

FROM MILLERISM, THROUGH THE SCATTERING, TO THE THIRD ANGEL:

ELLEN WHITE AND LIGHT FROM THE MOST HOLY PLACE, 1844-1851

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INTRODUCTION

This paper suggests that the vital truth of the third angel's message sounded shortly after October 22, 1844. Between that time and 1847, however, that message-- a message that could explain the past experience of the Advent body and give meaning to its present condition--became largely nullified by believers who stressed a multiplicity of "testing truths" that were designed to purify those people awaiting the return of the Lord. As the number of "tests" grew, the importance of the third angel's message or Sabbath truth receded farther and farther into the background. Beginning around 1847, though evidences are present even earlier, Mrs. White, through a series of visions, sought unity upon that central, testing truth. The term "shut door" in this setting, meant primarily a unity that maintained the initial two angel's messages and joined with them a third message.

The concept of a shut door, held by the future SDAs throughout the 1844-51 period, also involved a concept of judgment. It meant essentially that all who had rejected the clear Biblical truths of the first two angels had rejected the basis of their salvation. Shortly after October 22, 1844, however, some holding to this shut door concept of judgment, combined with it an additional concept of judgment, a concept that focused at first primarily and then solely upon those five "wise virgins" of the Bridegroom parable who had accepted those pre-1844 testing truths before the door was shut. That shut door did not assure their salvation, but enabled them to become eligible for an even closer examination. The paper deals with these two concepts of judgment: (1) a judgment based upon acceptance or rejection of the clear Biblical truths encompassed within the messages of the three angels of Rev. 14:6-12; and (2) a judgment embracing a multitude of tests and reserved solely for the "saints." It also attempts to examine the reaction of Ellen White to these concepts of judgment.

Another central concept advanced in this paper is a strong stress upon the pre-1844 roots to the SDA theological experience. It suggests that most of the basic teachings of the church were already accepted within the movement prior to 1845.

The post-1844 development of the message of the third angel constituted the central contribution thereafter.

THE SCATTERING TIME, OCTOBER 23, 1844-1846

In the aftermath of October 22, 1844, the leadership of the Millerite movement began to formulate explanations for the failure of the expected event. A concept quickly accepted was that of the shut door, an idea interpreted from Christ's parable of the Bridegroom of Matthew 25. It was assumed that probation had closed for all those who had rejected the messages of Rev. 14:6-8, and thus the movement no longer had a message relevant to the world, but instead concentrated upon preparations to meet the soon coming Lord. In addition to the shut door concept, the Millerites began to develop another idea related to it that would offer additional explanation for the delay. That idea involved a concept of a judicial, pre-Advent judgment that focused primarily upon the "saints." It was while this concept was developing that the Millerite movement began to disintegrate. By April of 1845, two distinct groups were apparent.¹

The major group or "Millerites" abandoned the concept that a significant event had occurred in 1844 and considered that the 2300-day prophecy would end sometime in the future. With this assumption the group likewise abandoned its previously-held idea that the door of mercy was shut and those so teaching were seen as heretical. Given that assumption, a concept of a judgment focusing entirely upon believers was likewise abandoned by the Millerites. A "minority" group of former Millerite leaders opposed the assumption that October 22 had lost its significance and also the idea that a door of mercy was opened to the world. This, to them, meant abandoning the entire movement that they considered to have clearly been led by the Lord. In retaining the significance of October 22, that minority group continued its attempt to understand the significance of the event beginning on that date, and thus continued to develop its concept of a judicial judgment that would primarily focus upon the "wise virgins" who had entered before the door was shut. It was from this group of minority Adventists that the later Seventh-day Adventist

church grew.

At first, one of the few publications in which the shut door Adventists found a voice was The Day-Star, a former Millerite publication initially entitled The Western Midnight Cry. Edited by Enoch Jacobs in Cincinnati, Ohio, the publication gave an outlet for many new ideas, including the seventh-day Sabbath. In its pages, Ellen White's early visions were first published, together with views and arguments which she and her husband James would certainly have rejected. Most of the Day-Star's initial platform sprang from the Millerite pillars: the first and second angels' messages anticipating the literal, visible return of Christ and urging preparation for that event; the 2300 days ended October 22, 1844, and thus fulfilled the other aspects of the Bridegroom parable. The paper, claiming it advocated "present truth," stressed that the sanctuary to be cleansed was in heaven, and that a third angel was to follow the first two and that third angel emphasized the "commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." The expression "faith of Jesus" to this group came to mean a literal application of a number of statements of Jesus concerning such subjects as selling property, forsaking all, becoming as "little children," etc. The shut door belief continued to be a prominent part of the Day-Star's message. James White wrote the editor in August of 1845:

The world & nominal church hate us more and more. . . . The hour of temptation will show their true character, and ours. Bless God, the scale will turn in favor of the little remnant. What will do it?--The truth preached by us? No-- unless we open that door by our opponents, and this we cannot do, for God has rejected them.² (Unless otherwise noted, all emphasis in quoted material is as in the original.)

As the minority Adventists sought to understand their position after 1844, they sought to harmonize their past beliefs with a meaning for their continued existence. They concluded that new light was available to them. This light, they affirmed, embraced following all of the revealed will of God. Note the rationale presented by some of the leading spokesmen of the movement:

Satan is by no means ignorant of the fact that God's method of saving his people, is to sanctify them by the truth. . . . To 'daily expect the King,' is to have every obstacle removed out of the way, and look for nothing else.

If truth and obedience did not sanctify us, and make us happy, we should be no

better off--so far as this world is concerned--than the ignorant and disobedient.

If we follow on to know the Lord and obey ALL his commandments, yea, glory be to our coming Lord, we shall then have a right to the tree of life.

Did you ever remember that if you fall, and lose your soul, it will be because you stumble over some plain truth written in this book? And remember again, that God has a few souls on earth, that can not be frowned down, nor frightened away from their investigations of the searching truth of God.³

The concept of "following all the commandments" embraced a constantly-developing list of testing truths, for the commandments to this minority group, included not just the original 10, but also those "least" commandments they believed were supported in the New Testament. Foot washing and the salutation or "holy kiss" rapidly became test questions of obedience and humility. These teachings harmonized with the search for unity within a shattered group and seemed to fulfill the "command" of Christ that the believers should "love one another." J. D. Cook, prominent in the movement, in his sermon on foot washing, "To Be Christians, We Must Do the Works of Christ," noted:

Eternal salvation is the legacy bequeathed to 'all who obey him.' . . . The more heartily, and perseveringly, and earnestly, and exactly, and fully we obey; the more entirely we become 'crucified to the world,' and related to the 'King of kings.' Such have 'the seal of the living God,' and shall stand in holy triumph on mount Zion. . . . Multitudes stop at each test--each truth, or each duty. They who stumble at the last point of trial, will as certainly fail of heaven as they who stumble at the first. . . . (If God) means what he says, then we obey and please him, when we believe just what he says, and act accordingly; and if this apply to any doctrine or duty above named, why does it not apply with equal force to the washing of feet--the very thing which Jesus did.⁴

By the end of 1845, the list of tests which had been advocated by the Day-Star's contributors included selling possessions and giving alms to the poor, refraining from work, celibacy, proper dress, vegetarianism, avoidance of snuff, tobacco, coffee, and tea, praying for the raising of dead saints, selling property and going out "two by two," taking no thought of food, clothing, etc., receiving the kingdom as a little child, the Sabbath, "forsaking all," including families. By November, 1845, the editor of Day-Star would affirm:

It has been charged upon some, that they are propagating the doctrine of literally exterminating the wicked with the sword. However true this may be against Mormons, or eastern Adventists, I know not, but I do know that no such doctrines have been advanced by Adventists in this section. But I have no hesitation in saying, were it a duty enjoined upon us in the Bible, it would have

been fearlessly advanced, for there are some who no longer seek to save their lives.⁵

The consequence of such a multiplicity of requirements sometimes meant that a decision to violate one resulted in giving up the entire system, as did the editors of the Hope of Israel and the Hope Within the Veil, who went back to "Millerism," when they decided to marry each other. Even James White, one year prior to his marriage, announced that the editors "denied their faith," in taking that step. "We all look upon it as a wile of the Devil," stated White. "The firm brethren in Maine who are waiting for Christ to come have no fellowship with such a move." A month earlier, however, he had sounded a note of warning to the editor of the Day-Star:

We are pleased with the course you are taking in the 'Star,' as it speaks out plain on the present truth, and commandments of my Master. Go on, but look out for the Devil's counterfeit--Look out for false tests.⁶

Another obvious consequence of the large number of testing truths was that the Sabbath became merely one issue among many, and thus never developed into a significant truth in the Day-Star. One issue was developing within the Day-Star, however. By March of 1846, the concept of an ongoing judgment was fairly widely advocated by the minority group of former Millerites who read the Day-Star:

The judgment scenes are passing before our eyes; what a solemn time is this. The testing truths that are now presented are almost too much for this poor heart to bear. But, by the grace of God helping me, I will follow on to know the Lord. I have set my face as a flint towards Zion. I feel persuaded to go out and forsake all, that I may be the disciple of Jesus.⁷

This hint of a pre-Advent judicial judgment⁸ had roots at least as far back as November, 1844, and seems to have been initially "tentatively" presented by Enoch Jacobs, a former Methodist minister, prominent in the pre-1844 Millerite movement and editor of its publication Western Midnight Cry from 1843 to 1845 when it became the Day-Star. In attempting to avoid the extremes of totally abandoning the relevance of October 22 and of "making a wrong application of scripture to that extraordinary movement," he presented his views, "upon my own individual responsibility," under the heading: "Evidence That the Judgment Might Have Set on the Tenth Day of the 7th Month."⁹

Jacobs' initial concept of this judgment beginning on October 22, 1844, centered

primarily, but not exclusively, upon the saints, since only those who had "afflicted themselves before the Lord" (Lev. 23:29) could be eligible for a positive judgment. This judgment, that "began at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17) would consume about 40 days, according to Jacobs. This represented the time spent by Noah within the ark before the rain came. The judgment upon the remainder, who "were condemned already" would consume about a year, the approximate time before Noah and his family "went out upon the renovated earth." Jacobs emphasized, "There must be a rendering of judgment before it can be executed," thus accounting for the judgment upon those already lost.¹⁰ He believed that the essential mission of the scattered believers was to "comfort God's people," during those solemn judgment scenes. He affirmed:

Unless something as decisive as the setting of the judgment took place on the tenth day, the antitype is not yet given--the 'True Midnight Cry' not sounded, and the overwhelming evidence that we live in the last year of prophetic periods must be abandoned, and God's people are left in darkness, not only to be overtaken as by a thief, but to be devoured by merciless wolves.¹¹

J. B. Cook, former Baptist minister, pre-1844 Millerite preacher and editor, likewise early embraced a concept of an ongoing judgment based upon a "separating of God's people from the world." He also emphasized that Noah had been "shut into the ark before the storm" and that Lot had been removed from Sodom prior to its destruction.

