," March 3, 1901.})" 1 Manuscript Release, page 63.

"The light given was that Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation, Great Controversy, and Patriarchs and Prophets would make their way. They contained the very message the people must have, **the special light God had given His people.** The angels of God would prepare the way for these books in the hearts of the people.--Lt 43, 1899." The Publishing Ministry, page 206.

"The Lord calls for workers to enter the canvassing field, that the books containing the light of present truth may be circulated. The people in the world need to know that the signs of the times are fulfilling. Take to them the books that will enlighten them. "Daniel and the Revelation," "Great Controversy," "Patriarchs and Prophets," and "Desire of Ages," should now go to the world. The grand instruction contained in "Daniel and the Revelation" has been eagerly read in many lands by those who were hungering for truth. This book has been the means of bringing many precious souls from darkness to light. It should everywhere be given a wide circulation." Pacific Union Record, November 6, 1902 par. 11.

"Instruction has been given me that the important books containing the light that God has given regarding Satan's apostasy in heaven should be given a wide circulation just now; for through them the truth will reach many minds. 'Patriarchs and Prophets,' 'Daniel and the Revelation,' and 'Great Controversy' are needed now as never before. They should be widely circulated because the truths they emphasize will open many blind eyes." Review and Herald, February 16, 1905 par. 10.

"Many will depart from the faith and give heed to seducing spirits. Patriarchs and Prophets and The Great Controversy are books that are especially adapted to those who have newly come to

the faith, that they may be established in the truth. The dangers are pointed out that should be avoided by the churches. Those who become thoroughly acquainted with the lessons in these books will see the dangers before them and will be able to discern the plain, straight path marked out for them. They will be kept from strange paths. They will make straight paths for their feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way. In *Desire of Ages*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *The Great Controversy*, and in *Daniel and the Revelation*, there is precious instruction. **These books must be regarded as of special importance, and every effort should be made to get them before the people.** (Letter 229, 1903.)" 21 Manuscript Release, page 440.

"The Lord calls for workers to enter the canvassing field that **the books containing the light of present truth** may be circulated. The people in the world need to know that the signs of the times are fulfilling. Take to them the books that will enlighten them. *Daniel and Revelation*, *The Great Controversy*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, and *The Desire of Ages* should now go to the world. The grand instruction contained in *Daniel and Revelation* has been eagerly perused by many in Australia. This book has been the means of bringing many precious souls to a knowledge of the truth. Everything that can be done should be done to circulate *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*. **I know of no other book that can take the place of this one. It is God's helping hand.** (Ms 76, 1901.)" 21 Manuscript Release, page 444.

There are many people today that like to call what Uriah Smith wrote error. But God's messenger called the information in this book 'the special light of God,' 'the grand instruction.' 'light that God has given,' 'it speaks of past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein,' 'the great, essential question which God would have presented,' and 'solid, eternal truth for this time.' She said that she knew 'of no other book that can take the place of this one. It is God's helping hand.' and 'God used the author of this book as a channel through which to communicate light.'

Friends, truth is always truth, and error is always error. Truth comes from God, and error from Satan. Something that was once truth will not one day be error, this is totally impossible. Those people who still condemn the book *Daniel and The Revelation* as being in error after reading the above quotes of Ellen White are not just condemning Uriah Smith who wrote it, they are also condemning God who used this author and gave this special light. They are saying, even without knowing it, that they are smarter and know better than God.
http://biblicalstudies.qldwide.net.au/egw_on_dr.html

This website, by D & S Goeldner, elevates the publication of Uriah Smith to virtually canonical status!!! This is done on the authority of Ellen White's confirmation of the book. How can the exploration of the prophecies be ongoing when statements like these from Ellen White fossilize the truth gained from the books of *Daniel and Revelation* into that written by Smith? This is preposterous. And to do that on the word of Ellen White!! Surely, if the leaders were following the counsel of the "Lord's servant," would be emphasizing what this couple is doing – that the study of these apocalyptic prophecies should only center around the writings of Uriah Smith!!!

Indeed, since the SDA church symbolizes the truths it promulgated, Ellen White can categorically say that anyone who leads away from the SDA church is in error. Notice these statements:

From Selected Messages, book 3:

When anyone is drawing apart from the organized body of God's commandment-keeping people ... then you may know that God is not leading him. He is on the wrong track (p.18).

Or these:

Brother Ballenger has been allowing his mind to receive and believe specious error. He has been misinterpreting and misapplying the scriptures upon which he has fastened his mind... I am bidden to say in the name of the Lord that Elder Ballenger is following a false light. The Lord has not given him the message that he is bearing regarding the sanctuary service... I have a warning for those who suppose that they have been given the work of revealing Scripture in a new light. This work means substituting human interpretation for the interpretation that God has given. - Thus did the heavenly messengers pronounce upon the effort into which Brother Ballenger has entered." (MS 62, 24 May 1905).

