

THE SHUT DOOR AND THE SANCTUARY:  
HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

for

Southern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

by

Wesley Ringer

Instructor of Religion

San Gabriel Academy

April 6, 1982

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter I:                    The Shut Door: A Recurring Problem	1
Chapter II:                   The Shut Door: Its Developmental History Feb., 1844-Feb., 1845	6
Chapter III:                 Conflict Between the Shut-door and Open- door Adventist 1845-1846	29
Chapter IV:                 The Shut Door and Christ's Entrance Into the Most Holy Place	67
Chapter V:                   The Shut Door and the Third Angel's Message	76
Chapter VI:                 The Critics` and the Pioneers' Remembrances of the Shut Door Years	84
Chapter VII:                The Transition from the Shut to the Open Door	97
Chapter VIII:               Solutions: A Forward Look	122
Appendix I:                 A Hermeneutic for Daniel 8:14	A-1
Appendix II:                Letter from S. S. Snow, Feb. 16, 1844	A-39
Appendix III:              Ellen G. White, Letter to Joseph Bates July 13, 1847	A-44
Appendix IV:                Letter from E. G. Harmon, Dec 20, 1845	A-47
Appendix V:                Letter from E. G. Harmon, Feb. 15, 1846	A-51
Appendix VI:                The Checkered History of the Phrase, "Within the Veil"	A-52
Appendix VII:              The Day of Atonement in Hebrews 9	A-58
Appendix VIII:             The Bates Text of the 1848 Dorchester Vision	A-69
Appendix IX:                Authur White: Evidence for James & Ellen white's Labor for Sinners 1845-1851	A-70
Appendix X:                 Statement of Mrs. Lucinda Burdick, concern- ing the Shut Door Visions of E. G. Harmon	A-81
Appendix XI:                An Example of the Continued Suppression of Shut-door Statements in E. G. White's Writings	A-83
Appendix XII:              Three Early Visions of Mrs. E. G. White, Copied by Hiram Edson: An Evaluation	A-126
Appendix XIII:             Albert M. Valentine, The Camden Vision Reconsidered	A-141

## Chapter I

### THE SHUT DOOR: A RECURRING PROBLEM

As Rolf Poehler has so ably demonstrated in his paper, ". . .And the Door Was Shut", problems concerning the Shut Door have arisen again and again. These problems have never been convincingly dealt with primarily because the presuppositions of Adventist writers have precluded the possibility of there being any real conflict between Ellen White's early visions during the Shut Door era (1844-1851) and her later statements concerning those early visions. While most Adventist writers have not openly stated them, their presuppositions have been in practice very similar by and large to Arthur White's:

- "1. That the great Advent awakening of the early 1840's was a movement of God's providence, marked by the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. That Ellen White was chosen by God as His messenger and her work embodied that of a prophet.
3. That as a sincere, dedicated Christian and a prophet, Ellen White would not and did not falsify. Therefore, we may accept her statements on their face value. Her witness, then, relating to the experience of 1844-1851 may be accepted as presenting a true picture of conditions, of positions taken, and work done.
4. Likewise the witness of those who passed through the experience of 1844 as fellow-believers with Ellen White may be accepted as true and correct to the best of the memory of the individual reported.""

The problem with beginning with such presuppositions is that it prevents men like Arthur White, F.D.Nichol, C.Mervyn Maxwell from

attempting an unbiased understanding of the meaning of Ellen White's visions in the context of the time given, the beliefs of her fellow believers, and from comparing her testimony with that of her fellow advent believers. Thus, Arthur White seeks to understand the visions during the Shut-door era almost exclusively through Ellen White's later statements concerning those early years and the later testimony of her fellow believers (For examples of this examine Appendices 9 and 11). However, Robert Olson of the White Estates believes this to be a mistake, because according to him neither the memory of E. G. White or the pioneers was perfect or complete.<sup>2</sup> In fact, these later statements were made in the climate of the need to defend Mrs. White from hostile critics and after the passage of time, when even she admitted that she did not have access to her earliest printed visions and that she could not remember all that she had earlier spoken and written.<sup>3</sup>

F. D. Nichol recognized that Adventists loyal to the church had often made sweeping generalizations in defense of E. G. White's views on the Shut-door, which indicated that they had never seen all of the early literature on the topic. In E. G. White and Her Critics he continues his own explanation of the Shut-door issue by stating, "Fortunately, the reputations of the pioneers do not suffer from a full presentation of all the sources, as this present study we believe reveals."<sup>4</sup>

However, Nichol in fact withholds perhaps the single most enlightening piece of evidence-- White's letter to Bates in 1847<sup>5</sup> --which helps us understand just what Mrs. White understood her visions to teach concerning the Shut-door. That Nichol was aware of the letter's existence at the time of the writing of his book is evident from the fact that he uses it to establish the date of her first vision, but he does so without revealing the letter's content.<sup>6</sup> Since critics of E. G. White had not yet seen the Bates

letter, Nichol apparently chose not to use it solely on the basis that it did not support the conclusions he was attempting to establish. Thus, while claiming to offer a complete examination of all relevant material, Nichol in fact seeks to explain Mrs. White's early Shut-door statements by removing them from their historical setting and dividing each sentence into many fragments from which he then produces a possible interpretation that harmonizes with later E. G. White statements. Finally, C. M. Maxwell's approach is to largely ignore the entire Shut-door question, even while quoting approvingly, but very selectively, from early statements by such Shut-door champions as A. Hale and J. Turner.<sup>7</sup>

Clearly, there is an ever-present danger of allowing the statements of the S. D. A. pioneers to become sacred tradition, which then prevents students of our past from looking objectively either at our early history or its theology. This in turn leaves us in a position similar, if not identical, to that which the Roman Catholic church holds towards the Bible's importance versus that of the church fathers:

"Like two sacred rivers flowing from Paradise, the Bible and Divine Tradition contain the word of God. Though these two diverse streams are in themselves, on account of their divine origin, of equal sacredness, and are both full of revealed truths, still of the two Tradition is to us more clear and safe."<sup>8</sup>

Arthur White's presuppositions should more properly have been conclusions reached only if Ellen White's early statements, taken in their context, did in fact fully harmonize with her later statements concerning issues such as the Shut-door. Yet, it is this basic problem of allowing presuppositions to prevent a totally candid appraisal of the data that has left our church unable to resolve the historic and theological problems of the Shut-door and the Sanctuary doctrines. As Raymond Cottrell has noted:

"From a hermeneutical point of view the basic flaw in our thinking at Glacier View lay in assuming the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14 as the norm for measuring Ford's position paper. With this as the norm, it was inevitable that we would find his position defective. But if we had been willing, and able, to let the Bible itself, and the Bible alone, serve as our norm, we would have come to a somewhat different conclusion."<sup>9</sup>

Let us, then, consider a number of what appear to be unresolved questions of both a historical and a theological nature, beginning with a review of some of Ellen White's earlier visions, noting the context of the time given as well as the beliefs of her fellow Adventists. In an effort to understand the use Mrs. White made of certain religious expressions or terms, we shall also note what other Adventist writers with whom she was in accord meant by those terms at the time of her respective visions. Finally, we shall attempt to discover how well these early Adventist beliefs harmonize with the Word of God, given an accurate historical-linguistic-contextual exegesis.

FOOTNOTES

1. Arthur White, "Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question," p. 5.
2. Robert Olson, Stated this by phone conversation with the author March 1, 1982.
3. E. G. White, Selected Messages, Book I, p. 60.
4. Francis Nichol, Ellen G. White and Her Critics, p. 193.
5. See Appendix III, Ellen G. White, Letter to Joseph Bates July 13, 1847.
6. Francis Nichol, 92. cit., p. 621.
7. C. Meryn Maxwell, Tell It to the World, p. 55.
8. Catholic Belief, p. 54.
9. Raymond F. Cottrell, "The Sanctuary Review Committee and Its New Consensus," Spectrum, Vol. 11, no. 2, p. 18.

## Chapter II

### THE SHUT DOOR: ITS DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY (FEB., 1844 - FEB., 1845)

In order to understand Ellen White's early visions one must first understand the way in which the Millerites used certain key texts. William Miller and the S. D. A. pioneers both depended heavily upon a proof-text method of Bible study to show that Christ would come at the end of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14. When one employs the historical-linguistic-contextual method of exegesis, however, he finds many problems in both Miller's and traditional Adventism's understanding of Daniel 8:14.<sup>1</sup>

The preaching that Christ would come was seen by the pioneers as the message of the first angel of Revelation 14, that "the hour of His judgment has come." When the mainstream denominations began to react negatively to Miller's time-setting by disfellowshipping Millerites, Charles Fitch in 1843 applied the second angel's message (Rev. 14) to the churches that rejected Miller's date for Christ's return. All Adventists were, as a result, to come out of these churches which Fitch had labeled "Babylon".<sup>2</sup>

Joshua V. Himes went even further when he stated just prior to October 22, 1844:

"And though we may not be all agreed as to what constitutes Babylon, we are agreed in the instant and final separation from all who oppose the doctrine of the coming and kingdom of God at hand. We believe it is a case of life and death. It is death to remain connected with those bodies that speak lightly or oppose, the coming of the Lord. It is life to come out from all human traditions, and stand upon the Word of God and look daily for the appearance of the Lord."<sup>3</sup>

Matthew 25:1-12 which recounts the parable of the Ten Virgins is, however, the key to our understanding of how the Millerites came to believe that probation for sinners had closed on October 22, 1844. The Millerites had a tendency to read prophetic fulfillment into every particular of their movement. Once they had accepted and begun to see almost every part of the Bible as finding fulfillment in the years 1843-1844, they began to arrive at interpretations of the Scripture which, though convincing to them in their experience, would satisfy almost no serious student of the Bible today. For example, Ellen White interpreted Matthew 25:1-12 in three different ways:

"Her early visions endorsed the general pioneer view of the parable fitting exactly the 1844 experience, culminating in the Shut Door which excluded from mercy the wicked world. The second interpretation is found in 4 SP in Great Controversy, where Matt. 25:1-13 is still applied to the 1844 experience but the Shut Door now becomes an open door, and her earlier stress on the 1844 close of probation for sinners is not found. But in Christ's Object Lessons we find her third and most mature application of Matt. 25:1-13-- and it says nothing about the 1844 experience. Instead it interprets the parable in the way opposed by James White and David Arnold and others during the early years of the movement-- that is, she applies it as the open-door Adventists did-- to the Second Coming of Christ!"<sup>4</sup>

In response to his critics' charge that no one knows the day or hour of Christ's return William Miller answered:

"I had never been positive as to any particular day for the Lord's appearing, believing that no man could know the day and hour. In all my published lectures will be seen on the title page, "about the year 1843." In all my oral lectures I invariably told my audiences that the periods would terminate in 1843 if there were no mistakes in my calculations. . . As I could see no error in my reckoning, I published my belief that some time between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844 the Lord would come."<sup>5</sup>

When March 21, 1844 came and went without the Lord's coming, William Miller made no further attempt to pinpoint the return of Christ, choosing rather to believe that his calculations were essentially correct and that Christ would come quickly. Miller was thus content to continue to preach the soon coming of Christ without fixing on a new date. However, just before the March, 1844 deadline S. S. Snow had in a February 16, 1844 letter placed the coming of Christ at the fall of 1844, and he had done this by means of several varied speculations and arguments. Consequently, the advent believers, greatly disappointed at the failure of Christ to come, felt encouraged that they must be in the "tarrying time" of Matt. 25:5.