It was probably William Miller, however, who lent the most prestige to the concept of a shut door tied to the idea of a judgment focusing primarily upon the saints. Less than a month after the disappointment William Miller wrote, "We have done our work in warning sinners and in trying to awake a formal church. God in his providence has shut the door; we can only stir one another up to be patient; and be diligent to make our calling and election sure." He noted that the scriptures foretold that "a little while before Christ should come, there would be a separation between the just and unjust, the righteous and wicked." He quoted Zechariah 13:9 to show a refining process that was to occur "a little while before Christ comes," to test every believer's character. "I cannot but believe," stressed Miller, "that the scenes of the seventh month was the time when Christ finished making up his jewels," and the time of trouble commenced. He believed that "Christ has risen up from his mercy-

seat, and now stands as a Judge at the door." He continued:

I cannot see as we were wrong in the chronology. That the prophetic numbers did close in 1844, I can have but little doubt. What then was there worthy of note that could be said to answer to the ending of the periods under these numbers so emphatically describing the end. I answer. The first thing I will notice is, 'The hour of his Judgment is come.' I ask, is there any thing in the scriptures to show that the hour has not come, or in our present position to show, that God is not now in his last Judicial character deciding the cases of all the righteous, so that Christ (speaking after the manner of men) will know whom to collect at his coming, or the angels may know whom to gather, when they are sent to gather together the elect, whom God has in this hour of his Judgment justified?¹²

Perhaps the most extended treatment of a judgment beginning in 1844 and reserved solely for the "remnant," was found in the March 25, 1845, issue of the Day-Star. Reprinted from the kindred publication, Hope of Israel, the article announced a judgment upon the saints that embraced all of God's revealed will. The writer urged, "The present is no time to play with Jehovah's word, or to quibble, through the aid of vain philosophy from a Bible position written before our eyes in living lines of light, and also deeply engraved on every sainted heart." He warned, "We have believed unwaveringly, that the mystery of God was finished, when the (Midnight) 'Cry' was finished; and have felt satisfied, that the number of Israel could not possibly be increased, but that the number might, and would be diminished." In illustrating his concept from the parable of the Bridegroom, the author urged against attempting to present the gospel to others "since some must knock, and be refused, because they knock too late (Luke 13:25)," that is, after October 22, 1844. Those only could become eligible to be saved who were already within the "marriage feast" by that time. A renouncing of that position, however, by seeking to convert others meant a renunciation of the truths that enabled the believer to enter that "feast." The author thus urged, "Be sure you stand, talk, think, pray, and sing, agreeable to the word of God, and the deep experience through which that word has brought you in connection with the seal of the Holy Ghost." By renouncing the "7th month experience no power in earth or heaven can save you. All, all is lost," declared the author.

He continued:

The saints must celebrate this marriage in what is like the guest-chamber before the Lord comes to gather them, for then he comes as King. Again, in the wedding,

some are bound and cast out. The 'Kingdom of heaven' shall be 'like' it. Will the Lord ever mistake, and change to immortality, any who have not on the wedding garment, take them to the sea of glass, and then cast them out. You answer no. So sure then as that will never be, so sure the examination is now passing, and will be all over when the Lord appears. . . . But it may be asked how any are found here not having on the wedding garment, as only they that were ready went in, and the door was shut. They have not kept their loins girded with truth--they have lost their garment through want of watchfulness.¹³

The Day-Star editor, Enoch Jacobs, continued his argument for a pre-Advent, judicial judgment in articles appearing in the April 29 and May 20, 1845, issues and in an article appearing June 6, 1846. (This last was written a year earlier, but used as a filler in the absence of the editor in June, 1846.) His concept consistently embraced the shut door, fullest obedience to a multiplicity of testing truths, and adherence to the pre-1844 pillars. He called for "unqualified obedience to (God's) every command," and urged the believers to "withdraw your sympathies from those that have proved themselves God's enemies, by resisting the messages of truth brought to them." Jacobs urged:

O when shall we learn, that when the Lord comes He will find His people perfectly prepared for his Kingdom in this mortal state--possessed of the mind of Christ, by which Spirit dwelling in them, their mortal bodies will be quickened. . . . The union of Heaven, is a union to Christ. The path that leads to it, is one of obedience to his commands--to 'love one another,' and 'after having done the will of God' to 'wait patiently for him' and LET the 'unjust' and 'filthy' so remain.

This ceasing of labor for an 'apostate church and dying world' a 'little while' before our mortal career is done, is not only a duty imposed upon those that 'are alive and remain,' but a process or exercise through which every child of God is called. A Christian is not fit to die, or 'sleep in Jesus' until his sympathies are all withdrawn from the world and friends. . . . His houses, lands, wife and children, are no more to him than the possessions and relatives of others. The sanctifying sympathies of heaven have opened up in his soul, and swallowed up every sordid motive--every earthly joy. Not till this is done is he prepared for 'the glory that is to be revealed'; and the accomplishment of this preparation is always before he enters upon it.¹⁴

In the issue of May 20, 1845, the editor and a reader have an interesting dialogue upon the subject of the "judicial judgment" that the reader had picked up from the Day-Star. The editor is arguing against the concept of the reader who asserts that the concept of a believer entering with Christ into the marriage lends itself to a "spiritualistic" interpretation of Scripture. Not so, asserts the editor:

No one asserts that they have gone in with Christ to the marriage, but that an

event in 'the Kingdom of heaven' (God's administration among men on earth) has transpired which has been 'likened unto' guests going into a marriage with the Bridegroom. There is therefore no 'unsound principle of spiritual fulfillment' adopted here.

The dialogue continues, with the reader's statements in quotation marks:

"Are the wise virgins now personally with Christ." Ans. Certainly not--nor can they be, until as Bridegroom he 'returns from the wedding.' "Then how can the Bridegroom already have come?" Ans. He certainly has not 'already' come from the wedding, or the wise virgins would personally be with him. "How can Christ manifest himself unto us and not unto the world?" By the Holy Ghost. "How can he fill the character of Bridegroom 'in the marriage' before he personally appears as 'the Lord'? By examining the guests and determining who to place on his right hand, and who on his left--by determining who shall be 'taken' and who 'left'--or who shall be 'blessed' by sitting down at the marriage supper of the Lamb.¹⁵

The editor noted that the lost would include more than the "wicked world" and a "luke-warm church" who were unconscious of their danger. He pointed to the Biblical examples of Lot's wife and Noah: "In the case of both Noah and Lot, many days were occupied after they were separated forever from the ungodly, before they reached the destination to which God had directed them." The dialogue continues:

"That the Judiciary Judgment will precede its execution, I admit, but know of no way of determining the exact point of time, when the last case will be decided upon but by the Saviour's appearing; hence I feel myself perfectly at liberty to proclaim the 'Gospel of the Kingdom' to the extent of my abilities, knowing, that when it has been preached in all nations to the extent brought to view in Matt. 24:14; that then the end will immediately come."

Editor: Here is an admission that completely overthrows the burden of the whole argument, that the door cannot be shut till Christ personally appears. . . . It may be that we have 'no way of determining the exact point of time when the last case will be decided upon but by the Saviour's appearing,' but remember, the door is shut before the so called 'Judiciary Judgment' proceeds, as is proved from the facts in the case, and not only this, but it will be exceedingly difficult for Bro. B--to harmonize, either with scripture or reason, the idea, that Christ, at the same point of time, fills the office of Judge, and Advocate, or Intercessor.

The editor reemphasized, "The time will come 'when the last case will be decided upon.' The wise begin to understand;--the time will come when their knowledge will be perfect. That time has not yet come." It seems apparent that the foremost initial exponent of a judicial judgment focusing upon the saints considered that concept firmly tied to a shut door.¹⁶

Related to the concept of a judicial judgment was the idea of a "cleansing," that, while originally focusing on the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, came more and more

to center upon the "cleansing" of the believer to prepare him to pass the judicial judgment. While the editorial and content tone of the Day-Star changed after its editor in January, 1846, accepted a more "spiritualistic" concept of the return of Christ, the internalized cleansing concept, already a major theme, had clearly set the stage for a system that eventually resulted in the editor and many of his followers first accepting Christ's return as a spiritual return to the believer and eventually culminating in their entering various Shaker encampments. The progression can be noticed by glimpses of the Day-Star between May and December, 1845.

Prior to January, 1846, the editor consistently argued against "spiritualizers" who took the ground that Christ had come spiritually. He felt especially called upon to make such presentations because of the large number of Eastern subscribers who were "living directly in the midst of the above named anti-scriptural influences," he asserted. At the same time, however, Jacobs emphasized that "God being a Spirit, Christ in us (is) the hope of glory." He believed that an "internal work and witness, (was) absolutely necessary in order to our salvation when Christ appears in his Kingdom." The editor emphasized, "We have Christ in us by faith," and defended his position by asserting, "I have never denied that when Jesus Christ is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire he will at that time be glorified in his Saints."¹⁷

A number of other writers began to put together the concepts of judgment, cleansing, shut door, and "living temples." It is important to note that these concepts were prevalent prior to the deemphasis by the editor of the personal return of Christ. Note the following from two believers in Philadelphia:

The God of Elijah is proving us. In '43 he took us by the hand to lead us out of Egypt, but Oh, how our very being was interwoven with its customs, traditions, sympathies, and idols, and how little we knew of the weaning, cleansing, process through which we must pass, to stand before the Son of Man. Like the children of Israel we expected immediately to enter Canaan, and considered not, that we must be tried in the wilderness, until all who are weary of the leading of the Angel of the covenant, may rebel, and until the murmurers, the fearful, and the unbelieving, shall be wasted from among us.

When we sought (the Lord) with our whole heart, he came suddenly to his temple on the 10th day of the 7th month, 1844. We know by the Scriptures of truth, and by his indwelling power, that we 'are the temples of the dwelling power,'

that we 'are the temples of the living God.' I believe that since that time, he has been sitting in us as 'a refiner and purifier' that we may be able to stand when he appeareth. . . . The spirit of Elijah has been sifting, fanning, and purging out all the dross and chaff, and the Lord has taken his own way to sanctify us 'through the truth,' by the different sieves of feet-washing, the holy salutation, keeping the Sabbath, etc.¹⁸

Mrs. Clorinda Minor, who had been prominent in the pre-1844 Millerite movement in Philadelphia, further developed her concept of an ongoing judgment:

'Judgment must begin at the house of God.' I believe that we are 'the temple of the living God,' and that the Lord, by his Spirit, came suddenly to his temple, on the 10th day of the 7th month, 1844. That he then changed his office work, in drawing near, in his second manifestation to the world. That he has been sitting 'as a refiner and purifier of silver, purifying the sons of Levi' (his peculiar people, who are soon to be 'priests and kings unto God,') 'his fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his floor.' He is now in a special work and sense, proving and preparing his people to reign with him. This sanctifying process, which is like fire consuming every thing within us, that is not like Jesus, I understand to be entirely out of the Lord's common, providential order, with his children in other days, and preparatory to our translation and his glory. . . . Is the refiner not in his temple? This has not been in the churches, all has been peace and safety there; it has not been among Adventists who have returned to ~~the~~ form and deny the power; all has been outward order and tranquility there; but this searching, reproofing power has been alone among those who are pressing forward, as witnesses for God. As this work draws near its consummation, we begin to feel the energy of eternal life stirring within us, a power, a glory, and that LOVE OF GOD that casteth out all fear.¹⁹

J. B. Cook took the concept to its conclusion: "Faith in Christ, including a promise that we shall not die, is as needful in us that we escape death." Through obedience, he proclaimed, "our experience will progress, undiverted by death, through the scenes of grandeur and glory which lie just before us. Hallelujah. We may live longer than Methusaleh to serve and glorify God." As others looked toward translation without seeing death, they stressed it was "absolutely necessary" to possess the same "power and faith" possessed by Enoch.²⁰

While the post-1845 descent of the Day-Star into "spiritualizing" concepts is a story in itself, the following concepts achieved prominence during 1846: purification as a route to power, the saints having a role in administering the seven last plagues and other pre-Advent judgments, judgmental attitudes towards those inhibiting the group from receiving that power, God as readily dwelling in the saints as He did in Christ, the saints as the sanctuary with the holy of holies being the heart, living without temptation, gaining the nature of Adam prior to his fall and thus having access

to the tree of life and not subject to death, spiritual wifery, and an inevitable consequence, disunity.²¹