The Lord has instructed me that he has misapplied texts of Scripture, and given them a wrong application" (MS 145, 31 October 1905)

I know that the sanctuary question stands in righteousness and truth just as we have held it for so many years" (S50, 30 January 1906)

So important is her position in endorsing these views that populist Adventist writers like Martin Weber can say, "the cause of this disheartening disaster [post-Glacier View fallout in ministerial membership, especially in Australia] was their rejection of the investigative judgment and the related issue of Ellen White's doctrinal authority." (Weber, 1985, p.18)¹² However, this criterion is not in the Protestant tradition and is not to be entertained. Everything is to be brought to the closest examination of the Word. What does not survive is to be discarded. That is the only position that can be held.

2. Statements of SDA Scholars and Writers.

SDA literature is replete with articles about the leading of God in the Advent movement. There has been no attempt to be exhaustive. I select just a few from my library to illustrate the sentiment.

LeRoy Froom

Froom explains in Our Firm Foundation the heaven-sent endorsement and mission of the SDA church:

Ours is therefore specifically a reconstruction task. We are to restore the ancient structure of prophetic truth that twice has suffered grave disfigurement at the hands of unfaithful workmen. Not only are we now to repair "the breach" in the wall of truth, and to "build the old waste places," and to restore the paths to dwell in, but we are specifically commissioned to "raise up the foundations of many generations." We are to gather together all the true foundational building materials that have been hewn out through past generations, including those that have

¹² Basic to the investigative judgment is the relationship between the 70 weeks and the 2300 days.

later been dislodged and tossed aside. These are to be brought together again, in balanced and symmetrical form, as originally designed of God for the faith of His church. We are to restore its beauty and harmony and strength. And we are to extend our work of recovery back to the dawn of the Christian Era.

Ours is therefore fundamentally a restoration, not the formation of a new structure. It is tied in inseparably with the efforts of all past builders of prophetic truth. All past truths and applications are to be retrieved. Not one block or stone of sound, true exposition is to be left out as worthless or needless. In this way we shall truly build again the foundations and superstructure of “many generations” into the stately edifice of truth originally designed by God. That is our bounden commission under the Advent movement. We are recognized pre-eminently as a people of prophecy, and we hold that we have a mandate and a mission from God for the proclamation of a message that is unique in all the annals of man. Our cause and our course have been outlined in advance by the infallible pen of inspiration. We have the authorizing credentials for our task, stamped with the insignia of heaven. (Revelation 14:6-12) Consequently, an obligation rests upon us not placed upon any other group in the world today. No man, or body of men, can disannul that heavenly commission. And no one can exempt us from the responsibility of faithfully and competently proclaiming that message to all mankind. We were brought onto the stage of world action for this specific purpose. The precise timing and fundamental scope of this movement identify it as of truly heavenly origin. Its historical rise and development and its ultimate climax and triumph are all portrayed upon the pages of inspired prediction. We are therefore a people of unparalleled privilege and accountability. High honor and tremendous obligation most surely devolve upon us. (1953, Vol. 2, p.29f)

Oh, that we might somehow see the strategic strength of our real position. Would that our horizons might be pushed back a little farther, that we might see more clearly and fully the beauties of our wonderful heritage. Would that our sights might somehow be lifted, that we might envision the key place that God has designed for us to occupy in these latter times. It is time for us now to take our rightful place. We have been too long on the defensive. Without appropriate challenge we have allowed ourselves to be considered an insignificant heretical sect, oddly different, and springing up too late to have any rightful place in true Protestantism.

We are not an heretical sect. We are not merely one of the welter of divergent denominations of the day. We are in the designated line of God’s true church of the centuries. We stand toward the close of His continuing line of witnesses, in the seventh and final phase of His great sevenfold church of the years. This grand line reaches from apostolic times down to remnant days. And we are on the stage of action at a time when all the treasure truths of the Christian Era have become our glorious heritage, and are to be presented to the world again in all their inherent beauty.

It is therefore time to lift our heads. It is high time to rejoice in the place that God has given us in His wondrous scheme of things. We are the continuators and consummation of the arrested Reformation. We are among God’s last prophetic witnesses, once more bearing aloft the torch of truth that has been passed on from the hands of Jewish, of Catholic, and particularly of Protestant spiritual ancestors in the imposing line of prophetic expositors of the ages. I believe with all my heart in such an apostolic succession of truth as the centuries have witnessed. I believe that godly men, of the finest intellect, have passed the torch of truth on from one hand or group to another, riot in so-called apostolic succession but in the succession of prophetic truth, for two thousand years. (Ibid, p.45)