By August of 1844, S. S. Snow's message was widely received among the Adventist bands. He had refined his argument to such a point that he believed Christ would come on October 22, 1844, thus fulfilling the typical day of Atonement. Using a day-for-a-year in prophecy, he and like believers computed that August was the approximate mid-point between March 21 and October 22, 1844. Thus, Snow's message was embraced as the true "Midnight Cry" or "Seventh-month" experience, fulfilling the midnight proclamation

in the parable of the Ten Virgins, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes; go ye out to meet him."

In her first vision of December, 1844, Ellen White stated of the Advent band, "They had a bright light set up behind them at the first end of the path, which the angel told me was the Midnight Cry."<sup>8</sup> Thus, in this vision E. G. White is clearly endorsing the validity of the Midnight Cry with the October 22, 1844 date as being essential light which none could reject; for if anyone did, "the light behind them went out which left their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and got their eyes

off the mark and lost sight of Jesus, and fell off the path down in the dark and wicked world below."<sup>9</sup> In fact, George Storrs, a fellow worker with S. S. Snow in the Midnight Cry movement, felt that to doubt the validity of the October 22 date would result in the loss of salvation."<sup>10</sup>

However, just how accurate is this message originated by Snow and championed by various Adventist pioneers, including Ellen White, both in terms of October 22, 1844's being the correct date for the termination of the 2300-day prophecy and for the validity of knowing the day of Christ's return in advance? Should S. S. Snow and his adherents have been so dogmatic in their emphasis on the essentiality of this belief when, for example, Leroy Froom spent-- without success --fourteen years attempting to substantiate with specific exactness the correctness of this October 22 Date?<sup>11</sup>

Many Christians rejected October 22, 1844 as the date for Christ's return simply because they believed Christ's own statements that no man knows the day or the hour of His return (Matt. 24:36, Mark 13:32). However, in rebuttal Snow used the argument that if this text proves that man will never know the day or hour of Christ's return, then neither would Christ or the angels (See Mark 13:32). Thus, he continues:

"But can any person believe that our glorious Lord, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given is and will remain ignorant of the time until the very moment he comes to judge the world? If not, then certainly this text can never prove that men may not be able to understand the time. . . So in the passage quoted, it is declared that that is the definite time of the Second coming of His Son. And this necessarily implies that God makes the time known. The Old Testament contains the testimony of the Father concerning his Son, and concerning the time of both his first and second comings. "<sup>12</sup>

If we accept the logic of Snow's argument, perhaps we must also conclude that Miller and Snow were better Bible students than Christ. We might also ask what prevented Christ from correctly calculating the 2300-day prophecy, so that He would, even as He talked with His disciples, have known the day of His return? And yet E. G. White affirmed in 1850:

“...that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843. It was his design to arouse the people and bring them to a testing point, where they should decide for or against the truth.”<sup>13</sup>

Of those who objected that no man knows the day or the hour, she wrote:

“Many sheperds of the flock, who professed to love Jesus, said that they had no opposition to the preaching of Christ's coming, but they objected to the definite time. God's all-seeing eye read their hearts. They did not love Jesus near. They knew that their unChristian lives would not stand the test, for they were not walking in the humble path marked out by him.”<sup>14</sup>

However, writing after the Shut-door era in other of her later works, E. G. White used the very same reasoning of the ministers she had condemned for rejecting a definite time in 1843-1844:

“Many who have called themselves Adventists have been time setters. Time after time has been set for Christ to come, but repeated failures have been the result. The definite time of our Lord's coming is declared to be beyond the ken of mortals.”<sup>15</sup>

Further, in Desire of Ages E. G. White indicates that she accurately understands the meaning of Christ's own teaching when she writes:

“But the day and hour of His coming Christ has not revealed. He stated plainly to His disciples that He Himself could not make known the day or hour of His second appearing. Had He been at liberty to reveal this, why need He have exhorted them to maintain an attitude of constant expectancy? There are those who claim to know the very day and hour of our Lord's

appearing. Very earnestly are they mapping out the future. But the Lord has warned them off the ground they occupy. The exact time of the second coming of the Son of man is God's mystery."<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps, the only fault of those Christian ministers who sincerely objected to the preaching of a definite time was that they correctly understood this important truth years before Ellen White; for how could God make time a test, when Christ has so clearly stated that no man knows the day or hour of His return (Matt. 24:42)?

The Millerites associated the shutting of the door in the parable with the close of probation, which they believed would occur on October 22, 1844 with the coming of Christ. Furthermore, just prior to October 22, they had begun to feel that their work for non-Adventists was almost finished. George Storrs wrote in the October 16, 1844 Advent Herald:

"We have done with the nominal churches, and all the wicked, except so far as this cry may affect them; our work is now to wake up the "virgins" who took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom."<sup>17</sup>

He continued by pointing out that the virgins in the parable could only apply to ". . . the professed believers in the Advent of 1843 and nobody else."<sup>18</sup> When Christ did not come on October 22, many Adventists continued to see in this a further fulfillment of the parable of the Ten Virgins:

. . . for when they had all arisen and trimmed their lamps, then there must still be a time when the lamps of the foolish virgins would be going out. This could not be without a passing by of the 10th day, for till that time their lamps would burn. There must therefore be a passing by of that day, for the foolish to give up their faith, as there must have been of '43, for the tarrying time."<sup>19</sup>

Thus, Adventists were warned against going back to their former churches lest the Bridegroom come and they be shut out with the foolish virgins.<sup>20</sup> William Miller finally carried the parable of the Ten Virgins to its logical conclusion by asserting in a letter of November 18, 1844:

"We have done our work in warning sinners, and in trying to awaken a formal church. God in his providence has shut the door; we can only stir one another up to be patient. . . we are now living in the time specified by Malachi 3:18, also Daniel 12:10, Rev. 22: 10-12. In this passage we can not help but see that a little while before Christ should come, there would be a separation between the just and the unjust, the righteous, and the wicked. . . And never since the days of the apostles has there been such a division line drawn, as was drawn about the 10th or 23rd day of the 7th Jewish month."<sup>21</sup>

Indicating that she and the Advent body understood the Shut-door as William Miller had described it, Ellen White wrote in 1883, "For a time after the disappointment in 1844, I did hold in common with the advent body that the door of mercy was then forever closed to the world."<sup>22</sup>

Other Millerites, particularly some of the leaders such as J. V. Himes and S. Bliss who had endorsed the October 22 date only a few weeks before, felt that it was possible that their calculations might be mistaken and, thus, the door of salvation was still open to the world. The November 13, 1844 Advent Herald reported, "We have heard the cheering account from other places in this vicinity both of the steadfastness of the faith of our brethren, and of the conversion of sinners."<sup>23</sup> In the November 20 issue of the same journal Himes allows for the possibility that the calculation of the 2300-day prophecy might have been mistaken with its termination coming at the very latest in the autumn of 1847.<sup>24</sup> At the Waterbury, Vermont Conference held on December 20, 1844, Himes encountered some shut-door believers of whom he wrote:

"Some, however, entertained the opinion that our work was done, as it related to the conversion of sinners; but in the progress of the meeting this view was given up by most, and a desire was expressed by all to have right views on this all-important question. The most of the lecturing brethren present resolved to commence their labor again, and publish the glad tidings of the Kingdom at hand, every-where in order to the salvation of sinners, as well as the comfort and edification of the saints."<sup>25</sup>

In the January 15, 1845 issue of the Advent Herald F. G. Brown asserted that the only safe position was one of indefinite time:

"Our conviction is that for wise reasons, the divine mind has forever concealed the precise rise of those periods, at the end of which his Son shall be revealed from heaven. So that we believe it above the power of man, to demonstrate either the year, the month, or the day, of their consummation."<sup>26</sup>

Hoping thus to bring reconciliation with other Christians, Brown continues:

"Nor should it be overlooked that one of the chief objections to our views is thus so far removed, that we may hope to receive no small addition to our ranks from among all the humble and devoted who heartily love Jesus and his appearing, but whose faith has never been adequate to grasp a definite point of time for that event."<sup>27</sup>

If, then, the 2300 days did not really end until 1847, there was still a present need to warn sinners. Thus, in a letter dated February 21, 1845, J. V. Himes asserts:

"Our brethren in this region are publishing a free and full salvation to sinners. And they assure me if ever God heard their prayers, and converted souls by their instrumentality, he is doing it now. . . I am more confirmed than ever since I came to this providence, that Jesus yet sits upon the mercy seat, and that sinners may come to him in the certain hope of salvation. . . It

will be an awful consideration, if sinners perish through our neglect; and how much so, if we should do aught to dishearten, or turn the sinner from the work of preparation for the kingdom of God."<sup>28</sup>

Thus, in the weeks and months following October 22 some Adventists wavered, doubted, and then gave up their whole advent faith. Others, such as Himes and Bliss, looked to the Midnight Cry and shut-door as still future events that would be fulfilled within a year or two at Christ's coming. Ellen Harmon, a young teenager of seventeen, found herself among the majority of Adventists in Portland, Maine, who by December, 1844 no longer believed that the Midnight Cry and the Shut-door had already occurred in October, 1844. In a letter to Joseph Bates, July 15, 1847, she writes:

"At the time I had the vision of the Midnight Cry I had given it up in the past and thought it future, as also most of the band had."<sup>29</sup>