Thus, while the Millerites, in effect, abandoned their 1844 positions when they gave up the ending of the 2300 days, these minority Adventists achieved the same by spiritualizing away those positions. The messages of the three angels, the state of the dead, the concept of a judgment based upon central testing truths clearly established in God's word, became diffused in a welter of false tests. The central truth of the Sabbath lost significance in its companionship with those additional requirements. The hope for a visible return of Christ became diffused in the sinless, perfectionistic eternity that was allegedly already occurring. The circle seemed complete when Enoch Jacobs called for a "gathering" to the Shaker settlements throughout the United States. He proclaimed that "though some of their doctrines are no improvement upon those of the churches we have left, yet it is not doctrines, but the Spirit, that we are commanded to try." The door was no longer shut as far as Enoch Jacobs and his followers were concerned, for he had opened it to Shakerism.²²

ELLEN HARMON AND THE SCATTERING

As Enoch Jacobs was preparing to leave for a conference of believers to be held in Cleveland, Ohio, in early 1846, the conference at which the editor would become converted to the "spiritualist" view of the Lord's return, he received a personal communication from Ellen Harmon. This communication, perhaps to be considered the first of the personal testimonies, contained an account of Ellen Harmon's first vision. The timing of the communication, as well as its content, leads one to conjecture that it contained just those truths relevant to the editor of the Day-Star at that time, in addition to being relevant to the experience of the scattered flock.²³

In her communication to Jacobs, Ellen Harmon, through reporting her vision, gave the reassurance of the rich reward to be given those waiting for the Lord's return "from the wedding." She described the travels of God's people to the Holy City who were guided by a bright light from behind that would keep them from stumbling. That light represented the midnight cry, or their past experience. The vision emphasized,

however, that the truths of the past were not the complete route to the heavenly city, for the Advent body must keep their eyes upon Jesus, Who was continuing to guide them. This concept of Jesus externally leading the Advent movement could have been extremely relevant to those whose focus had shifted inward. The vision reported that some had rashly denied the light behind them and consequently lost sight of Jesus. The consequence of that loss meant falling off the upward path back into the wicked world that had been "rejected by God." Because of the absence of the light provided by Jesus, it was impossible for this group to regain the path.²⁴

After emphasizing the unifying bonds of foot washing and the holy kiss, Miss Harmon, through description of her vision, depicted the physical return of Jesus in all His majesty. The grandeur of the scene made those saints looking for Christ's return intensely aware of their unworthiness. Through the indictment of the Holy Spirit, the next words could have shown Jacobs his danger, for Ellen Harmon then quoted Christ, at His second coming saying "MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU." The graves were then opened and Christ led the saints to the heavenly kingdom and its glories. While Ellen Harmon in this vision saw the ark within the Most Holy Place, its significance was not yet fully apparent to her. It was not until 1846 that she accepted the Sabbath.²⁵

We can thus see, from this initial vision, and from the timing in which it was reported, that, without using a text of scripture, or engaging in Biblical exegesis, Miss Harmon, through the guidance of the Lord, was, perhaps without even realizing it, depicting the error of a widespread spiritualistic movement within the scattered flock. She likewise, without Biblical exegesis, showed the error of the Millerite band that denied the guidance of the Lord during the midnight cry and the consequence of renouncing that light from the past. She strongly attached to a Millerite truth, however, a truth that was urgently needed by those that had separated from that body: Christ's grace was the necessity for salvation, not the testing truths established by Enoch Jacobs and others of the scattering time.²⁶

The editor of the Day-Star arrived at the conference at Cleveland January 2, 1846,

and described the meetings in the January 17 and 24 issues of Day-Star. He described how he went to the meeting determined to "put down" any "anti-scriptural systems of Spiritualizing," but while there experienced the "solemn scenes of the judgment." He seemed to hear Christ ask him, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" Jacobs then realized, he affirmed, that he had not truly been "born into the Kingdom," since he had not received it as a "little child." In accepting his version of that concept Jacobs reasoned that if he waited until the physical return of Christ for glorification, he could not thereby receive the kingdom as a "little child," and thus he could have no role in the process. He continued:

You and I have idly dreamed that God, independent of our exertions, would put on to us incorruption, and immortality, whereas we are expressly told (1 Cor. 15:54) that 'this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality.' . . . In what sense can our Lord come and 'knock' if the coming here spoken of is one that an ungodly world can not fail to see? Jesus also taught us that his second coming would be a manifestation to his saints unlike that which 'every eye shall see him.' . . . You have all acknowledged that Christ has come to the doors--O let him in. It is through this manifestation--this refreshing--this holy unction, alone, that I dare look for further and more glorious manifestations, when the wicked shall melt away before him. If I could not see Jesus now, I should not dare to look for him in his unveiled glory. Wherein do you and I differ from the world, if the coming of Christ in John 14 is one that the world can not fail to see?²⁷

Ellen Harmon's second "testimony" to Enoch Jacobs would have relevance to the next experience he described:

O how my heart overflows with love for you all. How I long to convey to you the experience I received on the evening of Jan. 5, 1846, and which has been increasing in untold glories in my soul since that time. My whole soul is panting within me to pour out before you the joys I feel, and which I had never expected to experience till the thrones of earth were laid in ruins, and earth itself in ashes; but it is all in vain--God will have the glory of teaching you this, 'Receive the Kingdom of God as a little child.' That Kingdom is here, and by digging in the field I have found it. Hallelujah.²⁸

The next issue of Day-Star was replete with descriptions of Jacobs' new-found experience and contained a number of calls for a gathering of those who "keep his commandments," and thus "having God dwelling in them, and his love perfected in them." Jacobs affirmed:

The work that God is performing among his people here, is truly astonishing. The majesty and glory of his truth is beyond every thing we had ever conceived. The great truth that Judgment has begun at the house of God--that God is now manifesting himself to his people in fulfillment of his promise in Acts 3:19-22--

that the Kingdom is to be received as a little child, and that we must be born again to receive it, is arresting every mind. The most violent opposition is checked by Almighty power, so wonderfully that the most trusting child of God has become astonished. Our meetings are crowded at the private houses, and some souls are born of the spirit every evening. Never so clearly has it been manifest, that God has undertaken the work of delivering his people. I would have sooner gone to the stake, three weeks since, than believed what I now do.

Judgment here is seen to embrace the concept that Christ was actually already returning the second time to His people.²⁹

Three weeks later, Ellen Harmon sent her second letter to Enoch Jacobs and described to him her second vision of February, 1845. She observed, "My vision which you published in the Day-Star was written under a deep sense of duty to you, not expecting you would publish it." She thus wanted to present to the readers a more complete picture and urged Jacobs to print this second communication that she considered "of vast importance to the Saints." Miss Harmon again stressed the personality of both Christ and the Father, both of whom were obviously external to the believers. She symbolically depicted a sincere group bowing before the throne and continually looking to Jesus, Who would mediate on their behalf and send them "an exceeding, bright light." While most rejected that light, some accepted it and joined the group bowed before the throne. The Father and Son then went into the Most Holy Place and those who had kept their eyes upon Jesus rose with Him and received light from the Most Holy Place from Him. They also received "love, joy and peace" as a consequence of Christ's mediation from the Most Holy. Some were unaware that Christ had left the Holy Place and were still bowed to Him there. Ellen Harmon continues:

Satan appeared to be by the throne trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne and pray, My Father give us thy spirit. Then Satan would breathe on them an unholy influence. In it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy and peace. Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children. I saw one after another leave the company who were praying to Jesus and the Holiest, go and join those before the throne and they at once received the unholy influence of Satan.

Here again was a symbolic vision that could have warned Jacobs of the false experience he was receiving.³⁰

In that same communication, Miss Harmon described another vision given about November, 1845. In describing events, "all in the future," she depicted the time of

trouble and the deliverance of God's people. She then saw Jesus leave the Most Holy, lay off "his priestly garment and put on his kingly robe," and return to the earth. Again, the visions accurately related to the circumstances faced by the scattered flock, and by Enoch Jacobs in particular. The two visions, again without any Biblical analysis, completely upset the system established by the Day-Star. Besides pointing to the recent false experience of Jacobs, it pointed forward to additional light that would be forthcoming from the Most Holy and also pointed to the bright light of their past experience. In addition, the vision concerning "events, all in the future," showing that Christ would not lay off His priestly garments until His return in the clouds of heaven, completely refuted Jacobs' concept that Christ was no longer a mediator and along with it, all that Jacobs' system embraced.³¹

A portent of things to come as far as the Day-Star was concerned, however, became apparent on the very same page of the Day-Star that contained the Ellen Harmon vision. Besides reporting about a believer who had reached such a state of perfection that she was as pure as Eden and "without temptation," another believer summarized his pilgrimage:

The little flock all understand that to be consistent in this day of the Lord, while we are commanded to wait the return of our Lord from the wedding, we cannot marry wives, or plant, or build, and only sell, that we may give alms, as Christ commands in Luke 12, and buy not to traffic and increase our substance but feed the Flock, both temporally and spiritually.

He believed it was time for another New Testament command to be accepted: "We should not seek nor take thought for our life what we shall eat, or drink, or wherewith we shall be clothed; but to seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all things we need God will give us."³²

Besides warning against the "sad and desolating effects" produced by the concepts embraced by Enoch Jacobs, Ellen Harmon, during the scattering period, urged against some of those principles near her residence in Maine. Her warnings against the requirements of "refraining from labor," and "some other things which they held to be religious duties," often brought upon her the condemnation of both the minority Adventists and

the post-1844 Millerites. The Millerites considered her visions as evidence of fanaticism, while some minority Adventists accused her of conformity to the world.³³

Another aspect of her earliest ministry involved retaining confidence in the guidance of the past, a guidance that brought forth those clear Biblical truths of the pre-1844 Millerite movement. Those truths essentially embraced the message of the first and second angel of Rev. 14, and the ending of the 2300 days on October 22, 1844. They were often summarized by the term shut door.³⁴ Immediately after October of 1844, Ellen Harmon herself was in danger of abandoning the concept that the midnight cry and shut door had occurred in the past, but was convinced of her error through a vision. James White reports, "It was then that the Lord shew her in vision the error into which she and the band in Portland had fallen. She then related her vision to the band (Dec. 1844) and about 60 confessed their error, and acknowledged their 7th month experience to be the work of God." When a similar division over the shut door occurred in Maine in February, 1845, Miss Harmon again established confidence in the guidance of the past through a vision that settled the group "upon the shut door."³⁵

Another of Ellen Harmon's roles during the scattering period involved warnings as a consequence of visions against the consistent practice of setting new times for the return of the Lord. While the Millerites did this by consistently juggling the ending of the 2300 days, the minority Adventists did similarly by keeping the 2300 days at October 22, 1844, but by manipulating Biblical numerology to anticipate Christ's return. The result within both groups nullified the central truths of the message.³⁶

Ellen Harmon, soon to become Ellen White, would gain additional insight in 1846 that would further prepare her to lead the scattered flock into a "gathering" of a different sort than that proposed by Enoch Jacobs. When Joseph Bates initially presented the Sabbath question to Miss Harmon in 1846, she considered that question as of minor significance. Her confidence in its importance, however, was established through a vision of the ark within the Most Holy Place. "I was amazed," she wrote,

"as I saw the fourth commandment." She continued: "A halo of glory was all around it; for it was the only one of the ten which points out to man who the living God is, the maker of heaven and earth."³⁷

In summary, then, it would seem that Miss Harmon's central role during the scattering time was to create an atmosphere where a vital, testing truth that was seeking entrance into the Advent body would have an opportunity to flourish. This meant refuting a system of spiritualism that inhibited that light and it meant maintaining belief in the Lord's past guidance that would provide the continuity and explanation for that light. A part of that commission involved unifying upon a concept, the shut door, that would later become modified after that central, testing truth was accepted. In neither case did Miss Harmon give final, Biblical explanations to either refute error or to explain the truth. Her visions, however, had the effect of broadly defining such truths and error. An additional continuum between the past and the post-1844 period was provided by the obvious manifestation, through her, of the fact that, just as the Holy Spirit had indicted the truths and experience of the pre-1844 Millerite period, so again was the Lord leading a group that would follow Him into the Most Holy Place.