In closing I would submit that there is but one valid reason and satisfying explanation for our existence today—that the hour for the proclamation of a great prophetic truth had come. And with the coming of the hour the requisite heralds appeared, in accordance with God’s uniform pattern

of operation throughout the centuries. This it was that a movement was born; and the hand of God was manifestly in its establishment, its up building, and its direction. It is wonderfully comforting to know that when the hour comes for a vital message to be given, God sends forth His Spirit and lays His hand, as it were, upon the shoulders of men widely scattered throughout the various countries of Christendom-and they respond and declare His message. (Ibid, p. 68)

W. A. Spicer

Spicer, writing in his book "Our Day in the Light of Prophecy," said:

Nearly two thousand years before, it had been written in the "sure word of prophecy" that when the hour of God's judgment came, a people keeping God's commandments would arise and spread forth into all the world with the last gospel message. The long prophetic period of Daniel 8 had fixed the year 1844 as the time when the judgment hour would begin and when the people of the prophecy must appear. When the year came, that people appeared, keeping "the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." When the hour struck, the work began. This advent movement was born of God in fulfillment of prophecy. And the mission of the movement is to lift up again the standard of truths obscured by tradition and trodden underfoot, and to call all men to the New Testament platform of the "commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus," where every believing soul may find safe refuge in these closing moments of the judgment hour in the courts above. (1917, p.74)

Paul Gordon.

The teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the sanctuary and judgment is not hazy and uncertain. A remarkable fact is that Seventh-day Adventists clearly established their belief regarding the cleansing of the sanctuary by the time the church officially organized in 1863. General agreement on the doctrine has remained from that time to the present.

Voices within the Seventh-day Adventist Church today call for it to abandon historic and Bible-based belief regarding the sanctuary and its cleansing. Is the voice of the pioneers still worth listening to? Is their exposition of the prophecies trustworthy? We believe it is. And we believe an honest and careful study of the Bible evidences will bring us to the conclusion that they are right.

These last moments of our world's history are not a time to play intellectual games with the Scriptures. The positions of the pioneers came about through much prayer and Bible study. Then the visions given to Ellen G. White confirmed them. It is powerful evidence that we must not cast aside lightly. But each person must make a decision for himself...Each [pioneer] believed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had a clear message that would continue to the end of the reign of sin on earth. We must reaffirm that conviction personally today. (Ibid, pp.139 -141)

For Gordon, the beginning of searching for truth comes from accepting the validity of the SDA historicism and moving on from there: "Ballenger had a fatal flaw. Rather than starting from the established Bible-based belief of the Adventist Church, he decided to take an independent beginning, choosing to ignore the careful study of the pioneers." (Ibid, p.38)

William G. Shea.

Get His 1980 paper after the stuff on Stephen about the leading of god with SDAs

Francis D. Nichol

Nichol published in 1944 a significant defence on the Millerite movement called The Midnight Cry, against rumours that had circulated throughout the decades previous. He included two chapters called “Confident in Defeat” and “The Movement called Millerism Draws to its Close,” in which he provides the testimony of many primary sources acknowledging the leading of God in the movement. Here is a sample:

Less than one month after the disappointment a lengthy statement was published in the two leading Millerite papers. [Nichol here inserts footnote: “See *The Advent Herald*, Nov 13, 1844, pp.108-112; *The Midnight Cry*, Nov 21, 1844, pp.161-166.”] This was entitled “Address to the Public.” ... There was a frank confession that they had been “twice disappointed.” This referred to the disappointment in connection with the prophetic year 1843, and also to the disappointment of October 22, 1844. “Those who do not believe with us,” continued the address, “honestly suppose that such disappointments cannot be reconciled with an adherence to our faith.” The purpose of most of the address that followed was to show how a person could still be a consistent, sensible Adventist after these disappointments. Commenting on the conclusion the public immediately reached, that “we must relinquish all our hopes, and abandon all our expectations,” the address declared: “We, however, do not feel thus. As great a paradox as it may be to our opponents, yet we can discern in it the leadings of God’s providence; and when we are reviled and censured by those to whom the world look as the Gamaliel’s of our age, we feel that they are only speaking evil of the things they understand not.”

The Millerites believed that in the mysterious plans of God this preaching of an exact date when men must meet God, served the purpose of a test to discover those who really loved the Lord and His appearing. They reasoned that God overruled to make this disappointment experience serve a divine purpose. (1944, p.277)

So far as the records reveals there was apparently only one of the Millerite ministers, who, having had a part in preaching the October 22 advent date, failed to see in that preaching any action of an overriding Providence. George Storrs...(Ibid, p.286)

Gerard Damsteegt

Commenting on the development of the sanctuary idea by Edson, Crosier and others, Damsteegt says:

The sanctuary theology provided an explanation of the Disappointment and interpreted the event as an important factor in God’s plan of redemption. A number of Adventists saw the importance of the Seventh Month movement not only confirmed by their personal experience but also by the first two visions of E. G. Harmon. The vision of December, 1844 pictured the validity of the Midnight Cry of the Seventh Month movement and an 1844 shut door. The immediate results of the vision was that she and about 60 other believers in Portland, Maine, acknowledged the 7th month experience to be the work of God.