She went on to note that she feared to give her first vision in December, 1844, because she was certain that it would run counter to the view Joseph Turner had published in his paper. Further in the letter she explained:

"Early the next morning Joseph Turner called, said he was in haste going out of the city in a short time, and wanted I should tell him all that God had shown me in vision. It was with fear and trembling I told him all. After I had got through he said he had told out the same last evening. I rejoiced, for I expected he was coming out against me. . ."<sup>30</sup>

That Ellen Harmon found herself in agreement with Joseph Turner in her vision of the Midnight Cry can be fully appreciated only when one considers Turner's own explanation of his Shut-door belief. In the January, 1845 Advent Mirror Turner published a long article to prove what he believed to be the truth of the Shut-door. In it he argued that Christ had come as

the Bridegroom to the marriage in fulfillment of the parable of the Ten Virgins, and that this coming of the Bridegroom to the marriage was separate from Christ's coming in power and glory. Turner goes on to define what he means by the term "Shut-door":

"By this act is undoubtedly denoted the exclusion from all further access to saving mercy, those who have rejected its offer during their time of probation. . . But can any sinners be converted if the door is shut? Of course they cannot, though changes that may appear to be conversions may take place."<sup>31</sup>

He does, however, allow for the possibility that some who fear God and work righteousness might grow in their understanding of truth, when he writes:

"That such may be found, for whom we should labor, there can be no doubt; and in fact, it is with such a class only, few indeed is their number, that our labors are in any sense successful."<sup>32</sup>

Despite this concession, however, Turner is certain about the futility of attempting to convert the world:

"But to think of laboring to convert the great mass of the world at such a time, would be as idle as it would have been for the Israelites, when they were down by the Red Sea to have turned about to convert the Egyptians."<sup>33</sup>

Many Adventist historians have sought to distance Ellen White's view of the Shut-door from that of Joseph Turner's. They have charged him with such extreme views as that all non-Millerites were lost, the sealing was finished, those sealed were now sinless, and that the Millerites had entered God's eternal Sabbath, and therefore should do no more work. In contrast, contend these historians, Mrs. White's visions never supported the view that no more sinners could be saved. Rather, after

(This page was missing from this copy)

(This page was missing from this copy)

following excerpt is taken:

"Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from the Father to the Son and from the Son it waved over the people before the throne. But few would receive this great light."<sup>41</sup>

The light mentioned here clearly parallels that of the December, 1844 visions in which she saw that the light was the Midnight Cry. In fact, in *A Word to the Little Flock* James White had already shown that the Midnight Cry and Shut-door were linked.

Ellen White continues her account of this vision:

"Then Jesus arose up from the throne, and most of those who were bowed down rose up with him. And I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after he rose up and they were left in perfect darkness."<sup>42</sup>

She concludes by recounting that all who failed to realize this change of position on Christ's part were now praying to and being deceived of Satan:

"They did not know that Jesus had left it. 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, Father, give us thy Spirit. Then Satan would breathe on them an unholy influence."<sup>43</sup>

That she understood this vision to teach the Shut-door or the close of probation is made clear by the comments she offered concerning this vision to Bates in 1847:

"While in Exeter, Maine, in meeting with Israel Dammon, James and many others, many of them did not believe in a Shut door. I suffered much at the commencement of the meeting. Unbelief seemed to be on every hand. There was one sister there that was

called very spiritual. She had traveled and been a powerful preacher the most of the time for twenty years. She had been truly a mother in Israel and could not believe the door was shut. I had known nothing of this difference. Sister Durban got up to talk. I felt very, very sad.

At length my soul seemed in an agony, and while she was talking I fell from my chair to the floor. It was then I had a view of Jesus rising from His mediatorial throne, and going to the holiest and Bridegroom to receive His kingdom. . .

Most of them received the vision and were settled upon the Shut Door."<sup>44</sup>

That Ellen Harmon's meaning of the Shut-door in February, 1845 was that probation had closed for sinners is further supported by the following evidence:

1. writing in 1883, Ellen White acknowledged that "For a time after the disappointment in 1844, I did hold in common with the advent body, that the door of mercy was then forever closed to the world."<sup>45</sup>
2. Her December, 1844 vision agreed with Joseph Tumer's position that no more sinners could be saved.<sup>46</sup>
3. William Miller, the leader of the Adventists during this same time period, likewise held that the door was shut or probation was closed for sinners:

"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. We are now living in the time specified by Malachi 3:18, also Daniel 12:10, Rev. 22:10-12. In this passage we cannot help but see, that a little while before Christ should come, there would be a separation between the just and unjust, the righteous and wicked, between those who love his appearing, and those who hate it. And never since the days of the apostles has there been such a division line drawn, as was drawn about the 10th or 23d day of the 7th Jewish month."<sup>47</sup>

4. Isreal Dammaon, in whose house E. G. Harmon experienced her Feb. 1845 vision, likewise believed that probation had closed. In a letter, written May 28 from Exeter, Maine, to the Jubilee Standard he had the following to say concerning the shut-door.

"I left my potatoes in the field and went and gave the cry, 'Behold the Bridgroom cometh,' on the 10th day of the seventh months . . . On the day when I gave the last message to a sinking world, which was the day before the 1st of the 7th month, I felt my work was done, On that same night I also told my brethren I believed the door was shut." <sup>48</sup>

In the next paragraph he continued:

"Some time in the first part of the winter Bro. James White came to this place and gave us the subject of the wedding -- the cooing of Christ to the Ancient of days to take the kingdom." <sup>49</sup>

Concerning the Albany Conference of open-door Adventists he wrote:

"we have no fellowship with the movement at the Albany Conference, not one in the band, if one is found of that disposition we think he belongs to the cage of uncleanness: Jude speaks of them and says, 'These be they who separate themselves, (are sect-makers) sensual, having not the Spirit'" <sup>50</sup>

In a second letter, written in July to the Day Star, Isreal Dammon said:

"We have but little or no fellowship for those who are trying to get the old cage clean, or to get scoffers converted now. . . we do not mess with any but those who are willing to be shut in from the world: . . ." <sup>51</sup>

5. Finally a careful examination of the shared beliefs of Joseph Bates and James and Ellen white, in which they frequently exchanged ideas concerning the shut-door, gives added certainty as to the meaning of the term shut-door in her letter to Bates July 13, 1847.
6. That Bates was one of the original shut-door believers, is made clear by several letters that he wrote to S. S. Snow in May of

1845. In the first letter he wrote concerning the Albany Conference of Open-door Adventist:

"Notwithstanding the late, to me unlooked-for, proceedings at Albany, and the endorsements they received since in your city, in Philadelphia, and now in Baltimore, and still further. anticipated in Boston, I cannot help believing still that our position is right respecting the cry at midnight, and that we have been to the marriage and the door is shut - not half or three quarters of the way - but effectively. And our fallen brethren will soon see their sad mistake!"<sup>52</sup>

In a second letter to S. S. Snow in the same month, Bates explained what he saw his work to be since the shutting of the door in Oct. 22, 1844.

". . . but, 'you say your work is done,' yes, and we don't believe that our divine Lord will require us to begin now nor any other time to do it over again for the world. But to comfort, encourage, and strengthen God's children in this little while, we have as much as we can do."<sup>53</sup>

Further on in this same letter Bates refers to the parable of the ten virgins.

"The parable of the ten virgins shows us clearly that there is a division in the Advent ranks, and that 'while the foolish went to buy,' the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Now this looks like knowledge increasing inside and out side of the door. Good Lord save us from falling.

The division here and at New Bedford (one mile from this,) has already taken place. We have united with our New Bedford brethren, . . . and we can say of a truth that God is with us, and here we feel determined to stand on this rock."<sup>54</sup>

7. That Bates, in 1847, continued to believe that the work for the world was finished with the close of probation in 1844, is made clear from the remarks that he made in a broadside containing one of Ellen White's visions in April of 1847. This broadside complete with his remarks was republished by James White in May of 1847 in A Word to the Little Flock.

"I believe the work [E. G. White's visions] is of God, and is given to comfort and strengthen his 'scattered,' 'tom,' and 'pealed people' since the closing of our work for the world in Oct, 1844." <sup>55</sup>

8. Bates further explained his understanding of the shut-door in a pamphlet *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps* that he published in April of 1847.

"Paul's open door, then, was the preaching the gospel with effect to the Gentiles. Now let this door be shut, and the preaching of this gospel will have no effect. This is what we say is the fact. The gospel message ended at the appointed time with the closing of the 2,300 days; and about every honest believer that is watching the signs of the times will admit it." <sup>56</sup>

9. James White writing just one month later in *A Word to the Flock* makes a similar comment concerning the shut-door.

"From the ascension to the shutting of the door, Oct. 1844, Jesus stood with wide-spread arms of love and mercy; ready to receive, and plead the cause of every sinner, who would come to God by him.

On the 10th day of the 7th month, 1844, he passed into the Holy of Holies, where he has since been a merciful high priest over the house of God." <sup>57</sup>

10. As if to clear up any doubt about what he meant, James White writing in the May 1850, *Present Truth* explains:

"He is still merciful to his saints, and ever will be; and Jesus is still their advocate and priest. But the sinner, to whom Jesus had stretched out his arms all the day long, and who rejected the offers of salvation was left without an advocate, when Jesus passed from the Holy Place, and shut the door in 1844." <sup>58</sup>

11. With this background into both Joseph Bates' and James White's use of the term shut-door is significant that Ellen White, in her July 13, 1847 letter to Joseph Bates, makes no effort to show in any way that she differed in her understanding of the shut-door. Rather the tone of her letter indicates her expectation that Bates will see her shut-door visions as confirming her prophetic gift.

Because the evidence is so over whelming, Robert Olson of the White Estate recently felt compelled to acknowledge that E. G. White did believe that her early visions taught that probation had closed for sinners. However, he seeks to lessen the impact of that concession by offering by way of apology that Mrs. White merely misinterpreted her Dec. 1844 vision.

"Ellen misinterpreted this vision. She correctly understood that the day of salvation for the latter two groups was past. For them the door was shut. But she incorrectly concluded that no one could accept Christ after Oct. 22, that only the Little Flock remaining in the household of faith would be saved, and that every one else would be lost." <sup>59</sup>

Commenting further on the Feb. 1845 vision in her letter to Bates in 1847 Olson continues:

"It appears that 1847 - - the date of this letter to Bates - - Ellen White still held that the door of mercy had been closed for the world in 1844." <sup>60</sup>

Olson is here attempting to show a distinction between the visions which were truly from God and Ellen White's interpretation which was fallible because of her humanity. However, well-intentioned, there are a number of problems with Olson's approach.