JOSEPH BATES

Among those whose experience spanned both the scattering and gathering time, Joseph Bates ranks as one of the most prominent. Active in the pre-1844 Millerite movement, his ministry probably did more to establish the Sabbath teaching within the Advent movement than that of any other minister. He was among the earliest to base his argument for observing the Sabbath upon the continuity of the three angels' messages of Rev. 14:6-13. Just as the first and second angel had represented "Advent lecturers," presenting testing truths, so did the third angel represent those who were "repairers of the breach," restoring "and keeping the seventh day Sabbath, that will test every living soul that enters the gates of the city." In addition, Bates, writing in January, 1847, was among the first to stress the importance of the Sabbath from Rev. 11:19, the opening of the temple in heaven and thereby the

relevation of the ark of the covenant.³⁸ Bates was so impressed with the importance of his new-found Sabbath truth, that he at times, closely tied it to a concept of "cleansing" of the sanctuary or "vindicating" the sanctuary truths. Note his conviction:

'The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was open.' Here was the preparation for the marriage, and cleansing the sanctuary that was open on the '10th of the 7th month,' and the first message that issued on the commandments came from the presentation of the ark, which had never been described nor seen since the day that God drove Adam out of Paradise. . . . This was the point of time that this message was urged on God's people, to test their sincerity and honesty in the whole word of God and no where else in the previous messages.³⁹

Bates' Sabbath message, however, was not one for the "world" or "fallen churches," who had rejected the message of the initial two angels, but was another, although vital, testing truth for the Advent believers. In 1850, Bates proclaimed the following as present truth:

The master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and now stands beside the Ark containing the commandments. The 'Present Truth,' then, of this third angel's message is THE SABBATH AND SHUT DOOR. . . . The Ark of the Testimony from which comes the Sabbath commandment, could not be seen until Jesus shut the first door and opened the second. Hence the door is shut before the Sabbath is given in the Message.

Bates' concept of a shut door, when combined with other concepts shortly to be explored, militated against his applying the Millerite concept of judgment based upon acceptance or rejection of the message of the first two angels, to a similar judgment relating to the third angel. Bates instead made other applications.⁴⁰

As an early crusader against tobacco, alcohol, slavery, meat, and other issues, Joseph Bates felt somewhat at home with the testing truths established by the post-1844 minority Adventists. Indeed, in his opinion, true believers should have left the pre-1844 "fallen churches" when those churches had tolerated slavery. In his opinion, the preaching of the message of the everlasting gospel and its relationship to the return of Christ was merely the "last, and crowning test" given by God calling for a separation from those fallen churches. Bates looked not only toward a cleansing within the heavenly sanctuary, but also a cleansing within the saints. His concept of the new covenant embraced the thought that God was proceeding to write His entire law upon the hearts of the believers and thus "perfecting the saints." This

purification involved the necessary preparation to enter the holy city and proceeded with the sealing that would exhibit "a clear development of christian character in their lives and shining foreheads (or faces) that it will be clearly understood that Jesus has redeemed them from all iniquity, by purifying 'unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' "41

While Joseph Bates considered the Sabbath a vital test of the third angel, to him that angel also brought the test of the "testimony of Jesus," which he defined to mean a literal application of all of Christ's teachings and thus a multiplicity of tests, along with that of the Sabbath. He thus considered that the remnant must practice the following:

Selling what they have, giving alms, laying up their treasure in heaven, casting themselves entirely loose from this wicked world; doing as their master told them to do, 'washing one another's feet,' and as the apostles have taught, 'greet all the brethren with an holy kiss,' 'salute every saint in Christ Jesus.' Living 'by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' practice keeping the Sabbath holy, just as God has told them in the commandments. But says the reader, there are tens of thousands that are looking for Jesus, that don't believe the above doctrines, what will become of them? Consult John, he knows better than we do; he has only described two companies. . . . One is keeping the commandments and faith of Jesus. The other has the mark of the beast. . . . But them that do (that practice) his commandments may enter in through the gates into the city.⁴²

Just as he seemed to exhibit a degree of rigidity upon the components of testing truths, so did he apply the footwashing, holy kiss, proper posture in prayer, and even Sabbath observance, in a rather rigid manner. His system, for instance, did not allow driving a horse over three miles to Sabbath meeting and involved close scrutiny on such questions as cooking, making fires, etc., on the Sabbath. Regarding the time to begin the Sabbath, Bates believed, "Here, also, we cannot be too particular; God claims every moment of his day." That day to Bates "must of necessity begin at 6 P.M." for believers could not be sealed "unless they keep the Sabbath holy in its appointed time, for it is just as sinful in the sight of God to wilfully reject the Bible light on the commencing of the Sabbath, and therefore transgress a part of sacred time, as it would be not to keep it at all." He concluded, "Friday evening at 6 P.M., the Sabbath commences, all other figuring is lost time."⁴³

Joseph Bates' concept of a pre-Advent judicial judgment focusing upon believers was obviously influenced by his reading of the Day-Star. By 1847, Bates clearly agreed with the earlier Day-Star position that, because of the "door being shut" no additional subjects could gain entrance, but those within were undergoing an additional trial "to purge and fan out the chaff from the wheat." This, to Bates, meant a judicial trial in heaven as well as a "refining" testing trial on earth. These trials were to continue "all the time that the high priest was in the most holy place, cleansing the sanctuary," and was to involve "afflicting yourselves" before the Lord (Lev. 23:27). Bates continued:

Then the true meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary is, Christ our high priest in the sanctuary . . . in the heavens, making atonement, or blotting out the sins of his true waiting people; and while he is doing this, they are in their trial. 'Here is the patience of the Saints,' as it was in the type referred to, with this difference--their day and trial and atonement was 'from even to even,' just twenty-four hours, whereas ours is to be from the tenth 'day of the seventh month, until God roars out of Zion.' "44

In 1847, Bates had affirmed, "There must be order and time, for God in his judicial character to decide the cases of all the righteous, that their names may be registered in the Lamb's Book of Life, and they be fully prepared for that eventful moment of their change from mortal to immortality." By 1850, he had a definite conclusion regarding the duration of this judicial judgment. It was firmly tied to the concept that "the Bridegroom did come," in 1844, "thus fulfilling the parable, and they that were ready went in with him to the Marriage and the door was shut." It anticipated that those judicial proceedings would occupy seven years and then Christ would return. Bates affirmed that on October 22, 1844:

Both Father and Son here left the throne in the Holy and moved into the Most Holy, in accordance also with, and close of, the message of the flying angel in Rev. 14:6,7, to set in judgment; first to decide who is, and who is not worthy to enter the gates of the holy city; while the Bridegroom, High Priest, Mediator and crowned King of Israel stands before him advocating the cause of all presented on his breast plate of judgment. As Daniel sees it, the judgment is now set and the books open. . . .

The seven spots of blood on the Golden Altar and before the Mercy Seat, I fully believe represents the duration of the judicial proceedings on the living saints in the Most Holy, all of which time they will be in their affliction, even seven years, God by his voice will deliver them.⁴⁵

In addition to the time setting aspect, Bates tied to his concept of a judicial judgment other elements. Not considering that Mrs. White, in vision, might be seeing events into the future, Bates interpreted her words in a vision he witnessed and transcribed on November 19, 1848, that "the time of trouble has commenced, it is begun," as currently true. He likewise interpreted her statements regarding saints then being sealed as apparent support for his concept of a pre-Advent judicial judgment focusing entirely upon believers. He thus drew the conclusions that since the sealing meant "fully receiving and being sanctified in keeping the whole truth, to pass safely through the time of trouble," and was a process reserved for "living saints only," that "the dead saints" were likewise then in the process of "being judged." He also proclaimed that since the time of trouble had begun, then the seven last plagues had begun and the seventh trumpet had sounded. He brought these concepts together in his book "Seal of the Living God," completed by January of 1849. Mrs. White would shortly react.⁴⁶

We can thus see that Joseph Bates' concept of pre-Advent judicial proceedings embraced a number of diverse concepts: it involved a multiplicity of testing truths as part of a refining, cleansing process; it involved a degree of rigidity in applying those testing truths; it assumed that only those who had accepted the pre-October 22, 1844, messages were eligible for this final refining process; it involved the assumption that the judicial proceedings would end October 22, 1851; it assumed that the sealing and ongoing judicial proceedings were equivalent; it assumed that since the time of trouble had commenced, the last plagues were occurring, the seventh trumpet had sounded and thus the "dead saints" were being judged. While neither Ellen White nor James White separated all the diverse elements within the system promulgated by Joseph Bates, both reacted to it, since it was seen to be creating disunity and thus inhibiting the central truth that needed to become firmly established.

In 1850, James White directly challenged various premises of the concept of judgment advanced by Joseph Bates. He introduced the subject of the "Day of Judgment," in the Advent Review of September, 1850, and noted, "Some have contended that the day

of judgment was prior to the second advent. This view is certainly without foundation in the word of God."⁴⁷ He suggested instead, a concept of judgment that involved acceptance or rejection of clear, testing truths presented to the individual. Note his reasoning as he considered the first angel's message:

The testimony of that angel could only signify, that the period had come for this generation to be tested by second advent truth. It is true that mortal saints act a part in the trial, in probationary time. They bear the cutting truths of God's word, which separate the wheat and tares, the 'precious from the vile,' but the work of judging to be done in the great day of judgment, and executing the 'judgment written' is the work of immortal saints. . . . God will execute his judgments on this generation, by pouring out the vials of his wrath, on all who have the mark of the beast.⁴⁸

In another article in that same issue, James White broadened that concept of judgment to include the third message when he affirmed, "God has ever had a test truth, with which to seal his people." He continued, "But the last sealing truth is the immutable law of Jehovah, of which the Sabbath is the crowning testimony." It would seem that James White, in 1850, bypassed the scattering experience and sought continuity based upon the Millerite concept of a judgment based upon central, testing truths clearly depicted in God's word. Ellen White would react similarly.⁴⁹

James White continued that theme into 1851, as the seven years' judicial proceedings proposed by Bates became a major issue. He rejected the experiences of the scattering period as he significantly wrote:

Many believe that the time has come to swell the loud cry of the third angel (Rev. 14:9-12) and to sound the last note of warning to the scattered people of God. If it is really so, and we fully believe that it is, then may we not expect to see the same oneness of views, and united effort among those who believe, as was witnessed during the messages of the former angels? We believe that we may. It is true that we have passed through the long dark night of scattering, and the flock has become faint and scattered by a strange diversity of views. And as they are now being gathered to the truth, many will be inclined to hold on to erroneous views received in the time of scattering. Therefore it should be a very important part of the present work of those who teach the truth to lead the minds of the brethren from distracting views, and to show them that they must be united in the third message, as we were in the former ones. Under the present unfavorable circumstances a powerful effort must be made to hold up the truths closely connected with this message, in their clear light and importance, so that precious souls may feed upon them, and rejoice in them, and thus lose sight of the errors and darkness that have so long enveloped them.

Those who gave the two former messages with success, dwelt almost entirely upon the leading ideas expressed by the two angels. Those who are especially called

of God to give the third, we think, will not wander far from the leading ideas expressed in the message of the third angel, to dwell on disputed points, not particularly meat in due season. The third angel's message opens before the mind a wide field of truth, important to our present salvation. The "patience of the saints," the "commandments of God," the faith of Jesus and the awfully solemn warning against the worship, and mark of the beast and his image, are themes perfectly calculated to inspire faith, and lead believers to consecrate themselves and all they have to the Lord. These subjects when investigated open the plan of salvation clearly, and do not fail to show our present work. No other subjects will move the heart, and revive the faith of the fainting flock like these. In fact all others seem to be ineffectual.⁵⁰

Becoming even more explicit, James White continued:

It is well known that some of the brethren have been teaching that the great work of salvation for the remnant, through the intercession of our Great High Priest, would close in seven years from the termination of the 2300 days, in the autumn of 1844. Some who have thus taught we esteem very highly, and love "fervently" as brethren, and we feel that it becomes us to be slow to say anything to hurt their feelings; yet we cannot refrain from giving some reasons why we do not receive the time.