In February, 1845 E. G. Harmon received another vision in which the Midnight Cry again was symbolized as a great light from Christ... In 1847 one of the earliest extensive historical evaluations of the Millerite movement was written by Joseph Bates, an active participant who accepted the Sabbath in 1845. He strongly stressed the validity of both the Millerite movement in general and the Midnight Cry of the Seventh Month movement as phases in salvation history. Similar views were found in later Sabbatarian Adventist publications. During this time Miller had a dream which J. White interpreted as being of divine origin and confirmed his confidence in the prophetic significance of the past Advent experience.

The majority of Adventists, however, gradually lost confidence in the new interpretations which emphasized the validity of the Seventh Month movement...Until his death in December, 1849, Miller expressed confidence in the divine guidance of the Advent movement of the 1840s and felt that some minor error in the calculation would explain the Disappointment. (1977, pp.132-134)

George R. Knight

Knight intertwines the validity of the message of the Second Advent movement with the prophetic gift of Ellen White:

Thus while the majority of the Millerite Adventists, under the leadership of Himes, looked back on the time element in their interpretation of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 as an error, the group evolving into Seventh-day Adventism held that the Millerites had been correct on the time, but wrong as to the event to take place on October 22, 1844. After all, they noted, no one had been able to refute Miller's time calculations. But further study made it obvious to them that the Millerites had misinterpreted the symbolism of both the "cleansing" and the "sanctuary."

This small band of struggling believers refused to step off the prophetic platform that had made the Millerite movement such a powerful force. Rather, while building on Miller's and Snow's insights, they made what they believed to be necessary corrections to them. They felt deeply convicted that God had called Miller to enlighten the world with the message of the nearness of the Second Advent.

Intimately related to the prophetic validity of the Millerite message and the correctness of the October 22 date was the call of 17-year-old Ellen Harmon (Ellen White after her marriage in 1846) to the prophetic ministry...

In vision, when she looked for her fellow Adventists and could not see them, a voice told her to look a little higher. "At this," she recounted, "I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path...On this path the Advent people were traveling to the [heavenly] city, which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the midnight cry." In this way God confirmed that the October 22 date was a fulfillment of prophecy. (2003, p.34)

The first aspect of that emphasis [in her ministry –FB] is that something of great importance took place in heaven on October 22, 1844, and that Adventists should never forget their place in prophetic history. Thus she could later write that "we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." Adventists, she held, are a prophetic people (LS 196). (Ibid, p.35)

...we should note that Ellen White's gift did not play a prominent role in the development of Adventist doctrine. In an 1874 response to critics who claimed that Seventh-day Adventists had received their sanctuary doctrine through the visions of Ellen White, the denomination's leading editor replied: "Hundreds of articles have been written upon the subject. But in no one of these are the visions once referred to as any authority on this subject, or the source from whence any view we hold has been derived... The appeal is invariably to the Bible, where there is abundant evidence for the views we hold on this subject." (RH, Dec. 22, 1874)

The same could be said for each of the great doctrinal positions of Adventism. The primary method used by the pioneers in their doctrinal formation was to study the Bible until a general consensus developed. At that point Ellen White would sometimes receive a vision on a topic already studied, primarily to reaffirm the consensus and to help those who were still out of harmony with the majority to accept the correctness of the group's biblical derived conclusions. Thus we can best view Mrs. White's role in doctrinal development as confirmation rather than initiation." (*Ibid*, p.37)

SDA President Jan Paulsen:

In May 2002, SDA General Conference President Jan Paulsen delivered a speech to gathered SDA Church leaders. Here are some astounding statements from his speech:

In the second half of the 1950s there was a wind sweeping through our ranks that said we should become more "Christ-centered" in our preaching (more *theologia crucis* and less *theologia gloria*). And that has happened, and has to a considerable extent been undergirded by a better understanding of what Ellen White in her writings urged us to do. In and of itself this was good.

But as is often the case, nothing is quite as simple as it seems, and the skill of "doing one and not leaving the other undone" is compromised. For the fact is that within the larger Christian world and culture in which we as a church exist, we do have a very specific identity, which we lose to our own destruction. I am reminded of the words spoken by a lay woman member of one of our committees--spoken in rebuke to us as elected leaders: "You have to remember that being a Seventh-day Adventist is a voluntary thing!" And that is true. Even as Christians, the people who worship in our churches on a Sabbath morning could have been something else (Lutherans, Pentecostal, Anglican, Catholic), but they chose to be Seventh-day Adventists. We are a community of Christians with a very specific and defined identity. And our people have made a very deliberate choice for some very good reasons. It is important that these reasons not be made to look inconsequential or irrelevant.