1. Ellen White never admitted to misinterpreting the visions. Rather she ever attempted to explain away the apparent close of probation implications to her first visions. <sup>61</sup>

2. Ellen White asserted:

"I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing a vision, as in having the vision" <sup>62</sup>

That being the case it is just as damaging to say she misinterpreted the vision as it is to say that the vision itself is wrong.

3. Ellen White warned against any attempt to distinguish what was of God from what was merely her own in the visions.

"Do not by your criticism take out all the force, all the point and power, from the Testimonies. Do not feel that you can dissect them to suit your own ideas, claiming that God has given you ability to discern what is light from heaven and what is the expression of mere human wisdom." <sup>63</sup>

4. Turn to Appendix IV and V and read the full text of the Dec. 1844 and Feb. 1845 visions.

From this evidence I believe that it is impossible to separate the vision itself from Ellen White's interpretation. The two are intractably linked and would pose an insurmountable challenge to any one attempting to offer a valid method for so dividing her visions from her interpretation.

5. Finally during the shut-door era, E. G. White insisted that her visions were given to correct people's mistaken understanding of the Bible. In a vision given Jan. 5, 1849 she says:

"I saw the state of some who stood on present truth, but disregarded the visions, - the way God had chosen to teach in some cases, those who erred from Bible truth. I saw that in striking against the visions they did not strike against the worm - the feeble instrument that God spoke through; but against the Holy Ghost. I saw it was a small thing to speak against the instrument, but it was dangerous to slight the words of God. I saw if they were in error and God chose to show them their errors through visions, and they disregarded the teachings of God through visions, they would be left to take their own way, and run in the way of error, and think they were right, until they would find out to late." <sup>64</sup>

If Ellen White was to teach and correct people through visions and if then she misinterpreted those very visions so as to believe that probation was closed for the world, what was God's purpose in giving the visions  
At all?

Thus, we find E. G. White by 1847 still united with her husband and fellow shut-door believers in asserting that probation had closed for the

world and therefore sinners could no longer be saved. However, if in fact her early visions had revealed to her their error in regards to the shut-door, and if she had spoken of her views, it would have brought her in open conflict with her fellow shut-door believers, who would have regarded her as one of the foolish virgins. Instead, we find that it was Ellen White's visions which strengthened their belief in a doctrine as erroneous as the shut-door.

## FOOTNOTES

1. See Appendix I, R. F. Cottrell, "A Hermeneutic for Daniel 8:14."
2. Charles Fitch, 'QOM 23.t.S2<sup>g</sup> .11It MX .P.22212, p. 24.
3. J. V. Hines, "Separation from the Churches," *The Advent Herald*, Vol. 8, no. 7, Sept. 19, 1844, p. 53.
4. Desmond Ford, Daniel 8:14 The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment, p. 361.
5. James White, Sketches of the Christian Life and Public Labors of William Miller, p. 362-363.
6. Ibid. p. 364.
7. See Appendix II, S. S. Snow, "Prophetic Time," *The Advent Herald*, Vol. 7, April 3, 1844, p. 69-70.
8. Ellen G. Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harmon," *The Day Star*, Vol. 9. no. 7-8, Jan. 24, 1846, p. 31.
9. Ibid.
10. George Storrs "Go Ye Out to Meet Him," *Bible Examiner*, Sept. 24, 1844, p. 2.
11. Desmond Ford, "The Daniel Committee of 1938-1952 and the Chronological problems of the 2300 Days," op.cit., pp. A-81 - A-106.
12. S.S. Snow, "Reasons for Believing the Advent will be on the 10th of the 7th Month," *The Advent Herald*, Vol. 8, no. 9, Oct. 2, 1844, p. 70.
13. B. G. White, Early Writings, p. 232.
14. Ibid. p. 234.
15. E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4, p. 307.
16. E. G. White, Desire of Ages, p. 632-633.
17. Geo. Storrs, "Go ye out to Meet Him," *The Advent Herald*, Vol. 8, no. 11, Oct. 16, 1844, p. 81.
18. Ibid. p. 82.
19. *The Advent Herald*, Vol. 8, no. 12, Oct. 30, 1844, p. 93.
20. *The Advent Herald*, Vol. 8, no. 15, Nov. 20, 1844, p. 115.
21. William Miller, *The Advent Herald*, Vol. 8, no. 18, Dec. 11, 1844, p. 142.
22. E. G. White, Selected Messages, Book I, p. 63.

23. The Advent Herald Vol. 8, no. 15, Nov. 13, 1844, p. 105.
24. J. V. Himes, The Advent Herald Vol. 8, no. 15, Nov. 20, 1844, p. 119.
25. J. V. Himes, "In the Field Again," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, no. 2, Jan, 16, 1845, p. 21.
26. F. G. Brown, "The Sate Position," The Advent Herald, fol. 8, no. 23. Jan. 15, 1845, p. 177.
27. Ibid.
28. J. V. Himes The Advent Herald, Vol. 9. no. 4, March 5, 1845, p. 25.
29. E. G. White, "Letter to Joseph Bates, July 13, 1847, See Appendix III.
30. Ibid.
31. A. Hale, J. Turner, The Advent Mirror, Vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 1845, p. 3-4.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. E. G. White, "Letter to Loughborough," August 24, 1874, Selected Messages, Book I, p. 74.
35. E. G. white, Selected Messages, Book I, p. 63.
36. Rolf Poehler, ". . . And the Door was Shut, Seventh-day Adventists and the Shut Poor Doctrine in the Decade After the Great Disappointment," p. 82.
37. James White, Advent Review, August, 1850, p. 10.
38. E. G. Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harmon," The ay Star, Vol. 9, no. 7-8, Jan. 24, 1846, p. 31. See Appendix IV.
39. James White, A Word to the Little Flock, May, 1847, p. 22.
40. Ibid.
41. E. G. Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harmon," The Day Star, Vol. 10, no. 2, March 14, 1846, p. 7, See Appendix V.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. See Appendix III, E. G. White, "Letter to Joseph Bates," July 13, 1847.
45. E. G. White, Selected Messages, Book I, p. 63.

46. A. Hale, J. Turner, *The Advent Mirror*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 1845, p. 4.
47. William Miller, *The Advent Herald*, Vol. 8, no. 18. Dec. 11, 1844, p. 142,
48. Isreal Dammon, "Letter from Bro. Damman," *The Jubilee Standard*, Vol. 1, no. 13, June 5, 1845, p. 104.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Isreal Dammon, *The Day Star*, Vol. 6, no. 12, July 29, 1845, p. 51.
52. Joseph Bates, "Letter From Bro. Joseph Bates," *The Jubilee Standard* Vol. 1, no. 12, May 29, 1845, p. 90.
53. Joseph Bates, "Letter From Bro. Bates," *The Jubilee Standard*, Vol. 1 no. 13, June 5, 1845, p. 111.
54. Ibid.
55. Joseph Bates, *A Vision*, Broadside April 7, 1847.
56. Joseph Bates, *Second Advent Nay, Marks and High Heaps.* p. 65-66.
57. James White, *A Word to the Little, Flock*, May 1847, p. 79.
58. James White, *Present Truth*, Vol. 1, no. 10. May 1850, 79.
59. Robert Olson, *One Hundred and One Questions on the Sanctuary* and on Ellen White, p. 58.
60. Ibid. 59.
61. E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 62-63.
62. E. G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, p. 293.
63. E. G. White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 691.
64. E. G. White, *To Those who are Receiving the Seal of the Living God*, Broadside Jan. 31, 1849, See Appendix VI.

### Chapter III

#### CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SHUT-DOOR AND OPEN-DOOR ADVENTISTS 1845 - 1846

The continued conflict between the Shut and open-door Adventists revolved around several issues. The Shut-door believers were convinced that every aspect of the parable of the Ten Virgins had been fulfilled in the Seventh-month movement with Christ's coming at the end of the 2300 days, October 22, 1844, as Bridegroom to shut the door of probation on a wicked world. They believed the preaching of definite time to be a test by which God had separated out for himself a peculiar people, and thus for them to question in any way either the possibility that the October 22 date was incorrect or to attempt to continue to save sinners would result in one's becoming a foolish virgin who would then be excluded from the wedding feast. Furthermore, they expected to be able to know the definite time of Christ's coming.

The Open-door Adventists, on the other hand, felt that since Christ had not come on October 22, 1844 as they had preached, the parable of the Ten Virgins and the shutting of the door at the close of probation could not yet have happened. Since the October 22 date rested on the reliability of human chronology and since the scholars argued for different dates, it was not possible to know the exact termination of the 2300-day prophecy with any certainty. They were, however, certain that Christ would come soon-- within a year or two--and that until he did come they must continue to preach the gospel and to warn sinners, so that the world might be prepared for Christ's coming.

The Shut-door Adventists presented their views in the *Hope of Israel*, published by Joseph Turner and John Pearson in Maine, and in *The Day Star*, published by Enoch Jacobs in Cincinnati. Open-door Adventists published their views in two papers edited by J. V. Hines, *The Advent Herald* of Boston and the Morning Watch of New York. A careful examination of the pages of these papers will yield a clearer understanding of what each side felt was at stake in the issue of the Shut-door.

Joseph Turner and Apolos Hale were the first to publish an extended article on the parable of the Ten Virgins that saw the close of probation as having occurred on October 22, 1844. They believed that every aspect of the parable had been literally fulfilled when Christ came on the October 22 date, not as king in the clouds of glory, but as bridegroom to the heavenly marriage. All who were awaiting his coming then went in with him to an inner chamber and the door was shut. "Shut-door" had a specific meaning for these adherents:

"By this act the shutting of the door) is undoubtedly denoted the exclusion from all further access to saving mercy, those who have rejected its offer during their time of probation."<sup>1</sup>

"But can any sinner be converted if the door is shut? Of course they cannot, though changes that may appear to be conversions may take place."<sup>2</sup>

William Miller had already in previous letters indicated his belief that probation had closed; therefore, it is not surprising that we find him in a letter of February 6, 1845 endorsing Turner's and Hale's views:

"I presume, Bro. Marsh, you have seen Bro. Hale and Turner's Advent Mirror, printed in Boston, Jan.,

1845, concerning the marriage, in the parable of the Ten Virgins. I do believe in the main that they are correct. . .