The reasons given by James White included: (1) Biblical proof for such a seven-year period of proceedings was insufficient; (2) the central message of the third angel had no time duration; (3) a connection of time with such a central truth would tend to weaken that central truth; (4) the reintroduction of time nullified the concept that God's people were urged to "await the return of the Lord from the wedding"; (5) "If it is the purpose of God that time should be embraced we think the brethren generally would be called up to it"; (6) time setting ran the risk of bringing with it the "fanaticism and divisions," reminiscent of the scattering period that "we have witnessed, for more than six years past." Suggesting that the time setting issue arose from Bates' 1850 publication, White observed:

It has been our humble view for the past year that the proclamation of the time was no part of our present work. We do not see time in the present message; we see no necessity for it, and we do not see the hand of the Lord in it. And we have felt it to be our duty to let the brethren know that we have no part in the present movement on time, and that we believe that our present work, and present duty is to strive to be united in presenting those important truths embraced in the third angel's cry.⁵¹

In a special edition of the Review in July of 1851, James White noted, "It is evident that the purpose of God in the proclamation of the time has been accomplished, and that since our great disappointment in 1844, the preaching of time has had a blighting influence." In addition, he significantly republished what he had written

in 1847 in "A Word to the 'Little Flock,' ":

The event which will introduce the Judgment day, will be the coming of the Son of Man, to raise the sleeping saints, and to change those that are alive at that time. The second event, will be the King's sitting 'upon the throne of his glory.' The King will not sit upon the throne of his glory until those who have followed him are raised, and sit upon the thrones of Judgment with him. Mat. 18:28. . . . It is not necessary that the final sentence should be given before the first resurrection, as some have taught; for the names of the saints are written in heaven, and Jesus, and the angels will certainly know who to raise, and gather to the New Jerusalem.⁵²

In describing his November, 1851, tour with Mrs. White of various areas in Massachusetts, James White again alluded to the influence of disuniting views and pointed again to the Sabbath as the central, uniting truth to bind the believers together:

We were much grieved to learn that some discord had been created among the brethren, by the presentation of fanciful views of unfulfilled prophecies. Such things are extremely painful to those who labor to unite the precious flock of Christ upon the great truths connected with the message of Rev. 14:9-12. The evil result of leaving the important truths of the present message, or connecting with them fanciful views of unfulfilled prophecy, were pointed out, and with the special blessing of Heaven, the brethren all felt deeply the importance of being "perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment," and of united action in the great work before us.⁵³

As early as 1849, Mrs. White seemed to react to various issues raised by Joseph Bates. In August of that year she published two visions in Present Truth. In reporting a vision given March 24, 1849, Mrs. White stated:

Sabbath, March 24th, 1849, we had a sweet, and very interesting meeting with the Brethren at Topsham, Me. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us, and I was taken off in the Spirit to the City of the living God. There I was shown that the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, relating to the shut door, could not be separated, and that the time for the commandments of God to shine out, with all their importance, and for God's people to be tried on the Sabbath truth, was when the door was opened in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary, where the Ark is, containing the ten commandments. This door was not opened, until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the Holy Place of the Sanctuary in 1844. Then, Jesus rose up, and shut the door in the Holy Place, and opened the door in the Most Holy, and passed within the second vail, where he now stands by the Ark; and where the faith of Israel now reaches.

I saw that Jesus had shut the door in the Holy Place, and no man can open it; and that he had opened the door in the Most Holy, and no man can shut it: (See Rev. 3:7,8) and that since Jesus has opened the door in the Most Holy Place, which contains the Ark, the commandments have been shining out to God's people, and they are being tested on the Sabbath question.

I saw that the present test on the Sabbath could not come, until the mediation

of Jesus in the Holy Place was finished.⁵⁴

In these brief words, Ellen White linked the past, present, and future. She tied to the Millerite period using the term shut door and showed the solemn testing truths of the first and second angel. She bypassed the scattering period by linking the term testimony of Jesus to the shut door, or the Millerite period, rather than to the numerous tests of the scattering period. She gave continuity to the message by showing its relevance to 1844 and pointed to the third angel as likewise proclaiming a solemn testing truth, so solemn that, in conjunction with the first and second angel, "God's people" were "being tested on the Sabbath question." She likewise pointed to the future since the door to the Most Holy was open. She foreshadowed an open door message for the world: a message, the receptivity or rejection of which, involved judgment, a judgment, however, based upon a different set of premises than that of Joseph Bates' system.

In describing a vision of January 5, 1849, Mrs. White addressed more of the elements of the system embraced by Bates. She stated, "I was taken off in Vision to the Most Holy Place, where I saw Jesus still interceding for Israel." This meant, therefore, that the time of trouble had not commenced, the plagues were not then being poured out, and that the dead saints were not then being judged. Note Mrs. White's statement:

I saw that Jesus would not leave the Most Holy Place, until every case was decided either for salvation or destruction; and that the wrath of God could not come until Jesus had finished his work in the Most Holy Place--laid off his priestly attire and clothed himself with the garments of vengeance. Then Jesus will step out from between the Father and man, and God will keep silent no longer; but pour out his wrath on those who have rejected his truth. I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead, were separate events, one following the other. I saw that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced.⁵⁵

In the latter part of September, 1850, a conference of believers was held at Sutton, Vermont, during which time, reported James White, "some trial arose in consequence of the introduction of certain views relative to the Judgment." He noted that "God helped us to discuss the subjects upon which we differed with profit, and to commit them, and ourselves to Him in fervent prayer." He noted that before

the conference ended, that "errors were confessed, and perfect union, as sweet as heaven, was felt among us all." Since some question has been raised regarding the authenticity of the vision given to Mrs. White in connection with the conference at Sutton, the contents of that vision will not be used in connection with this paper. In the writer's opinion, however, the report of the vision contains important relevance to Bates' concept of a pre-Advent judicial judgment for the saints. The fact that most of the vision is reprinted in Present Truth, November, 1850, omitting Bates' name, and that a portion is published in "Experience and Views," p. 49, lends major credibility to the authenticity of other portions of the vision. Some of the same points might be made to the "Dorchester" vision of October 23, 1850, also relevant to Bates' concept of judgment and likewise currently regarded as apocryphal.⁵⁶

In the published version, without mentioning Bates' name, Mrs. White warned against those who had misapplied and rigidly applied the issues of "selling and giving alms," praying for the sick before unbelievers, and the test of washing feet and communion before unbelievers. She affirmed that the plagues would not come until after Jesus left the sanctuary and that the saints would not sit in judgment until the 1000 years. She also urged:

I also saw that the shepherds should consult those in whom they have reason to have confidence, those who have been in all the messages, and are firm in all the present truth, before they advocate any new point of importance, which they may think the Bible sustains. Then the shepherds will be perfectly united, and the union of the shepherds will be felt by the church. Such a course I saw would prevent unhappy divisions, and then there would be no danger of the precious flock being divided, and the sheep scattered, without a shepherd.

In that same issue, she reported another vision in which "the Lord showed me that time had not been a test since 1844, and that time will never again be a test."⁵⁷

As the time setting issue became dominant in 1851, Mrs. White again reiterated that counsel in the special issue of the Review:

The Lord has shown me that the message of the third angel must go, and be proclaimed to the scattered children of the Lord, and that it should not be hung on time; for time never will be a test again. I saw that some were getting a false excitement arising from preaching time; that the third angel's message was stronger than time can be. I saw that this message can stand on its own foundation, and that it needs not time to strengthen it, and that it will go in mighty power, and do its work, and will be cut short in righteousness.

I saw that some were making every thing bend to the time of this next fall-- that is, making their calculations in reference to that time. I saw that this was wrong, for this reason: Instead of going to God daily to know their PRESENT duty, they look ahead, and make their calculations as though they knew the work would end this fall, without inquiring their duty of God daily.⁵⁸

After the passing of October 22, 1851, Ellen White continued to see the results of the time setting experience and one such experience in particular evidenced how susceptible believers could be to the spiritualistic interpretations of the scattering time. One believer, Brother Walker, refused to confess his error at a conference of believers and suggested instead that perhaps the 1851 time was correct and that Christ had indeed left the Most Holy Place at that time. Mrs. White objected to this replay of the scattering experience:

I asked Brother Walker where he would be or what would be his state, if Jesus had now left the Most Holy and His work for the saints was all done and he were in the state he then was? I talked plainly. The Lord helped me. I showed them how the messengers that had been toiling in the scattering time had labored to get the truth before them, how much they had suffered, and now, when God's cause was prospering, they embrace the third angel's message and enter into the labors of the chosen messengers of God, and lift up their heel against them.

Mrs. White clearly wanted no spiritualistic repetition such as was embraced by Enoch Jacobs during the scattering time.⁵⁹

We can thus see that between 1849 and 1851 both James and Ellen White had either directly or indirectly questioned a number of teachings endorsed by Joseph Bates that he related to his concept of a pre-Advent judicial judgment focused upon the believers. While neither dealt with all of the specifics of his judgment concept, that concept in total was seen by Mrs. White as an innovation, one that should be tested by the "shepherds," especially by James White, before being promulgated. Both seemed to consider that the concept, at that time, worked to diffuse the central, testing truth of the third angel. Some of the counsels directed by Mrs. White to Joseph Bates suggested a tendency to rigidly apply certain ordinances, a tendency that seemed reminiscent of the scattering period. She likewise considered that he misunderstood the interrelationship between the time of trouble, the last plagues, and the judgment of the dead, stressing that they followed each other. The end result of some of his views, especially those relating to time setting, had divided the flock by

making division among the shepherds apparent. In making significant distinctions between the scattering and gathering times, Mrs. White stressed the Sabbath as a final, eschatological testing truth, a truth so strong that it brought its own test and did not need the false test of time to accompany it.⁶⁰

THE GATHERING TIME, 1847-1851

In late 1850, Ellen White reported the following vision:

The Lord shewed me that he had stretched out his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people, and that efforts must be redoubled in this gathering time. In the scattering, Israel was smitten and torn; but now in the gathering time God will heal and bind up his people. In the scattering, efforts made to spread the truth had but little effect, accomplished but little or nothing; but in the gathering, when God has set his hand to gather his people, efforts to spread the truth will have their designed effect. All should be united and zealous in the work. I saw that it was wrong for any to refer to the scattering for examples to govern us now in the gathering; for if God does no more for us now than he did then, Israel would never be gathered.⁶¹

Through this vision, Mrs. White seems to be calling for a different experience than that of the 1845-46 period. A call is made for unity and that unity is to be achieved upon a different basis than the methods used during the scattering. James White expressed it this way in 1849: "The scattering time we have had; it is in the past, and now the time for the saints to be gathered into the unity of the faith, and be sealed by one holy, uniting truth has come. Yes, Brother, it has come." In strengthening his call to a fellow believer, James appealed to a recent vision. He noted that the Sabbath was to "rise, never to fall again," and continued "Mark this well, 'never to fall' again. This was the mind of the Holy Ghost spoken, a few weeks since, through feeble clay, while in Holy Vision."⁶²

Actually, the concept of a new experience or a gathering based upon one central, unifying truth had begun with Mrs. White as early as 1847. In reporting a vision of late March, 1847, Mrs. White told Joseph Bates, "I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question, to unite the hearts of God's dear waiting saints." A few months later she informed him, "The sheep are now scattered, but thank God they are about to be gathered." By late 1848, she was quoted by Bates as saying in vision:

"Out of weakness it (the Sabbath) has become strong from searching his word. The test upon it has been but a short time. All who are saved will be tried upon it in some way."⁶³

In that same vision, Mrs. White identified the Sabbath as the seal, and continued, "that's why it comes last. The shut door we have had." Her next vision seems to further clarify this interrelationship when she affirmed that the Sabbath and "the testimony of Jesus Christ relating to the shut door could not be separated, and that the time for the commandments of God to shine out, with all their importance, and for God's people to be tried on the Sabbath truth, was when the door was opened in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary, where the Ark is, containing the ten commandments." This seems clearly to call for unity around the central, testing Sabbath truth. The shut door, or truths of the first and second angel, were truths to be retained, but were truths from the past. She continues, "Since Jesus has opened the door in the Most Holy Place, which contains the Ark, the commandments have been shining out to God's people, and they are being tested on the Sabbath question."⁶⁴

As she looked toward the future, Mrs. White suggested that the message of the third angel would retain its testing function. Reflecting upon her March, 1847, vision regarding the Sabbath, she noted, in 1851, that it was given when "there were but very few of the Advent brethren observing the Sabbath, and of these, but few supposed that its observance was of sufficient importance to draw a line between the professed people of God." Given the climate of the scattering time, it seems apparent that the central, testing truth of the third angel, was being diffused. She observed that by 1851, however, "the fulfillment of that view (was) beginning to be seen." And as she looked toward the future saw "a little company traveling a narrow pathway. All seemed to be firmly united, and bound together by the truth, in bundles, or companies. Said the angel, 'The third angel is binding them (sealing them) in bundles for the heavenly garner."⁶⁵

When Mrs. White considered the unifying truth of the third angel, she seemed consciously to reject the excesses that developed during the atmosphere of the

scattering period. She noted:

God will not intrust the care of his precious flock to men whose minds and judgment have been weakened by former errors that they have been in, such as so-called perfectionism and spiritualism, and by their course, while in these errors, have brought reproach upon the cause of truth and disgraced themselves.⁶⁶

Even as Ellen White emphasized the message of the third angel as a vital, testing truth, so did she emphasize that a conscious rejection of that clear Biblical truth meant a rejection of the basis of salvation. In 1847, she wrote, "I saw . . . (that) if one believed, and kept the Sabbath, and received the blessing attending it, and then gave it up, and broke the holy commandment, they would shut the gates of the Holy City against themselves, as sure as there was a God that rules in heaven above." This concept was reiterated a number of times between 1847 and 1851 and seems to embrace a concept of judgment similar to that espoused during the Millerite period. Just as a conscious rejection of the messages of the first and second angel resulted in a decision against the basis of salvation, so did a rejection of the message of the third angel, in conjunction with the other two, result in a conscious decision against the basis of salvation.⁶⁷

Mrs. White tied these concepts together in 1851 as she explained her very first vision of 1844, where she had initially emphasized the condition of those who had rejected or later denied the messages of the first two angels of Rev. 14 and who were consequently "rejected by God." It would appear that Mrs. White's concept of a judgment based upon clear, testing truths of the three angels was consistent throughout the period we have been examining and likewise anticipates a concept of a judgment she would retain after the three messages were made available to the world. Note her explanation of her initial vision in regard to false reformations:

This view relates more particularly to those who have rejected the light of the Advent doctrine (i.e., first and second messages). They are given over to strong delusions. Such will not have 'the travail of soul for sinners as used to be.' Having rejected the Advent, and being given over to the delusions of Satan, 'the time for their salvation is past.' This does not, however, relate to those who have not heard and rejected the first and second messages.⁶⁸

Placed in that setting, Mrs. White's statement, based upon a vision of January 5, 1849, that "Jesus would not leave the Most Holy Place, until every case was

decided either for salvation or destruction," could reasonably be tied to a number of other visions emphasizing, as in the case of the vision transcribed by Bates, that "All who are saved will be tried upon (the Sabbath) in some way." The messages of the three angels are thus seen by Mrs. White to be the last, solemn testing truths of God's word and she could urge the embracing of the full message as a solemn responsibility:

I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps--the first, second and third angel's messages. Said my accompanying angel, 'Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.' I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform.⁶⁹

In December of 1847, William Miller reported a dream that impressed him greatly and also attained great significance to those calling for a unifying upon the central truth of the third angel. It was in 1848, reported James White, that he considered that the dream was given by divine providence to explain "our past second advent experience" and as a guidepost for the group then being gathered. Using the symbolism of the dream, James White applied it to both the scattering and gathering experiences. Just as the message of the first and second angel was initially inhibited by false shepherds within the pre-1840 churches, so had the third message been inhibited following 1844. After that experience however, just as the message of the two angels reached effectiveness following 1840, so were the "dirt and shavings, sand and all manner of rubbish," that had inhibited the proclamation of the third angel after 1844, being removed beginning around 1848. White decried such errors as those systems that proclaimed their pre-1844 experience to have been a mistake; those systems that removed the "landmarks" by preaching "definite time" and consequently threw "darkness and doubt over the whole advent movement"; those systems that embraced "spiritualism with all its fancies and extravagances"; and he also mentioned the errors of S. S. Snow, who was currently professing to be "Elijah the Prophet," and who "in his strange and wild career, has also acted his part in this work of death, and his course has had a tendency to bring the true position for the waiting saints

into disrepute in the minds of many honest souls."⁷⁰

White went on to name such additional errors as misinterpretations of the millennium, the resurrection, the "no-work doctrine," and others whose end consequence was that "the true jewels were excluded from sight." He continued:

This harmonious system of truth or 'casket' has been torn in pieces, and scattered among the rubbish by those who have rejected their own experience, and have denied the very truths that they, with Bro. Miller so fearlessly preached to the world.⁷¹

Just as the essential truths of the first and second angel had been diffused by the creedalism prior to 1840, so was the truth of the third angel nullified by the scattering experience after 1844. Relying upon the symbolish of the dream, however, James White looked toward a new experience:

The man with the "dirt-brush" represents the clear light of present truth, as brought to view by the third angel's message (Rev. 14:9-12) which is now purging the errors away from the remnant. The cause of present truth began to revive in the spring of 1848, and has been rising and gaining strength from that time to the present.⁷²

Ellen White again revealed her concept of a judgment based upon the "light shining from the Most Holy Place" as she related the Sabbath truth to the Miller dream. She used the dream symbolism of "scattered jewels" to mean God's true children:

The Lord has often given me a view of the situation and wants of the scattered jewels who have not yet come to the light of the present truth, and that the messengers should speed their way to them as fast as possible to give them the light. Many, all around us, only need to have their prejudices removed, and the evidences of our present position spread out before them from the Word, and they will joyfully receive the present truth. . . . (The messengers must) make it their first object to do all in their power to advance the cause of truth, and save perishing souls.⁷³

Between 1848 and 1851, James White, on a number of occasions linked the new truth of the third angel with that of the earlier angels. As did Ellen White, he often used the term shut door as referring to those past pillars which, combined with the Sabbath, constituted present truth. On August of 1848, he wrote concerning the Sabbath:

Here are they who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Amen. My Brother and Sister, here is the standard to rally around. Jesus has left his mediatorial throne. He is now claiming His new kingdom. Do you believe it, I hope you do. Well this is the present "faith of Jesus." So the Shut door and Sabbath is the present truth. These truths will form and keep up the same mark of distinction between us and unbelievers as God made in 1844. . . . First is the Advent Angel or message of (Rev. 14) verses 6 and 7. This took place from 1840 to 1843. Second is another angel in the 8th verse crying Babylon is fallen. This

was in 1844 when we all rushed out of Babylon. Next a third angel appears with a warning message for us not to go back and receive the marks we got rid of in 1844. Well here yes, right here is the little, despised company who embrace the 7th day Sabbath. Oh how glad I am that I know my whereabouts. Yes, never was there a people whose position was so plainly marked out in the Word as ours.⁷⁴

A few months later he wrote again, "The principal points on which we dwell as present truth are the 7th day Sabbath and Shut Door. In this we wish to honor God's most holy institution and also acknowledge the work of God in our Second Advent experience." James White firmly embraced the pillars of the first two angels, and combined with it the light streaming upon the message of the third angel. Thus could he write, "now (is) the time for the saints to be gathered into the unity of the faith, and be sealed by one holy, uniting truth."⁷⁵

In a major article appearing in Present Truth, James White noted that the "breach that has been made, and is now being repaired, is in the law of God." He saw that as a work of solemn preparation for the soon-coming destruction of the seven last plagues and related it to the sealing since "none but the marked, or sealed ones stand in the battle of the Lord. So we see that the repairing of the breach in the law of God, and the sealing, are one and the same work." As he pointed to the Sabbath as the basis for unity, James White observed that its Biblical proof was "so plain and simple, that a child may understand it," and that the "scattering has been from the true position; and the gathering will be to the present true position." During this gathering time the followers of God "will all be united on the great sealing truth" of the Sabbath. He again bypassed the scattering experience in his use of the term "testimony of Jesus" by defining that term to refer to the pre-1844 experience with the truths of the first and second angel, rather than the requirements established between 1845-46:

The present truth relating to the Sabbath, and our advent experience, or as John has it in Rev. 14:12; 12:17, "the commandments of God, and the faith, or testimony of Jesus Christ," is to us the living bread and water of heaven.⁷⁶

Mrs. White agreed. In that same issue of the Present Truth, she noted that the Lord had shown her "that precious souls are starving, and dying for want of the present, sealing truth." In urging that the "messengers" accept the urgency of

presenting that Sabbath truth, Mrs. White reported the words of an angel, "Speed the swift messengers, speed the swift messengers; for the case of every soul will soon be decided, either for Life, or for Death." Again, the Sabbath is here seen as a basis of judgment, a judgment resulting from the light that was shining from the Most Holy Place. Mrs. White would urge those who had accepted the Sabbath message, "since the light shone out of the most holy place," in 1844, to "stand in the gap" and prepare others to "stand in the battle in the day of the Lord."⁷⁷

James White, in two major articles in 1850, even more explicitly related his concept of judgment based upon the central truths of the three angels to the experiences of 1840-50. The first angel's message had represented the "last mission of mercy to the world; and it has been fulfilled." The world was thus judged by the light of that first angel. The message was testified to by the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit and "proclaimed with solemnity, zeal and holy confidence." To renounce that message was to renounce the basis of salvation. Since the first message was to the churches, but was rejected by them, "Jesus and the Spirit of truth left them for ever, and the churches or Babylon fell." The solemn testing truth of the second angel called God's true believers from those fallen churches. "We know," he exclaimed, "that the time for keeping all the commandments right has been since 1844, since God called us out of Babylon." He continued:

If we had stayed there, bound down by ministers and creeds, the glorious light of the Holy Sabbath never would have reached us; but glory to God, the second angel's message called us out from the fallen churches where we are now free to think, and act for ourselves in the fear of God.⁷⁸

As he brought his concept of solemn, testing truths to the point of the third angel, James White emotionally exclaimed:

O, my brethren, what an awfully solemn subject is this now before us. And what an hour will soon burst upon the world like a thief. Never did I have such feelings while holding my pen as now. And never did I see and feel the importance of the Sabbath as I do this moment. Surely the Sabbath truth, like the rising sun ascending from the east, has increased in light, in power and in importance until it is the great sealing truth. Its rays of holy light cheer and sanctify the true believer, and condemn those who reject it.⁷⁹

As he observed the "light" shining on the Sabbath since 1844, James White drew upon Rev. 11:19 as scriptural support: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven,

and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." Those who followed Jesus into the Most Holy were depicted by John:

He saw the waiting saints, after the 2300 days ended, by faith looking to their Great High Priest, who stands by the ark in the "holiest of all." They are keeping the commandments of God; and by faith they see the ark of the testament, or ten commandments in the temple in heaven. . . . This also shows that the time for keeping all the commandments right, the Sabbath with the rest, has been since 1844, where the third angel's message commenced.⁸⁰

As Ellen White called for a publication that would "strengthen the things that remain" and "build up God's people in the most holy faith," the Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald called for a gathering based upon the central message of the third angel. Its initial four articles dealt with the Sabbath question, while its editorial pages called for a forsaking of "questions foreign from the present truth," and unity upon the central testing truth of the Sabbath. In "calling to remembrance the former days," James White declared that he would republish many of the writings of the former leaders of the Millerite movement, to give evidence to the fact that they once espoused the truths of the first two angels, that the Review continued to endorse. That message clearly came through for a letter published in the third issue stated:

The re-publishment of the testimonies of the leading Advent preachers after the 7th month, '44 and '45, is seasonable, and it will have a salutary effect in reviving the hearts of those who hold sacred the 7th mo. cry, and lead them to a deeper examination of the present truth--the shut-door and the commandments of God.⁸¹

The evidence of the period we have been examining, 1844-51, seems to strongly indicate that the primary function of the Spirit of Prophecy during this time was to create the kind of atmosphere that would enable the central truth of the third angel to be received. That truth, to be perceived, initially meant holding to the truths of the first two angels while awaiting the clarification that would come with the third angel. Unity to understand that relationship seemed a primary consideration. We find Ellen White strongly urging the holding of the past pillars, or the shut door, and strongly urging unity upon the central truth of the third angel.