Maybe this is the point at which we should look at our relationship with other Christian communities. I've often asked the question Has our stand on ecumenism changed? Has it softened, and do we, consequently, need to change our basic prophetic scenario?

The answer, emphatically, is no. We've consistently held that we shall stand apart and be separate from the organized ecumenical movement. And we have stated openly our reasons. Since the early days of our movement we have stated that we foresee in Scripture two super, geopolitical powers gaining prominence in the latter days, and we have stated which two political and religious powers these would be. In this context we shall stand apart because that is the only way we can be faithful to our mission and identity. Faithfulness to who we are and why we are is critical. There is no change in our being separate, neither do we need to change our basic prophetic scenario.

Nevertheless, I underscore again that it is vital that we keep our separate identity. While we must always be ready to give a reason for our faith, we do this with humility, respect, and honesty. And we continue to see ourselves as the historical remnant gathering the faithful remnant from any and all corners to the purposes of God.

A further word needs to be said about our being "loyal to our heritage and to our identity." Some would have us believe that there have been significant shifts in recent times in regard to doctrines that historically have been at the heart of Seventh-day Adventism.

Take specifically our understanding of judgment and Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary and the prophetic messages in which these teachings are contained. Some are suggesting that since the 1980 (Glacier View) meetings, the very teachings that the church affirmed that year at those meetings have been abandoned, and that the church has essentially moved to accept the very positions it rejected then. Such a claim is a distortion of reality, and nothing could be further from the truth. The historic sanctuary message, based on Scripture and supported by the writings of Ellen White, continues to be held to unequivocally. And the inspired authorities on which these and other doctrines are based, namely the Bible supported by the writings of Ellen White, continue to be the hermeneutical foundation on which we as a church place all matters of faith and conduct. Let no one think that there has been a change of position in regard to this.

The question to which the church should constantly be sensitive is: Have we been loyal to "who we are and why we are"? Preserving our identity has to do with the integrity of our church. Faithfulness to the Lord and to the reasons for which He caused this movement to arise cannot be compromised. If we drift, it is not the "brethren" (whether on the left or the right) who will hold us accountable, but the Lord Himself. And ultimately that is what really matters.

<http://www.adventistreview.org/2002-1524/story3.html>

Do statements like this give any inkling that change is possible on the topic I have covered in these papers?

Conclusion

As is amply illustrated by prophet, pioneer and contemporary scholar, the Advent movement is seen as being led by God's providence. In God's providence He led them into a correct understanding of the sanctuary message, as now proclaimed by the Adventist Church. And this belief means that the "landmark doctrines" forged out in the 1840s will continue until the Second Advent. Future developments of Biblical beliefs will naturally include the relationship between the 70 weeks and the 2300 days. If they contradict this, they are not valid ideas and are not to be entertained. This is the crux of the issue.

And now the SDA church is in a 'Catch 22' situation, as was the Millerite movement, bound by its own limitations, unable to move forward as changes develop. How can this be?

The church acknowledges the leading of God in the formation of the beliefs of both the Advent movement and the SDA church and the immutability of these beliefs.

The idea that these beliefs will not change is supported by the pen of Ellen White. This is one side of the problem.

The other side of the problem is that an increasing body of literature is accumulating documenting errors related to these beliefs. This web site is one of those contributors to that corpus of material. To acknowledge the validity of this material is to come into conflict with the other side of the problem – the acknowledgment that the traditional beliefs of the early pioneers of the church are immutable, eternal truths.

Both of these points are diametrically opposed. For example, the position of this web-site, that the SDA explanation of the relationship between the seventy weeks of Dn9 and the 2300 days of Dn8 is totally invalid cannot be acknowledged without coming into immediate conflict with everything the pioneers of the church had to say on the topic of the prophecies of Daniel. It cuts to the very bone of Adventist doctrine and belief.

And it is this dilemma that puts the church into a Catch 22 situation. It cannot acknowledge this research as having any validity at all. Its very existence is seen to depend on defending itself against these views. It cannot question the validity of the pioneer's position without coming in conflict with the views of Ellen White, its official prophet, who endorsed the position of these pioneers. Yet on the other side of the coin, the gaps and cracks that are being shown to be present in the theoretical corpus that the church has developed cannot but be acknowledged, if one is to be honest and maintain any scholarly integrity. And there is the rub. It is a dilemma the church is unable to meet, just as the Second Advent movement was unable to meet its crisis after the disappointment in 1844.

Notice Nichol's explanation of the reason for the demise of the Advent movement soon after the Great Disappointment:

...the Millerite movement was not constituted to meet the conditions that confronted it after 1844. Miller had consistently held before the movement the ideal of an interchurch awakening on the doctrine of the soon coming of Christ. The various advent conferences repeatedly declared that Millerism did not seek to create another denomination or disturb the church relationship of anyone. And even the cry to come out of the churches, which was finally sounded, did not have as its purpose creating a new church, but simply lifting men out of a hostile atmosphere in anticipation of the immediate advent of Christ. Why should the leaders build a close-knit organization? They expected the perfect order and organization of heaven to shape their affairs in a very little while.