"My opinion is, that it was on the 10th day of the Seventh month, when the great majority of those who are looking for Christ dedicated themselves and all they had to the Lord. There was a division line drawn then. . . and I have not seen a genuine conversion since. . . This is a great evidence that this view is correct, and that Christ has risen up from his mercy seat and now stands as a Judge at the door."

For the Shut-door believer there were two great dangers. The first was to be deceived into believing that sinners were still being saved. A letter from a Bro. Williamson in *The Ray Star* of February 18, 1845 expresses well those fears:

". . . the mighty effort to baffle the late movement in the advent cause by the reported revivals of religion in the conversion of so many sinners, it only drives them [Shut-door Adventists] closer to God. They look upon it as the last and only effort employed by their father to 'deceive (if it were possible) the very elect.'"<sup>4</sup>

The second danger to be feared was that of discarding the belief that the preaching of the definite time of the second advent was what had tested and separated all of God's true children from the world. The March 4, 1845 *Star* republished the following from *The Home of Israel*:

"The Adventists have always been a distinct people. . . What made so visible a distinction between them and the world? It was not merely faith in the literal coming of Christ, for that was the belief of thousands prior to the excitement caused by this people. Neither was it simply believing that event near. Where then began this distinction? The preaching of "definite time" commenced the work.

". . . If then the past preaching was authorized

by the Most High-- if he has in his way separated the precious from the vile, the wheat from the chaff, to affect a union again, would be to surrender a portion of all of these truths. This would be demolishing the dividing wall. This is the manner in which some have crossed the line, and proffered the hand of union to a fallen world."<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, to give up either the belief in definite time or the close of probation was to Shut-door believers analogous to the action of Lot's wife, who looked back. The Day Star of April 1, 1845 expresses well this belief:

"It is indeed most solemnly true, that we have come to that part of 'the path of the just' where we have been commanded to go 'forth to meet the Bridegroom' (Matt. 25:6), and also to 'remember Lot's wife.' (Luke 17: 29-33) This none of us dare to deny in the Seventh month; in obedience to heaven's high command we separated ourselves forever from the world, and shall we now presume upon God's command, and return our eyes, hearts, or affections, upon the city of destruction to which we have bid our last farewell! Why 'remember Lot's wife' in this part of the path? Because, as in her case, a might struggle will arise between the power of human sympathy, and a disposition to strict obedience--while every spirit and temper that savors of this world will be of the former. Friends, unconverted friends, was what turned her eyes back to the city of wrath. . ."<sup>6</sup>

The reason the Shut-door believers were so convinced that probation was closed can be understood by the argument that they derived from the typical Day of Atonement. A. Hale in a March 5, 1845 article in The Advent Herald argues that the high priest's functions on the typical Day of Atonement were accomplished by Christ in the heavenly sanctuary on October 22, 1844. This change of position by Christ, Hale believed, came about when he resigned his mediatorial work in behalf of the world in order for him to become king.<sup>7</sup> Again, Hale makes unmis-

takably clear what the import of this belief is:

"But can any impenitent sinners be converted if the door is shut? Of course they cannot, though changes that men would call conversions may take place."<sup>8</sup>

An article in The Hope of Israel, later republished in the March 25, 1845 Day Star, contains even more equivocally Shut-door statements:

"We have never tried to press the flock to labor among the wolves, lest they should be devoured, . . . We have believed unwaveringly that the mystery of God was finished, when the Cry

[Oct. 22, 1844] 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, by every apparent conversion or revival, . . ."<sup>9</sup>

The article continues by asking what reasons there are for the door's being shut:

"Some suppose that the world and the Laodicean church, as a whole are rejected, merely on the grounds of their having shut their eyes to truth. And some portion of the world may be rejected, and not the whole, because they all have not had the same light that some have. But this is not the fact in either case. If the door is shut, it is done by finishing the atonement, on the 10th day of the 7th month, and if the atonement is not finished then the door is not shut, and all who come to Christ in any land may yet be saved.

" . . . . . Then the atonement being finished, as must be on that day: He leaves on the clouds, to obtain the throne— as we have before shown.— The great objection urged against the argument of the 10th day, is then without weight, for He must go in and come out, on the same day. . . hence no more blood can be obtained, for Jesus dies no more."<sup>10</sup>

If, then, the atonement was completed on October 22, 1844, as the argument goes, the destiny of all sinners had been forever fixed.

The only changes that could now take place would be for believers to give up their faith and thus be lost.

Of special significance at this point is the fact that James White endorsed this view of the atonement in 1845. In a letter dated August 19 of that year he first notes with approval the message that The Day Star has been proclaiming:

"The Day Star shines gloriously. We down East, are happy to catch a single ray from its brilliant light."<sup>11</sup>

After mentioning the trials the Shut-door bands in Maine have gone through, James White continues by relating E. G. Harmon's first vision and appears to see a complete agreement between it and the position of The Day Star.<sup>12</sup>

In a second letter to The Day Star in September, 1845 he comments:

"The fall of Babylon commenced in the spring of '43 when the churches all around began to fall into a cold state, and was completed on the 7th month '44, when the last faint ray of hope was taken up from a wicked world and church."<sup>13</sup>

A little further in this letter, White continues:

"The year of his redeemed, or the year in which he will redeem his people commenced when the atonement ended, and will not close till the waiting sons of the morning shall plant their glad feet in the golden streets of the City of God."<sup>14</sup>

A corollary to the belief that the atonement ended on October 22, 1844 was the belief that this day of atonement ushered in the Jubilee<sup>y</sup> ear and that Christ would come by the end of the Jubilee, or on October 22, 1845. James White indicates his endorsement of this belief not only in his statements above, but also in his last words from the same letter:

"Do we know what watch the Lord is coming? Certainly. Three have passed, and there is but four. All who see this light will receive a certainty that before the 10th day of the 7th month 1845 [Oct. 22, 1845], our King will come, and we will watch, and like Noah know the day. (Rev. 3:3)"<sup>15</sup>

The Open-door Adventists objected to each of the points that

the Shut-door Adventists regarded as testing truths. Regarding the fact that the preaching of definite time in October 22, 1844\* was the test that had separated God's people forever from the world, F. C. Brown offers this apology:

"In so doing, we now confess we have honestly erred. . .

"After all our ingenuity has been spent in attempting to learn the exact time for the Advent, and we have found that the main pillars of our hope are not sufficient in this particular to support us longer. . . We are therefore bound, in all deference to the Word of God to abandon our ground of definite time."<sup>16</sup>

In what appeared to the Shut-door Adventists to be returning to make union with a fallen world, F. C. Brown continues:

"Nor should it be overlooked that one of the chief objections to our views is thus so far removed, that we may hope to receive no small addition to our ranks from among all the humble and devoted who heartily love Jesus and his appearing, but whose faith has never been adequate to grasp a definite point of time for that event."<sup>17</sup>

Responding in the February 6, 1845 Morning Watch to Turner and Hale's January, 1845 Advent Mirror concerning the Shut-door, Bro. Storrs writes:

"I think I see how these dear men have been led into what I conceive is a dangerous error, paralyzing

all further exertion for the salvation of men, it is an unwillingness to admit that we as Adventists have been wrong on any of our positions."<sup>18</sup>

Storrs continues by noting that although Turner and Hale felt that admitting any error would necessarily mean "we have been wrong in every position behind us. . .", in fact in order for them to have arrived at their Shut-door conclusions they would have first had to admit that Adventists had been wrong concerning the event to take place on October 22, 1844.<sup>19</sup>

Referring to Turner's and Hale's tentative "ifs" and "possibilities", Storrs isolates what he feels to be the greatest danger in accepting Shut-door views-- a danger which was far more serious than any which might have resulted from preaching a definite times while Open-door Adventists continues to labor for the salvation of sinners, Shut-door adherents ceased all such efforts, thus depriving the sinner of any further opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel.

“.....the first error (Seventh-month movement) was not altogether unaccompanied with efforts to save souls from death; but this (Shut-door) , if received, is to put an entire quietus on our consciences, as to any responsibility to seek the salvation of men.”<sup>20</sup>

In the February 20, 1845 issue of The Morning Watch J. V. Himes continues the Open-door Adventists' attack on Turner and Hale's Shut-door interpretation of the parable of the Ten Virgins. Himes objects to the Cry of the Seventh month as being the true and final Cry for the following reasons:

1. "The Cry of the 7th month was a local and partial one—it was confined to this country.

Although there are thousands of

holy and devoted Adventists in Europe. . . yet the Seventh-month movement produced no influence there."<sup>21</sup>

1. In answer to the question of whether the Bridegroom came, Himes notes:

"Did he come spiritually? No. He has never been absent spiritually, and that would not fulfill the parable. The Bridegroom always comes in person. . . For Christ to be married in heaven, while the guests are on the earth would be a strange way to go in with him to the wedding. A strange fulfillment of the Scriptures, this!"<sup>22</sup>

2. As to the question of whether the door was shut or not, Himes makes this observation:

"It is true, that, without exception, wherever brethren, instead of preaching salvation, have preached no more salvation—as they have sown, so have they reaped—and no souls have been converted from their labors. But when brethren have gone forth, to compel them to come in that the wedding may be furnished with guests, many have been brought in from the highways and hedges."<sup>23</sup>

3. Concerning the parable itself he asks, "And would a parable be given to liken the coming of Christ in which every minute circumstance of his coming, except his actual coming, should be presented, and that left out?"<sup>24</sup>
4. Quoting Matt. 24: 23-27 concerning the signs of Christ's coming, he argues:

"Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert, go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers, Believe it not. Why may we not believe it? May it not be possible that he is in the secret chamber, the nuptial chamber, having the marriage ceremony performed? No. For as the lightning shineth out of the east, and shineth even to the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."<sup>25</sup>

Hale had argued that the "heavenly things" of Hebrews 9:23 which must be cleansed with better things than animal blood referred to Christ's cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary on the anti-typical Day of Atonement, October 22, 1844. However, Bliss countered this line of reasoning by correctly noting:

"This sacrifice was offered 'once when he offered up himself,' Heb. 7:27. He then ascended to the Father and 'entered once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us' 9:12; 'for Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us,' 9:24. Christ having done this, 'after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his foot-stool; for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified, -10:12-14. This preparation must therefore have all been made, not on 2pe 226 of October, but eighteen hundred years ago."<sup>26</sup>

Bliss employed another parable of Christ to show why he believed Christians must continue to preach to sinners until Christ comes:

"We believe that while God spares the world, it is on account of his long suffering, which waited in the days of Noah 120 years, -he was so unwilling that any should perish; and that it is the imperative duty of all to labor in the vineyard until the Master shall come at even to reckon with them."<sup>27</sup>

It was this, then, which Bliss perceived to be the real danger in adhering to the Shut-door. If one believed that the door was shut, he would, consequently, be found doing nothing for sinners when Christ comes.