James White alluded to the kind of solemn atmosphere created by the Spirit of Prophecy when he described an incident during the Sabbath conferences of 1848. A believer at one of the meetings had not accepted the Sabbath truth, who, according

to James, "was humble and good." Mrs. White was given a vision, during which time she "took the large Bible, held it up before the Lord, talked from it, then carried it to this humble brother who was not on the Sabbath and put it in his arms." The brother tearfully accepted the Sabbath and James noted, "It was an affecting time. All wept much for joy."⁸²

Obviously fearing a repetition of the scattering experience, Mrs. White urged, "There are many precious truths contained in the word of God, but it is 'present truth' that the flock needs now. I have seen the danger of the messengers running off from the important points of present truth, to dwell upon subjects that are not calculated to unite the flock, and sanctify the soul." In referring to the divisiveness generated by Joseph Bates on the issues of selling of property, praying for the sick before unbelievers, foot washing carried to extremes, Mrs. White, without mentioning Bates' name in the published statement, strongly urged that those issues not become divisive for they would diffuse the central message during the gathering time.⁸³

Ellen and James White both consistently contrasted the unity of views of those being gathered into the Sabbath truth with the varied and contradictory attacks upon the Sabbath by those who were once united in the period prior to 1845. Indeed, those currently attacking the truth of the Sabbath were reacting similarly to those who had adopted such contradictory and disunited attacks upon the messages prior to 1844. Mrs. White noted, "God's people are coming into the unity of the faith, and those who observe the Sabbath of the Bible are united in their views of Bible truth. But those who oppose the Sabbath among the Advent people are disunited, and strangely divided." Unity upon the central truth of the third angel became a vital consideration during the gathering period.⁸⁴

It becomes apparent that a number of potentially divisive issues were relegated to "minor" importance during the gathering period and hence not allowed to become divisive. At times, unity was achieved upon a "minor" point that would later become modified after the central truth of the Sabbath was firmly established. One such

example of this, the time to begin the Sabbath, will serve as an example of such unity. In noting that "there has been some division as to the time of beginning the Sabbath," and that some had begun to observe it commencing at sundown in opposition to the majority that believed the time commenced at 6 p.m., James White reported a meeting in Connecticut where "we made this a subject of prayer." Based upon an apparent manifestation involving speaking "in an unknown tongue" through a prominent Sabbath-keeper, E. H. L. Chamberlain, unity was achieved upon the 6 o'clock time for the Sabbath. James White proclaimed, "Here is where the Sabbath begins at 6 p.m. Satan would get us from this time. But let us stand fast in the Sabbath as God has given it to us and Brother Bates."⁸⁵

At other times, potentially divisive issues were just not allowed to become so. James White reacted negatively when the question of the use of "swine's flesh" threatened division, since some were advocating its disuse as a Christian duty. White proclaimed that such agitation, during 1850, was harmful since it tended to inhibit the proclamation of the central message seeking to become established. Such a "minor issue" to James White would "distract the flock of God, and lead the minds of the brethren from the importance of the present work of God among the remnant." Neither James nor Ellen White wanted to repeat the scattering experiences.⁸⁶

It would seem that Mrs. White considered the Joseph Bates concept of the judgment similarly, for, after discussing the question of the judgment, she stated, in counsel originally involving Joseph Bates:

I also saw that the shepherds should consult those in whom they have reason to have confidence, those who have been in all the messages, and are firm in all the present truth, before they advocate any new point of importance, which they may think the Bible sustains.

From the original testimony, it is likewise apparent that she was urging Bates to be willing to accept the ideas of James White in that regard. In seeing the Bates position as an innovation, something proposed after 1844 during the scattering time, and something that tended to detract from the importance of the message of the third angel, she apparently raised serious question about that concept. She seems instead to have felt comfortable with a concept of judgment based upon the messages

of the three angels, a concept that tied together the past and present, and one that looked toward the future to a time when the gathered flock proclaimed a message for the world.⁸⁷

CONCLUSION

What can we learn from the varied experiences of the group of Advent believers following 1844? Was the group that rallied around the message of the third angel during the gathering period of a higher intellectual or theological capacity than their predecessors? How can we account for the relative success of that latter group? Ellen White gives one obvious answer: the message itself. In 1900 she wrote:

A great work is to be done in setting before men the saving truths of the gospel. To present these truths is the work of the third angel's message. The Lord designs that the presentation of this message shall be the highest, greatest work carried on in our world at this time. . . . The whole of the gospel is embraced in the third angel's message, and in all our work the truth is to be presented as it is in Jesus. . . . Let nothing lessen the force of the truth for this time. The third angel's message must do its work of separating from the churches a people who will take their stand on the platform of eternal truth. Our message is a life and death message, and we must let it appear as it is, the great power of God. We are to present it in all its telling force. Then the Lord will make it effectual.

She would also write, "The gospel message for this time is comprised in the third angel's message, which embraces the messages of the first and second angel, and which is to be proclaimed everywhere; for it is present truth. This message is to go forth with great distinctness and power."⁸⁸

James White would likewise offer an explanation. In 1852 he wrote "A Brief Sketch of the Past," in which he contrasted the 1852 position with that of the 1844-46 period. He noted that in the earlier time of "confusion of views and scattering of the precious flock," many who had originally embraced the Sabbath gave it up. He observed that some had taught the Sabbath "in a rash manner," and thereby provided fuel for those opposing the Sabbath truth. He then pointed to the gathering experience and the Sabbath Conferences of 1848. He noted that here the "work of uniting the brethren on the great truths connected with the message of the third angel commenced." The work of unity involved downplaying the "diversity of views" held by some on questions "of less importance." James White pointed to the results: "Where there was

but about a score of advent brethren in the State of New York that observed the Sabbath three years since, there are now probably near one thousand, and several hundred in the Western States, where there were none, to our knowledge."⁸⁹

As Mrs. White, in this youthful period of her ministry, related to what we today call "orthodoxy" and "heresy," she seemed to use her initial two visions as touchstones. The "light" shining upon the pathway from behind represented the continuing relevance of the pre-1844 experience, the messages of the first two angels, the ending of the 2300 days on October 22, 1844. It also meant following Christ into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, where He was continuing to guide those following Him, and shedding the clear light upon His law, that, combined with the experience of the past, gave the key to the Advent experience and also provided a message for the world.

Acceptance of that third angel's message, however, involved a test. The varied reactions to that test, in the period we have examined seem as follows: (1) a rejection of the past experience that nullified the perception of the third angel's message; (2) maintainance of the past experience, but nullification of the third angel's message by acceptance of a number of competing teachings, the end result of which was "spiritualizing" away all the teachings; (3) maintaining the past experience and creating unity upon the one central message of the third angel.

The central role of Mrs. White during this period involved: (1) creating an atmosphere of unity in which that central message of the third angel could flourish; (2) nullifying potentially divisive secondary issues that, at times, included "spiritualizing" interpretations of presumed Scriptural tests. It seems clear to this writer that the future SDA church could easily have followed a path similar to the gathering into Shakerism accepted by Enoch Jacobs and his followers were it not for the guidance of the Lord through the Spirit of Prophecy.

What about those that followed their inclinations and rejected the light shining from the Most Holy Place? Mrs. White would write in 1885, "When God lets man have his own way, it is the darkest hour of his life." That experience, tragically, would

exhibit itself a number of times in SDA history. It seemed always to exhibit itself during periods of disunity within the church. It was during those periods of disunity, usually created by magnification of theological points of difference, that Ellen White stressed a coming together upon the "great truths of the word of God," as she did in the aftermath of the theological friction of 1888 when she observed:

One man may be conversant with the Scriptures, and some particular portion of the Scripture may be especially appreciated by him, another sees another portion as very important, and thus one may present one point, and another, another point, and both may be of highest value. This is all in the order of God. But if a man makes a mistake in his interpretation of some portion of the Scripture, shall this cause diversity and disunion?--God forbid. We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of scripture in the very same light. The church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions, but we cannot force the mind and will, and thus root out disagreement. These resolutions may conceal the discord; but they cannot quench it, and establish perfect agreement. Nothing can perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christ-like forbearance.

She concluded her thought by calling attention to the broad basis of unity, "The great truths of the word of God are so clearly stated that none need make a mistake in understanding them."⁹⁰

In 1890, Ellen White recalled that she was among the few living who "had an experience in the first, second, and third angels' message." As she reflected upon that experience in 1858, the following seems pertinent:

After Jesus opened the door of the Most Holy the light of the Sabbath was seen, and the people of God were to be tested and proved, as God proved the children of Israel anciently, to see if they would keep his law. I saw the third angel pointing upward, showing the disappointed ones the way to the Holiest of the heavenly Sanctuary. They followed Jesus by faith into the Most Holy. Again they have found Jesus, and joy and hope spring up anew. I saw them looking back reviewing the past, from the proclamation of the second advent of Jesus, down through their travels to the passing of the time in 1844. They see their disappointment explained, and joy and certainty again animate them. The third angel has lighted up the past, present and future, and they know that God has indeed led them by his mysterious providence.⁹¹

¹The writer is aware that he is suggesting an interpretation of the Millerite split somewhat different from that ordinarily proposed by suggesting two, rather than three divisions within that movement. It seems to the writer, however, that the group usually labeled as "spiritualist," did not become a distinct group until 1846 when the future SDAs no longer identified with them. Between October, 1844 and early 1846, most future SDAs identified with the diverse group of minority Adventists rather than with the Millerites led by J. V. Himes, who had abandoned the October 22 date and the shut door by April of 1845.

²James White to Bro. Jacobs, Aug. 19, 1845, Day-Star, Sept. 6, 1845. See also Day-Stars of June 10, July 29, Sept. 13, Oct. 3, Nov. 8, and Nov. 29, 1845.

³Enoch Jacobs, DS, May 13, 1845, p. 4; J. D. Pickands, DS, Sept. 27, 1845, p. 33; E.L.H. Chamberlain, DS, Nov. 15, 1845, p. 23; Enoch Jacobs, DS, Nov. 8, 1845, p. 18.

⁴DS, July 1, 1845, pp. 31-2.

⁵Enoch Jacobs, DS, Nov. 8, 1845, p. 20. For the other points made, see the DS of June 24, July 1, July 8, July 29, Sept. 13, Oct. 3, Oct. 18, Oct. 25, Dec. 6, Dec. 27, 1845, and Feb. 14, Mar. 14, and May 2, 1846.