It is therefore no occasion for surprise, nor any indictment of Millerism, that the movement so markedly subsided after 1844...But in the very nature of the case Miller was debarred by the logic of his own belief from planning anything beyond 1844. Nor could he have great reason to sense the need of the stabilizing value of an organized church body...as long as it was truly a movement it tended to hold all steadily to a course. But when the sudden halt came in October, 1844, the inevitable happened. (1944, pp.290-292)

The Millerite group saw itself as continuing right up to the second coming of Christ. But it had no plans or contingencies for the existence of the group if their

predictions did not eventuate, and this caused them to disintegrate. This meant, after the Disappointment, the need for the development of another movement to facilitate the spirituality of those who wanted to keep the faith they had developed during this revival. Thus, a variety of Adventist groups were spawned to cater for this need – a move beyond the scope of the Millerism.¹³

Similarly with the Seventh-day Adventist church. It has committed itself to endorsing the position promulgated by the pioneers of the SDA church. The pen of Ellen White says there will be no change on this matter. The incumbent World Presidents reiterate the same. So when the evidence comes clearer and clearer to the point that it is incontrovertible—there were more details incorrect in the message of the Advent movement than just the *nature of the event* in 1844—the church is in a dilemma. It is bound by its own statements of belief and mission, its allegiance to both the position of the pioneers and also the position of Ellen White, and the parameters it uses to determine an allowable progression in doctrinal development. It cannot change those without changing the fundamental nature and character of the church itself. To acknowledge the problems highlighted in these papers is to contradict everything it stands for. Yet change on these doctrinal matters is the very thing essential for survival and relevance in the face of incontrovertible evidence.

George R. Knight, in his 2004 concise history of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, documents a sociological-developmental view to the church and discusses the need for change in order to avoid becoming redundant, under the chapter entitled, “The Challenges and Possibilities of Maturity”:

It is a well known fact that individuals pass through a life cycle that begins in infancy, advances through rapidly developing adolescence and vigorous young adulthood, and progresses on into the slowing down of middle age. If a person lives long enough, he or she will eventually face the mental and/or physical decay of old age.

But it is less well recognized that organizations, including churches, pass through a similar aging process. Adventism has not escaped that dynamic. It passed through infancy between 1844 and 1863 and adolescence between 1863 and 1901. By 1901 it had reached, in sociological terms, the stage of maximum efficiency. Unfortunately, the stages beyond that level are no more pleasant for churches than they are for individuals. They are marked by institutionalism as an end in itself, bureaucracy, and eventually, dysfunction.

However, the good news is that, unlike individuals, whose life cycle is biologically determined, social organizations do not necessarily have to pass into the degenerative parts of the cycle. The alternative is ongoing revival and reformation. For a church, that means two things: (1) always keeping its mission in view, and (2) maintaining a willingness to restructure and reform its organizations and institutions, thus keeping those entities functional in achieving the church’s mission...

¹³ George R Knight (2001) documents how difficult initially was the task to introduce the idea of an organised body of believers.

Adventism in 2004, with its more than 13 million members, stands at a similar crossroads. This chapter argues that Adventism reached denominational maturity in the mid-1950s and that after nearly half a century of maturity the denomination needs consciously to reform and retool for renewed vigor. The alternative is to face the possibility of succumbing to the threats of institutionalism, secularization, and dysfunctionality. (2004, pp.140f)

Knight only names the matter of mission-focus and the restructuring and reformation of denominational institutions as matters crucial to the survival of Adventism's relevance in God's plan. Knight does not consider in this book, the need for renewal and reformation in doctrinal matters. Yet he opens his book *A Search for Identity*, written four years previous in 2000, with the startling statement that "most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to agree to the denomination's 27 Fundamental Beliefs... He then lists details why the belief on the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, or the personhood of the Holy Spirit would eliminate the bulk of them. (2000, pp.17-19) He then states that three factors "espoused by the earliest Seventh-day Adventist thought leaders" were unique in encouraging doctrinal development: "(1) their dynamic conception of 'present truth,' (2) their attitude toward creedal statements of Christian belief, and (3) their view of the pathway to progressive understanding." (*Ibid*, p.18) He then says "James White, meanwhile, after noting that the Sabbatarian Adventists had modified their view on the proper time to begin the Sabbath, claimed that they 'would change on other points of faith if they could see good reason to do so from the Scriptures' (RH, Feb. 7, 1856, 149)." (*Ibid*, p.19) Not that everything was up for revision. "Certain non-negotiables did exist" (p.24), but:

at any rate, it is clear that the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had a dynamic concept of what they called "present truth," opposed creedal rigidity, and had an openness to new theological understandings that built upon the landmark doctrines that had made them a people. Their understanding allowed room for both theological continuity and change. Robert M. Johnston caught the essence of the tension between continuity and change in Adventist theology when he identified what he called "the most striking characteristic of Adventism." "Without repudiating the past leading of the Lord, it seeks even to understand better what that leading was. It is always open to better insights to learn – to seek for truth as for hid treasure." As Johnston sees it, Adventists "are still pilgrims on a doctrinal journey who do not repudiate the waymarks, but neither do they remain stopped at any of them (AdvRev, Sept. 15, 1983, 8). (2000, pp.27f)