The Open-door Adventists realized that perhaps far more convincing than the texts the Shut-door believers cited was the experience of the autumn of 1844 which convinced them that the door was shut. The Hope of Israel, a Shut-door paper, expresses the impact of that experience

in this manner:

"So also the cry which began the last July, has had a finish-- it was made, and had an end. We were all engaged in extending the Cry, we were driven day and night, until about the beginning of the Seventh month, when unexpectedly, throughout the host of God's elect, a sound within the soul said, it is Done. The watchmen were called from the walls, the Advent papers through the land bearing the cry were stopped."<sup>28</sup>

The article continues by explaining what it saw to be the significance of that subjective feeling:

". . . We were all enabled to see the walls of separation that were put between the world and us on the 10th day of the 7th month, 'having done the will of God,' and with one consent exclaimed, our work for earth is done.

". . . Christ is this door, he also is the vine, and we the branches. He having risen up, the door is Shut; and every living branch is raised up with him; --their prayers for rebels hushed and all unholy sympathies dried up forever."<sup>29</sup>

Josiah Litch, an Open-door Adventist, tried to indicate the danger of relying on experiences and feelings in an article entitled, "Did the Bridegroom Come in 1843?":

"'But what,' it may be asked, 'do you mean by such a question as this-- Did the Bridegroom come in 1843?' I mean this-- that by the same arguments which you bring to prove that Christ came in October last, I will prove he came in 1843."<sup>30</sup>

He continued by summarizing the feelings the Millerites had experienced concerning the Midnight Cry of 1843:

1. The Midnight Cry was the true cry.
2. They had the powerful witness of the Holy Spirit that

it was true.

3. The preaching of it brought a wonderful effect.
4. God was evidently in the work.
5. It followed logically that if the Cry of 43 was the true cry, then Christ had come into the marriage and the door was shut in 1843.

Litch continued by pointing to the danger to which a belief such as the Shut-door, subjective as it was, could lead if Christ did not come at the time of the Jubilee, when the Shut-door adherents expected him. Rather than admit that they were mistaken, they might take "...the ground of a spiritual coming, and a spiritual resurrection, and a spiritual Jubilee, for they can not be wrong."<sup>31</sup>

Finally, Litch summed up his own belief:

"I believe the whole advent movement from the days of Edward Irving, to be the true cry, and that at the appointed time the Bridegroom will come, and they that are ready go in with him to the marriage: and I also believe that time to be very near."<sup>32</sup>

All other arguments aside, the evidence that seemed the most convincing to the Open-door Adventists in support of their stance was that when they preached the gospel, sinners were converted. Writing in the February 20, 1845

Morning Watch, B. T. Young states:

"According to the views of some, who give an exposition of Matt. 25th, there is no opportunity for sinners to obtain pardon now, unless they were penitent on or before, the 23d of October, last. Is it true?"<sup>33</sup>

After mentioning a revival in which 200 people had come to Christ, Young

continues:

"Since the 10th of the 7th month, two of the persons referred to as having been converted, came to my house. . . They were unregenerated when they came; and, as one now confesses, in a conversation with me, was convicted of sin, and shortly after found Jesus a precious Savior to his soul."<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, J. V. Mimes, reporting on a trip through Canada and northern Vermont, writes:

"Our brethren in this region are publishing a free and full salvation to sinners. And they assure me if ever God heard their prayers, and converted souls by their instrumentality, he is doing it now. . . I am more confirmed than ever since I came to this province, that Jesus yet sits upon the mercy seat, and that sinners may come to him in the certain hope of salvation.

. . . I have had the pleasure to see score of these converts, and hear them testify of the forgiving mercy of God, and plead with sinners to come to Christ, assuring them from their own experience that Jesus yet lives to save the chief of sinners."<sup>35</sup>

In fact it was this trip through Canada and Vermont with its many reported conversions which convinced Miller that the door of probation could not be shut. Mimes visited Miller in Low Hampton, H. Y. on March 8 and 9 of 1845 and reports the following:

"For a little time, he cherished some views, relating to the door of mercy, and the coming of the Bridegroom, that were not in strict accordance with the above principles of exposition [that the parable of the Ten Virgins applies to the Second Coming]. The peculiar and striking circumstances of the time, led him into the view. But, the fact of souls being converted in different places, as formerly, at once showed the mistake which he readily and cheerfully corrected."<sup>36</sup>

Immediately following Mimes' visit Miller wrote a letter, dated March 10, to The Morning Watch in which he urged:

"And I now plead with those who have supposed the door to be shut, to yield the point to our brethren of the opposite view; for it is evident at present that all evidence is against it being now shut, if we can believe the reports of our brethren from different parts; and surely my soul will not permit me to doubt their veracity, who have been with us as pioneers in the work of calling up the world to this important point of our faith—the Second Advent of Jesus."<sup>37</sup>

Thus, by April of 1845, when the Albany Conference convened, Miller found himself united with Himes, Bliss, and virtually all prominent Adventist leaders in rejecting the Shut-door. The conference unanimously approved a statement of what Adventists believed, which included the following Open-door comment:

"That the Second Coming is indicated to be now emphatically nigh, . . . And that this truth should be preached both to saints and sinners, that the first may rejoice, knowing their redemption draweth nigh, and the last be warned to flee from the wrath to come, before the Master of the house shall rise up and Shut the door."<sup>38</sup>

Miller addressed the conference and warned them against allowing various speculations to divide the Advent believers. He urged, instead, that the Christian graces of love, patience, and prayer might overcome prideful sectarian differences.<sup>39</sup>

Himes and Miller continued to attempt a union of the Adventists by holding further conferences, the first of which was in New York on May 6, 1845. There delegate after delegate testified to having had experiences similar to that of Bro. L. Kimbal, who recounted his reaction to the October 22, 1844 disappointment. Mimes records it thus:

"He was at first a little disposed to favor the idea that the door of mercy was closed against the sinner; but by presenting his inquiries he learned of conversions and at once abandoned this notion and again entered the field to occupy until the Lord should come. He has also been an eye-witness of the power of God since that time. Those that never had indulged a hope and were never informed concerning the Advent, were converted and are still living epistles of the mercy extended to the sinner."<sup>40</sup>

At the Advent Conference held in Boston, May 26 - 27, both Himes and Miller testified that when they actually began to work for sinners it seemed that a spell was broken.<sup>41</sup> However, this open rejection of the Shut-door, many reported, had brought a sharp reaction from Shut-door believers who called anyone who attempted to save sinners one of the foolish virgins:

"Brother E. [Eastman] said he had been thrown by as a foolish virgin because he would preach the gospel to sinners."<sup>42</sup>

Finally, in a letter to the May 22 Morning watch a certain Bro. Bartholomew wrote that the reports of conversions coming in from so many different places either proved positively that the door had not been shut in 1844, or that all of these conversions were in fact the deception of Satan.<sup>43</sup> He for one, however, did not think the latter to be so.

In The Morning watch of June 12 of that year Himes reports a visit with Miller and a group of Shut-door believers in Ellen Harmon's hometown of Portland, Maine. After referring to J. Turner's view that 6,000 years were finished and the millennial Sabbath had begun in which no one was to work, Himes notes:

"While waiting in this position of idleness, as to worldly manual labor, a new light as it was thought, shone upon Bro. Turner's mind, viz., that the Bridegroom had come— that he came on the 10th of the 7th month, of the Jewish year last past—that the marriage then took place.— that all the virgins then, in some sense, went in with him to the marriage, and the door was Shut! None of these could be lost and none without could be saved."<sup>44</sup>

He then notes that according to a day-for-a-year reckoning, if the Midnight Cry was truly given in August, 1844, then Christ would have come prior to June, 1845, Hines concludes:

"There is now no view which we can take of the Seventh-month movement, which makes it a final one. Time has demonstrated our mistakes respecting it. Then let us all abandon our errors, and return to our duty as honest, faithful servants. The door of salvation being open wide, and the gospel still sounding a sweet release to all the perishing sons of Adam, let us as ministers and members of the church of Christ awake, and engage with new zeal and interest in the work of God.

"Above all, we must watch and pray always, that when the Son of Man cometh, we may be found of him in peace."<sup>45</sup>

By July of 1845 William Miller had printed a 36-page tract entitled Apology and Defence in which he attempted to explain his present understanding of the 2300-day prophecy and of how it related to October 22, 1844. His statements reveal a decided rejection of all sectarian attitudes which tended only to divide Christians from each other. Notable among the points Miller makes are the following:

1. Adventists had been mistaken in applying the term "Babylon" to all other Christian churches and that this had needlessly created prejudice and hostility between Adventists and other Christians who had not accepted their date-setting.<sup>46</sup>

2. He had never felt that what he regarded as speculations that Christ would come on Oct. 22, 1844, should have been made a salvation test. Further, he had only endorsed the movement within two or three weeks of that date, because it had grown so large and the date appeared to be a probable one for Christ's return.<sup>47</sup>

3. He had for a time believed that the Adventist work for the world had been finished.<sup>48</sup>

4. As time went on, however, he had become alarmed at the extreme sectarian spirit manifested by many Adventist groups who sought to disfellowship all who did not agree with them.<sup>49</sup>

5. He had been wrong on his chronology, and if other dates were correct, Christ's coming would not be more than a few years away. He was thus determined to "... live in continual expectation of the event."

6. He felt the continued need to call sinners to repentance and faith in Christ so that they might be prepared for Christ's coming.<sup>51</sup>

While Miller and Himes showed an open, kind, and accepting attitude towards the Shut-door believers who, they concluded, were honest in their attempt to follow and honor God, the Shut-door believers manifested the extremely sectarian spirit that had so alarmed Miller. They denounced Open-door Adventists as foolish virgins in the most severe language.