⁶DS, Oct. 11, 1845; James White to Bro. Jacobs, Sept. 27, 1845, in Oct. 11, DS; and White to Jacobs, Aug. 19, 1845, in DS, Sept. 6, 1845.

⁷G. W. Cherry to Bro. Jacobs, Mar. 18, 1846, DS, Apr. 4, 1846, p. 23.

⁸While it is beyond the scope of this paper to trace the pre-October 22, 1844, roots of such a concept, it seems apparent that the concept as developed within the minority Adventist body sprang from a conviction that probation for the "world" had closed and only those who had accepted the vital, testing truths of 1844 were candidates for the final test. Since the Millerites soon gave up their concept of a shut door, they never retained their concept of a judicial judgment centering solely upon the believers. It should be noted that since the writer is the first that he knows of to attempt to present the interrelationship between the shut door and what was to become the investigative judgment he is making such a presentation tentatively and with the full realization that his attempt will need considerable refinement by those more qualified to deal with this theological issue.

⁹Enoch Jacobs, Western Midnight Cry, Nov. 29, 1844. p. 3.

¹⁰Jacobs obviously did not hold to such a role for the saints during the 1000 years in heaven.

¹¹Jacobs, WMC, Nov. 29, 1844, p. 3. While Jacobs later dropped the 40-day time limit for the judgment of the saints, he reenunciated his conviction that the judgment was then in session several times during 1844. See WMC, Dec. 30, 1844, p. 30 and April 8, 1845, referring back to a Dec. 22 meeting.

¹²William Miller letters of Nov. 18, Nov. 22, 1844 and Feb. 6, Mar. 20, and undated, 1845, in WMC, Dec. 21, 1844, and DS, Feb. 25, Mar. 11, Apr. 8, 1845.

¹³DS, Mar. 25, 1845.

¹⁴DS, April 29, 1845, pp. 46-7.

¹⁵Letter From Brother Butt, "Is the Door Shut," May 5, 1845, DS, May 20, 1845, p.7.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁷DS, June 10, July 29, Sept. 13, Oct. 3, Oct. 18, 1845, pp. 18, 48, 23, 42, 4.

¹⁸Mrs. C. S. Minor to Bro. Jacobs, May 5, 1845, DS, May 20, 1845, p. 6; James L. Boyd to Bro. Jacobs, Nov. 11, 1845, DS, Nov. 22, 1845.

¹⁹C. S. Minor to Beloved Brother, Nov. 6, 1845, DS, Nov. 22, 1845, p. 30. Mrs. White would later label as spiritualism the concepts held by Mrs. Minor. See 2SG, 72-3.

²⁰J. B. Cook to Bro. Jacobs, Oct. 6, 1845, DS, Nov. 22, 1845, p. 31; see also DS of Dec. 6 and 27, 1845 for similar concepts.

²¹These concepts were drawn from the following 1846 issues of the Day-Star: Jan. 10, Jan. 31, Feb. 14, Feb. 21, Feb. 28, Mar. 7, Mar. 14, Mar. 21, Mar. 28, Apr. 4, Apr. 11, May 2, Aug. 25, Nov. 7.

²²DS, Apr. 11, 1846, p. 28.

²³Actually James White had given an inaccurate report of that vision some four months earlier to the Day-Star editor. See Day-Star, Sept. 6, 1845, p. 17.

²⁴Ellen Harmon to Bro. Jacobs, Dec. 20, 1845, DS, Jan. 24, 1846, pp. 31-2.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶While it has been beyond the scope of this paper to examine the significant contributions to Adventist thought developed during the Millerite period, it is apparent that a theological disaster accompanied the disunity after 1844. While all the essential pillars of the later SDA Church, excepting the message of the Third Angel, were established during the Millerite period, it is apparent that concepts relating to the gospel were diffused as a product of disunity. One can readily see many of the truths that became prominent at Minneapolis in 1888 already present during the Millerite period. In addition, the concept of a judgment based upon acceptance or rejection of central truths of the gospel, the interrelation between the attitudes toward the guidance of the Millerite movement by the Holy Spirit and later attitudes toward the Spirit of Prophecy, all suggest the strongest roots from Millerism that need exploring. The price of disunity is always beyond calculation.

²⁷Enoch Jacobs, "The Cleveland Conference," DS, Jan. 17, 1846, pp. 23-4.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹DS, Jan. 24, 1846, p. 29.

³⁰Ellen G. Harmon to Bro. Jacobs, Feb. 15, 1846, DS, Mar. 14, 1846, p. 7.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid. See letters of J. B. Cook and Albert Lyford on the page of the Ellen Harmon letter.

³³Ellen White, A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White, 1851, pp. 7, 64.

³⁴While this paper does not attempt to deal with the shut door issue, it seems apparent that merely a cursory reading of the primary sources readily reveals that those holding to a shut door concept believed that probation had closed for those who had not accepted the messages of the first and second angel. That concept seems to have predominated at least until 1851. The writer, however, does not believe that the probation issue is the significant issue of the shut door concept, but rather that the concept held together a body of believers that needed to maintain belief in the past guidance of the Holy Spirit upon their movement. The essence of the shut door to them meant holding on to the pillars of the past, while they waited for additional light that would explain their reason for existence. That light came with the message of the third angel and tied their past with their present. Unity, however, while that third message was seeking entrance was vital. Initially, unity was achieved by belief in the shut door, which explained the past. After the third message was firmly established, the shut door fell as a product of unity on the greater truth. The church thus retained the essence of its past and a continuity for the future in all three messages.

³⁵James White, "A Word to the 'Little Flock,'" p. 22; Ellen White to Joseph Bates, July 13, 1847, B3--1847.

³⁶James White, WLF, p. 22; E.G. White, Experience and Views, p. 7.

³⁷Ellen White, My Christian Experience, Views and Labors, 1860, p. 82.

³⁸While Mrs. White had a vision of the ark within the Most Holy as early as Dec. 1844, she did not relate it to the Sabbath until later. As will be seen, however, Mrs. White's concept of a central, testing truth of the Sabbath did not embrace all that Bates included.

³⁹Joseph Bates, "Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps," 1847, p. 73. See Bates' "The Seventh Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign," 2d ed., 1847, pp. 5, 57-8, 60, for earlier statements re Bates' teaching. See also his study, "A Vindication of the Seventh-day Sabbath," 1848.

⁴⁰Bates, "An Explanation of the Typical and Anti-Typical Sanctuary," 1850, p. 16.

⁴¹Bates, "The Opening Heavens," 1846, p. 31; Bates, "Second Advent Way Marks," 1847, p. 63; Bates, "Vindication of the Seventh-day Sabbath," 1848, pp. 39, 42, 69, 96, 108; Bates, "Seal of the Living God," 1849, p. 61.

⁴²Bates, "The Seventh Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign," 1847, pp. 58-9.

⁴³Bates, "Vindication of the Seventh Day Sabbath," p. 76-81; Bates, "Seal of the Living God," p. 38; Bates, RH, Jan. 1851, p. 40.

⁴⁴Bates, "Second Advent Way Marks," p. 64, 66; Bates, "Vindication of the Seventh Day Sabbath," pp. 83-4.

⁴⁵Bates, "An Explanation of the Typical and Anti-Typical Sanctuary," 1850, p. 10; Bates, "Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps," p. 6.

⁴⁶Bates, "Seal of the Living God," pp. 24-7, 39-40, 48, 59.

⁴⁷An area unexplored by the writer that he believes needs development is the subject of the varying concepts of the millennium and their relationship to the concept of a final judgment.

⁴⁸James White, "The Day of Judgment," AR, Sept., 1850, pp. 49-50)

⁴⁹James White, "The 144,000," AR, Sept., 1850, p. 57.

⁵⁰James White, "Our Present Work," RH, Aug., 19, 1851, p. 12.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 13.

⁵²James White, RH Extra, July 21, 1851, pp. 3-4; for additional references to the distractions caused by the time-setting experience see RH, Sept. 2, 1851, pp. 22, 32.

⁵³James White, "Our Tour East," RH, Nov. 25, 1851, p. 52.

⁵⁴Ellen White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters, Present Truth, Aug., 1849, p. 21.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁶James White, AR, Nov., 1850, p. 72.

⁵⁷Ellen White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," PT, Nov., 1850, pp. 86-7.

⁵⁸RH Extra, July 21, 1851, p. 4.

⁵⁹Ellen White to Bro. and Sister Howland, Nov. 12, 1851, H-8-1851, MR 592.

⁶⁰In addition to Ellen White's other statements regarding the final judgment of the dead not begun, her first vision, given Dec., 1844, showed that Brethren Fitch and Stockman, both prominent leaders in the Millerite movement who had died in 1844, who her vision revealed were to be saved, were not subject to the type of judicial proceedings put forth by Bates, for, if they were, it would indicate that those proceedings were very close to the living by that time. It would seem instead that these brethren had lived up to the light they had received from the first and second angels and were thus already judged on that basis.

⁶¹Ellen White, Experience and Views, p. 61.

⁶²James White to Brother Bowles, Nov. 8, 1849, DF 1, WE.

- ⁶³Ellen White to Joseph Bates, Apr. 7, 1847 and July 13, 1847, in WLF, p. 19 and DF 1; Bates, "Seal of the Living God," p. 25.
- ⁶⁴Ibid.; Ellen White, Experience and Views, pp. 24-5.
- ⁶⁵Ibid., p. 1; 1854 Supplement to Experience and Views, p. 7.
- ⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 19-20.
- ⁶⁷Ellen White, WLF, p. 19.
- ⁶⁸Ellen White, Experience and Views, p. 2.
- ⁶⁹Ellen white, Early Writings, pp. 258-59.
- ⁷⁰James White, "Brother Miller's Dream," PT, May, 1850, pp. 73-4.
- ⁷¹Ibid., p. 75.
- ⁷²Ibid.
- ⁷³Ellen White, Experience and Views, p. 49.
- ⁷⁴James White to Bro. and Sister Hastings, Aug. 26, 1848, DF 1, WE.
- ⁷⁵James White to Bro. and Sister Hastings, Oct. 2, 1848, DF 1, WE; White to Bowles, Nov. 8, 1849, Ibid.
- ⁷⁶James White, "Repairing the Breach in the Law of God," PT, Sept., 1849, pp. 25-9.
- ⁷⁷Ellen White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," PT, Sept., 1849, p. 32; Ellen White, Testimony of Aug. 24, 1850, California Missionary, Feb. 10, 1901, RH, July 9, 1901, MR 592.
- ⁷⁸James White, "The Third Angel's Message," PT, April, 1850, pp. 65-8.
- ⁷⁹Ibid., p. 68.
- ⁸⁰Ibid. See also his article "The Sanctuary, 2300 Days, and the Shut Door," PT, May, 1850, for additional development of that theme.
- ⁸¹Ellen White, Aug. 24, 1850; RH, Sept., 1850, p. 47; Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Vol. 1, No. 1.
- ⁸²James White to Bro. and Sister Hastings, Aug. 26, 1848, DF 1, WE.
- ⁸³Ellen White, Experience and Views, p. 51 and PT, Nov., 1850, p. 86-7.
- ⁸⁴Ellen White, Experience and Views, p. 56.
- ⁸⁵James White to "Dear Brother," July 2, 1848, DF 1, WE.
- ⁸⁶James White, "Swine's Flesh," PT, Nov., 1850, pp. 87-8.
- ⁸⁷Ellen White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," PT, Nov., 1850, pp. 86-7.
- ⁸⁸Ellen White, Ms. 19, 1900 and Letter 20, 1900.
- ⁸⁹James White, "A Brief Sketch of the Past," RH, May 6, 1852, p. 5.

⁹⁰Ellen White, RH, Aug. 25, 1885; Ellen White, Ms. 24, 1892.

⁹¹Ellen White, Ms. 106, 1898; Ellen White, The Great Controversy, 1858, p. 163.