From this excellent chapter entitled "The Present Nature of "Present Truth,"" one would think that Knight should have taken a lead when coming to write his 2004 work and added a *third* point for renewal of the organization. That third point would have been 'Fostering the Pathway of Doctrinal Development.' But it was not included, even though Knight explicitly indicates elsewhere that this is a factor.¹⁴ But notwithstanding,

¹⁴ In fairness to Knight, the position in my papers goes much further than Knight would consider justified. The arguments in my papers challenge 'the untouchables;' the 'non-negotiable landmarks' that serve to provide an identity to the Adventist doctrine. Knight would also object to the concept that something as fundamental as the relationship between the 2300 days and the 70 weeks as held by the SDA church is not Biblically valid and needs to be revised, as is clearly indicated in his Annotated Questions on Doctrine (2003, pp.217-235, esp. pp xxviii-xxvix).

doctrinal development is an important aspect of renewal. But renewal on the topic that this paper argues for, is beyond the limitations of an organisation as mature as the Adventist church.

So when the evidence comes clearer and clearer to the point that it is incontrovertible—there were more details incorrect in the message of the Advent movement than just the *nature of the event* in 1844—the church is in a dilemma. It is bound by its own statements of belief and mission, its allegiance to both the position of the pioneers and also the position of Ellen White, and the parameters it uses to determine an allowable progression in doctrinal development. It cannot change those without changing the fundamental nature and character of the church itself. Yet to acknowledge the problems highlighted in these papers is to contradict everything it stands for. So it is crippled from acknowledging the research like of Dr Desmond Ford and Dr Fred Mazzaferri in his work “As in A Mirror,”(2003?) and a host of others done through the years, or that done in these papers as having any validity. It can only try and create some chimera of defence to give the appearance that their position is more correct than that proposed by those who show up the problems. It cannot do anything different than what it did to Dr. Desmond Ford and many others before him – alienate and ostracise as delinquents – (in classical sociological terminology), in an attempt to maintain the status quo. As is happening before our very eyes,¹⁵ its defence is increasingly becoming a superficial and sorry sight, and will only become more so, as the argumentation against the traditional position becomes even more clearer. In the end, its objections will be a muffled complaint.

A belief in Assumption 23 enables a person to resist plain Biblical evidence and refrain from changing his/her belief, *even when convinced of the validity of a contrary position* being put to them. They can acknowledge the validity of the opposing arguments *without doing anything about it*. They can selectively forget clear factual evidence from Scripture and hold on to old beliefs “by faith” that *somehow* the old beliefs are right, even if they cannot be proved so at present. It enables a person to resist change by believing that God will eventually vindicate the old position, given time and more study and providential intervention to clarify matters. They believe God will clarify matters in His time. Their task is to hold tenaciously to the “faith once delivered to the Advent movement pioneers” and wait for the confirmation of their trust in the old truths.

This is identical to those Jews, in the times of both the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar and the Roman Titus, who, both before and during the siege of Jerusalem, clung to the belief that God would deliver Jerusalem from defeat, as He did in the times of Hezekiah, with the destruction of the Assyrian armies. The Jews during the Babylonian siege clung to the teachings of Isaiah on the topic, whereas Jeremiah had told them clearly that that idea was no longer valid, and that they were to accept submission to

¹⁵ In the publication of the DARCOM series.

a foreign king, if they wanted things to turn out for the better. Jeremiah's philosophy contradicted the beliefs of the traditional followers of the prophet Isaiah, and was 'anathematised.' But history proved *twice* that the new ideas were the correct ones, and the old ones indeed had been superceded. Put differently, in the times of the siege against Jerusalem by Sennacherib the Assyrian, God's message through his prophet was "**Wait and see the salvation of God.**" In the times of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian, God's message through Jeremiah the prophet had changed. It was now "**Submit and see the salvation of God.**" In the times of the siege by the Roman Titus, God's message through both Jesus, the Son of man, and Jesus, son of Ananus had changed again. ((Josephus, 1987, pp.742f. *Wars*, Bk6, ch5, 3; (300-310). See details on this person discussed by Josephus in [Assumption No. 18](#)) This time it was "**Escape and see the salvation of God.**" The majority in both the Babylonian and Roman siege tended to hold to Isaiah's doctrine and hoped for a miraculous deliverance right up to the last. But Isaiah's doctrine was no longer valid. It had served its day, but was now redundant. It was an inspired message for a certain context. It was not a teaching to be generalised.