Enoch Jacobs reacted to the Open-door Adventists in the June 24, 1845 *Day Star* by insisting that the Shut-door Adventists were the only true Adventists. Of those who had returned to the work of winning sin-

ners he writes:

"They no doubt really feel that it will be but a small matter for the Almighty to waive the teachings of the past, and just open again the door of access to the world, and churches, to save their otherwise tarnished honor."<sup>52</sup>

J.D. Pickands further underlined the Shut-door believers' position when he stated concerning the Open-door Adventists:

"But are not the foolish virgins Shut out, and are they not crying Lord, Lord, open unto us? I answer, they as well as the wise are shut out from access to the world and churches for the effectual proclamation of the truth as it is in Jesus. The foolish are trying to preach what they call truth, but what contradicts the word and providence of God— and then they can not gain the ear of the church or world. These back-sliding Adventists who complained as piteously that we would not still preach and pray for the conversion of sinners have now abundantly shown their hypocrisy, for their main efforts are aimed at the overthrow of our views and their own recovery and exaltation, and the sinners and Babylonians are none the better for anything they can or will do for them."<sup>53</sup>

In the late summer and early fall of 1845, just as the shut-door believers had concluded that the Open-door Adventists were foolish virgins, the editors of the two Shut-door papers in Maine all gave up belief in the Shut-door. Writing to the readers of The Hope of Israel in the September 3, 1845 Advent Herald, John Pearson explains the reasons for his change of postures

1. The hard, judging and unforgiving spirit of the Shut-door believers was not in character with the real working of God's Spirit.<sup>54</sup>
2. The division within the Adventist ranks was not ful-

fulfillment of the parable of the Ten Virgins, because that parable will only reach its fulfillment at the second Coming of Christ. Careful reasoning showed that the parables of Matt. 24 - 25 all reach their fulfillment together when Christ comes in the clouds of glory.<sup>55</sup>

3. "The new Tests of Salvation - a belief that the bridegroom has come - that the door is Shut, etc., are not agreeable to the Word of God, by which we shall be judged at the last days."<sup>58</sup>

Bro. Jacobs in The Dm star said of Pearson's article, "It is a regular confess over which an editor of the Advent Herald is rejoicing-- inasmuch as Bro. J. Pearson has returned to his first love."<sup>57</sup> In reply Pearson noted that Jacob's judgment of him was one evidence, among many, of the truth of my remarks. . . that those who claim to be in the right, and are teaching that a division must take place in the Advent ranks before the Lord shall be revealed, do not possess the graces of the Spirit, nor that charity that suffereth long, and is kind; that thinketh no evil."<sup>58</sup>

In response to the question of what his first love was, John Pearson replied:

"It was love to God and my blessed Savior; and consequently, it exhibited itself in loving and obeying all the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ."<sup>59</sup>

John Pearson then answered several other questions that Jacobs had posed about why his article had been published by Himes and whether anyone else had influenced him to change his views. He asks that Jacobs furnish him with the name of the person who gave him this evil report.

C. H. Pearson, John's brother, confessed in a letter to Jacobs on September 22 that he had originated the misunderstanding concerning his brother, because he had felt that John's confession

"... was really a trap for such as entertained the faith of the closed door. Upon reading the Sheet, I was satisfied that nothing ever put forth upon this subject, was so well calculated to shake the faith of such; not only for its contents, but coming as it did from one that had publicly advocated those views."<sup>60</sup>

In fact, John Pearson's argument was so compelling that his brother gave up the Shut-door and halted publication of the *Within the Veil*. In a letter to the October 8, 1845 *Voice of Truth* he explained his actions:

"The thought that we were sending forth error weighted like an incubus upon my heart. In addition to this my attention was arrested, by what appeared to me to be the moral of the parable of the Ten Virgins, as found in verse 13th. 'Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor hour wherein the Son of man cometh.' From this it seemed clear that the coming of the Bridegroom and of the Son of man were one and the same."<sup>61</sup>

James White reacted to what to him appeared to be apostasy by stating in a letter to the October 11, 1845 *Day Star*:

"Bless God, dear Brother, there are many in Maine, who stand firm on the truth, unmoved, fixed, that we have had the 'True Midnight Cry', and of course the Bridegroom has come, and the door is Shut; if not, a true Midnight Cry has told a lie."<sup>62</sup>

Further in the letter he charges, "Brethren J. and C. H. Pearson, and E. C. Clemons, have given up the Shut door, and are doing all they can to drag others to outer darkness."<sup>63</sup>

James white went even further to assert that the fall of C. H.

Pearson and E. C. Clemons was the result of the denial of their faith as indicated by their plans to get married. Enoch Jacobs, James White, and others at this time felt it was a denial of faith and sin to marry so soon before Christ's coming. In fact, Jacobs finally carried this belief to its logical conclusion by urging celibacy on all who would be part of the 144,000 and himself withdrew to a Shaker commune in the fall of 1846 there to await the Lord's return.

O. R. L. Crosier, who in a few months would write the Sanctuary article that E. G. White would endorse in vision, likewise indicated in the October 11 issue of The Day Star his belief in the Shut-door and his dismay that the editors of the Hope Within the Veil would reject this truth. He continues by quoting a portion of a letter that E. C. Clemons had written to him to explain her reasons for giving up the Shut-door. These reasons indicated the influence which Joseph Turner's views, as expressed in the January, 1845 Advent Mirror had had on her:

"Well I do feel more and more confirmed that we have been snared to interpret the parable as we have, by Bro. Joseph Turner— who, even supposing him the Lord's, weaves theories too ingeniously to be safe as a teacher."<sup>65</sup>

In the May, 1850 issue of Present Truth the Shut-door S. D. A. pioneers charged the Open-door Adventists with continuing to set dates for the coming of Christ, because they (Open-door adherents) refused to accept the fact that the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 had in fact ended in October, 1844 with the shutting of the door." It is true that Miller's looking for a future ending within a year or two of the 2300 days did encourage the Open-door Adventists to set further dates for Christ's coming. However, the evidence clearly indicates that the Shut-door

Adventists who were settled on the October 22 date likewise continued to speculate and set dates for Christ's second coming.

Writing in April, 1845, O. R. L. Crosier asserted that the anti-typical Day of Atonement would take one year, according to the day-for-a-year principle of prophecy. He believed that the first half of that year from the spring to the fall of 1844 was occupied in the tarrying time:

"During that time he Christ waited to be gracious and through his faithful servants gave the last call of mercy to the world. Then on the tenth day of the seventh month (Oct. 23) . . . Jesus closed the tarrying time by entering upon the office of bridegroom or the final atonement for his people which is to occupy the last half of the present Jewish month and will end about the 20th or 21st of this month."<sup>67</sup>

It is even claimed by a critic of E. G. Hamon, Lucinda Burdick, that the former had predicted Christ would come first in June and then in September of 1845:

"During the year 1845 I met Miss Ellen G. Hamon several times at my Uncle's house in South Windham, Me. The first of these meeting was in the month of May, when I heard her declare that God had revealed to her that Jesus Christ would return to this earth in June, the next month. During the haying season I again met her in company with James White at the same place, and heard my Uncle ask her about the failure of the Lord to appear in June according to her visions. She replied that she had been told in the language of Canaan which she did not understand that Christ would return in September, at the second growth of grass instead of the first."<sup>68</sup>

While care must be exercised in accepting a critic's testimony at face value, especially in light of the fact that there is no other independent source to confirm this account, still Mrs. Burdick's account

does possess at least a measure of credibility, considering that what she recalls about E. G. White's other visions and James White's preaching on the Shut-door can be independently confirmed from primary documents.<sup>69</sup>

Whether or not E. G. Harmon did in fact predict Christ's return in June and in September of 1845, we do know that among Shut-door believers there continued to be intense speculation as to His coming. Writing in The Jubilee Standard, May 29, 1845, and using prophetic speculation, Hiram Edson also expected Christ to come in fulfillment of the 1335 days of Daniel 12:12 by August of 1845 at the very latest.<sup>70</sup> James White, writing in The Day Star of September 20, 1845, reasoned that Christ would come on the tenth day of the seventh month in 1845 at the completion of the year of Jubilee:

"The Midnight Cry, we say, was the antitype of the trumpet blown in the 49th year. So last year was the 49th, this is the 50th or Jubilee."<sup>71</sup>

Further in his letter White gives the assurance that:

"The year of his redeemed, or the year in which he will redeem his people commenced when the atonement ended, and will not close till the waiting Sons of the morning shall plant their glad feet in the golden streets of the City of God."<sup>72</sup>

When October came and went without Christ's return, H. B. Woodcock, using the same basic reasoning as James White, found a way to extend the time until the Passover of 1846.<sup>73</sup> F. B. Hahn, a Seventh-day Sabbath keeper closely associated with Edson, Bates, Crosier, and the White's, recalculated the 1335 days in the April 2, 1847 lax Dawn to demonstrate conclusively that Christ would come in the spring of 1847.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, it appears that Joseph Bates was the last of the S. D. A. pioneers to set a date for Christ's coming. He believed that Christ would come seven years after October, 1844, when he wrote in 1850:

"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, 'For it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul' Lev. 26:11. Then the number seven will finish the day of atonement (not redemption). Six months of this time, I understand, Jesus will be gathering in the harvest with his sickle, on the White Cloud."<sup>75</sup>

After so many repeated failures at setting dates for the coming of Christ, based on a confident appeal to various Old Testament types and chronological calculations from the book of Daniel, one would think that the Shut-door Adventists might have questioned the validity of their reasoning as to the Shut-door theory itself. It should be noted that the only difference between the type of reasoning which convinced them that probation had closed in October of 1844 and the reasoning that Christ would return in April, May, August, or October of 1845 was that each date was successively proved to be erroneous when Christ did not in fact come. However, since Christ's entrance into the Most Holy place in heaven was spiritual and beyond the ability of anyone to disprove absolutely and visibly in the same way as it could be demonstrated that he had not come in the clouds of glory, the Shut-door Adventists seemed to have no pressing reason to challenge or to reexamine the thinking that had led to their belief that probation was closed.