The important thing is to discern when the time has come to move on and accept incontrovertible evidence, though it means a change of belief. This assumption ensures that this process does not occur. To fail to include new adjustments to one's belief is to doom oneself to obsolescence—individually or institutionally. The SDA church has shown its unwillingness to face the facts in the debate over the relationship between the 70 weeks and the 2300 days, and instead is prepared to authorise the publication and dissemination of such awful material as the DARCOM series to its eternal shame.¹⁶ Its desperation to bolster such a tottering edifice of unsubstantiated assumptions as those exposed in these papers is evidence enough of its unwillingness to be frank and face the prospect of a new direction, of embracing evidence that shows up the errors of earlier teachings. To admit an error of such significance, especially with regard to a doctrine that has been tenaciously defended throughout the life of the institution, is beyond the possibility of an institution so mature, and so the process of the movement being superceded will eventually again be repeated, as it did in the times of Miller. In the words of ex-Adventists Skip and Linda Dee Baker:

As one former pastor has stated here he feels that if Christ Himself were to come down to try to correct Adventism his words would fall on deaf ears. I can't help but feel the same way for no amount of argument can fight against the words of a false prophet that is firmly in control of her church from the grave. It's an amazing thing to see.¹⁷

¹⁶ I refer here mainly to the DARCOM papers of Shea and Hasel on the prophetic time periods in the book of Daniel.

¹⁷ Their testimony on http://www.truthorfables.com/SDA_Directory.htm

SDA historicists have judged that it is far better to publish material that compromises the integrity of the standards of evidence and argumentation used by scholars generally, than it is to admit the problems openly. Their recourse to this appalling quality of published material is testimony in itself to any thinking person of the desperate position of the church on this topic.

It has been demonstrated by every religious movement in the past, and it will continue to do so in the future, that the only option history has shown to be effective in dealing with this, especially when this persistent assumption is institutionalised, is for another movement to supercede the former movement. Even the Advent movement is a testimony to this principle, as is the SDA church, the successor of the Second Advent movement. To suppose that this principle, which has operated for two millennia, would no longer need to operate with the appearance of the SDA church is simplistic and will prove invalid. Though the writings of the church's prophet support the idea that the SDA church will go through to the end of history, thereby eliminating the need for the creation of a new movement, she also sees the outcome of the success of the church as being conditional. This position thereby allows for the possibility of a new movement beyond Adventism at some time before the advent, given the failure of the SDA church to keep pace with the current state of research. Therefore, the process referred to above could be replicated yet again.

In summary, Assumption No. 23 does not have any Scriptural evidence for its basis, but rather is sustained by a belief that somehow the traditional SDA position is correct. It is also substantiated by the pen of Ellen White, who says the SDA teaching on the relationship between the 70 weeks and the 2300 days will *never* be changed; but rather, the endorsed position is eternally and immutably true. This belief is also endorsed by a belief in the signs indicating God's leading being present in both the Second Advent Movement and the development of Seventh-day Adventist Church. With these beliefs in mind, no amount of evidence that could be brought against the traditional position would be of any benefit in persuading the believer to trust a different position. They will hold by *even firmer* faith, to the traditional position, trusting God to clarify matters in His time. It is *this* assumption that makes the SDA historicists' thinking impermeable and unchangeable. It is *this* assumption that makes it impossible for published SDA scholarship to be frank and honest on the topic of the relationship between the 2300 days and the 70 weeks. This will never change, and so there is no answer or remedy for those who cling tenaciously to this assumption. But, it is *this* assumption that will guarantee the rise of a movement that will supercede the SDA church.

As a final word, it should be said that this conclusion is predicated on the view that the information in these papers is correct. If it can be demonstrated that the information in my papers is not correct, (which I have not been able to do), then this assumption is superfluous. It should be said however, that if someone wishes to disagree with the papers I have posted on this site, then it should be done point by point –

addressing the actual arguments contained therein.¹⁸ Just a blanket disapproval of my material without addressing the specifics is only wasted effort; it will convince neither me nor other thoughtful visitors to this site. Are you able to overthrow the challenges posed in these papers? I would be the first to welcome a thorough and complete decimation of the arguments developed in these papers, if it is done so with honesty, integrity and irresistible logic, qualities not always present in the DARCOM articles reviewed in these papers.

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¹⁸ Goldstein says, “If he [Ratzlaff] would have confronted some of those books, or at least the sections that deal with the charges he makes, and then sought to rebut them, point by point (as I will do to his work) – that approach, if nothing else, would have been more credible than merely listing a string of arguments against the judgment while ignoring their best defense.” (p.18)

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