With the failure of the Lord to come in April of 1847, James White in A Word to the Little Flock, May, 1847, sought to credit the E. G. Harmon visions with revealing the error of believing Christ would come in October of 1845:

"It is well known that many were expecting the Lord to come at the 7th month, 1845. That Christ would then come we firmly believed. A few days before the time passed, I was in Fairhaven and Dartmouth, Mass. with a message on this point of time. At this time, Ellen was with the band at Carver, Mass., where she saw in vision, that we would be disappointed, and that the saints must pass through the time of Jacob's trouble, which was future."<sup>76</sup>

In the March 14, 1846 ay Star E. G. Harmon does refer to a vision she had had around October, 1845 in which she had seen that the time of Jacob's trouble was yet future. However, she does not indicate at this time that her vision was given prior to the disappointment of October, 1845 or that the vision had indeed saved Advent believers from being disappointed.<sup>77</sup> What is stranger still, if James White's account in A Word to the Little Flock is to be credible, is why he fails to mention in his November 19, 1845 letter to The Day Star either the E. G. Harmon vision or the future time of Jacob's trouble as the reason for the disappointment in October, 1845. In fact, James offers an entirely different explanation for the passing of time, namely that the "powers of the heavens have not yet been shaken."<sup>78</sup>

In this incident we have an example of what will be repeated many times in the future as James and Ellen White look back on her earlier visions and interpret them in ways that seem to indicate the providential leading of God. The problem, however, is that as one looks at the contemporary evidence of what the visions meant at the time

they were given, one comes to realize that the later interpretations often totally conflict with the initial understanding, which itself raises a host of questions.

For example, in the particular incident cited above one might assume that the scattered believers, discouraged by yet another disappointment, needed to know then in October of 1845 that God was still leading them-- not two years later in May of 1847, when James White offered his explanation in *A Word to the Little Flock*. Why, then, would James withhold such encouraging news-- that God was still leading them through vision and that the time of Jacob's trouble was yet future --for two years and even appear entirely ignorant of it himself, when he had already mentioned E. G. Harmon's first vision to the readers of *The Day Star* in August of 1845?

Just what was E. G. White's attitude toward the Open-door or nominal Adventists, as they were considered? Though years later we find Mrs. White in *Christ's Object Lessons* accepting and applying the Open-door Adventists' interpretation of the parable of the Ten Virgins to the Second Coming with no mention of 1844<sup>79</sup>, in 1844-1851 she opposed the Open-door Adventists as rejected of God.

In a letter in *The Day Star* of December 6, 1845, Eli Curtis applied the term "nominal Adventists" to those who opposed the Shut-door. Two years later in a letter to Ellen White he expressed his feeling that these nominal or professed Adventists would at last be saved. Note, however, Mrs. White's response in *A Word to the Little Flock* to Eli Curtis:

“You think that those who worship before the Saints' feet (Rev. 3:9), will at last be saved Here I must differ with you; for God shew me that this

class were professed Adventists, who had fallen away, and 'crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to open shame.' And in the hour of temptation, which is yet to come, to show out everyone's true character, they will know that they are forever lost; and overwhelmed with anguish of spirit, they will bow at the Saints' feet. . .

"The Lord has shown me in vision, that Jesus rose up and shut the door, and entered the Holy of Holies, at the 7th month, 1844; but Michael's standing up (Daniel 12:1) to deliver His people, is still in the future."<sup>81</sup>

Despite the force of White's condemnation, however, it should be remembered that the Open-door Adventists had some sound Biblical and experiential reasons for believing that probation had not in fact closed. Since even S. D. A. apologists today must concede that probation did not close for the wicked world in October of 1844, must they not also be prepared to allow that some of the hundreds of conversions reported, in the Open-door Adventists' papers during the years 1845 - 1851 were genuine? Surely God continued to save sinners during the so-called Shut-door period (1844 - 1851); and if this is so, he must certainly have used the Open-door Adventists to preach the gospel to those sinners. Subsequently, these Open-door Adventists felt justified in rejecting the Shut-door arguments, because they had seen with their own eyes sinners still being saved.

However, a careful examination of Ellen White's visions during the Shut-door era indicates that she regarded all reported conversions as an attempt to deceive God's true children. In her first vision is revealed what she believes to have happened to those who rejected the idea that the true Midnight Cry had been sounded and probation had closed:

"Others rashly denied the light behind them, and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out which left them in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and got their eyes off the mark and lost sight of Jesus, and fell off the path down in the dark and wicked world below. It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the City, as all the wicked world which God had rejected."<sup>82</sup>

Her February, 1845 vision, which she stated (in the Bates letter of 1847) had confirmed the advent band in the Shut-door, indicated that all who did not realize that Christ had left the Holy Place and gone into the Holy of Holies were now in fact praying to Satan.

Furthermore, all who rejected the special light of the Midnight cry and Shut-door she saw leave the company of those praying to Jesus in the Holy of Holies and "at once received the unholy influence of Satan."<sup>83</sup>

Mrs. White continued to have other visions during the Shut-door period that offered the same denunciations in even stronger language. Recounting a vision of March 24, 1849 she writes:

"Some appeared to have been really converted, so as to deceive God's people; but if their hearts could be seen, they would appear as black as ever.

"My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked, but could not see it, for the time for their salvation was past."<sup>84</sup>

It, therefore, seems conclusive that Mrs. White believed and taught in 1845 that all who had abandoned the importance of the Midnight Cry and Shut-door because of the reports of conversions and who had begun to work again to save sinners had been deceived of Satan and had fallen off the path to the wicked world below.

The early S. D. A. pioneers, including E. G. White, felt forced to conclude that the door of probation had closed, because they had linked Daniel 8:14 with the parable of the Ten Virgins; thus, they could see no suitable termination of the 2300 days other than October 22, 1844. That they were trying to be faithful to their understanding of Bible truth is indisputable. However, this same commitment to truth also characterized the Open-door Adventists whose understanding of Matthew 25:1-12 was, in fact, correct, while that of the Shut-door believers was not. How can it be valid, then, to say as did Ellen White in 1883 about her continued belief in the Shut-door:

"I was shown in vision and I still believe that there was a Shut door in 1844. All who saw the light of the first and second angels' messages and rejected that light, were left in darkness. And those who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer plead with them."<sup>65</sup>

E. G. White could and did grant a few exceptions, as in the case of William Miller:

"So also I saw that William Miller erred as he was soon to enter the heavenly Canaan, in suffering his influence to go against the truth. Others led hint to this, others must account for it. But angels watch the precious dust of this servant of God, and he will come forth at the sound of the trumpet."<sup>86</sup>

However, Such exceptions did not invalidate what she viewed as the general rule.

It should be noted that what Ellen White meant by the Open-

door Adventists rejecting their faith was not that they no longer believed the gospel of Christ and Him crucified or the soon-coming of Christ in power and glory, but that they did not accept the Shut-door believers' interpretation of what had happened October 22, 1844. Thus, it seems that the Shut-door Adventists had fallen into the very danger which Martin Luther had warned against:

"It is indeed true that some passages of Scripture are dark; however, they contain nothing but precisely that which is found at other places in clear, open passages. But now the heretics come on, understand the dark passages according to their own mind, and contend with them against the clear passages, the foundation of our faith."<sup>87</sup>

The New Testament clearly and repeatedly states that if we believe that Christ died for our sins and if we accept Him as Savior and Lord, we are justified through His blood (Romans 5:6-11). How, then, could someone in 1844-1851, who by faith had accepted the clear gospel message of the New Testament, be lost because he or she did not accept the Shut-door Adventists' understanding of Daniel 8:14?

The problem with making correct understanding of the difficult passages of Scripture (and Daniel 8:14 is surely a difficult verse, compared with John 3:16) a salvation issue is that a person's salvation then rests upon correct knowledge, rather than on Christ alone. It should be emphasized again at this point that the reason the Open-door Adventists rejected the first and second angels' messages as given in 1844 was because they correctly understood at that time that the parable of the Ten Virgins applied to the Second Coming. In fact, their interpretation of this parable was endorsed by Ellen White herself in 1900,<sup>88</sup> and if she had correctly interpreted the parable in 1845, she would have

found herself among the group of Adventists whom she had labeled forever damned.

It was the Shut-door Adventists' very preoccupation with attempting to correctly understand every aspect of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 that prevented them from achieving any clear understanding of the gospel. Joseph Bates, writing in Second Advent Wad Marks and High Heaps in April, 1847, explains why the Shut-door and the gospel were not compatible:

"Paul's open door, then, was the preaching of the gospel with effect to the Gentiles. Now let this door be shut, and the preaching of this gospel will have no effect. This is what we say is the fact. The gospel message ended at the appointed time with the closing of the 2300 days; and almost every honest believer that is watching the signs of the times will believe it."<sup>89</sup>

Perhaps, the most accurate presentation of the pioneers' concept of the gospel is given by James White:

"The keeping of the fourth commandment is all important present truth; but this alone will not save anyone. We must keep all ten of the commandments, and strictly follow all the directions of the New Testament, and have living, active faith in Jesus. Those who would be found ready to enter the Saints' rest, at the appearing of Christ, must live wholly, wholly for Jesus now."<sup>90</sup>

In addition, James White held to anti-trinitarian views which denied the full deity of Christ:

"The way spiritualizers this way have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural trinitarian creed, viz., that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain Scripture testimony in abun-

dance that he is the Son of the eternal God.<sup>91</sup>

It would seem that an accurate understanding of the gospel of justification by faith alone and of the full deity of our Lord Jesus Christ is much more centrally important to salvation than a proper understanding of Daniel 8:14. Yet, though our pioneers certainly lacked such an understanding, none today would level against them the judgment with which they condemned other contemporary Christians, namely that the door was shut to them because of their hesitation to accept what Shut-door adherents considered to be essential truths.

## FOOTNOTES

1. A. Hale, J. Turner, "Has not the Bridgroom Come as the Savior," *The Advent Mirror*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 1845, p. 3.
2. *Ibid.* p. 4.
3. Willaim Miller, "Extract of a Letter from Bro. Miller," *The ax Star*, Vol. 5, no. 4, March 11, 1845, p. 13.
4. Bro. Williamson, "Letter from Bro. Williamson, *The Day Star*, Vol. 5. no. 1, Feb. 18, 1845, p. 1.
5. "No Union with the World, *The Day Star*, Vol. 5, no. 3, March 4, 1845, p. 11.
6. Enoch Jacobs, "The Path of the Just,\* *The ay. Star*, Vol. 5, no. 3, March 4, 1845, p. 11.
7. A. Hale, "Has the Bridgroom Come?," *The Advent Herald*, Vol. 9, no. 4, March 5, 1845, p. 27.
8. *Ibid.* p. 26.
9. "To the Believers Scattered Abroad," *The Day Star*, Vol. 5, no. 6, March 25, 1845, p. 21.
10. *Ibid.* p. 22.
11. James White, "Letter from Bro. White," *The ay: Star*, Vol. 7, no. 5, Sept. 6, 1845, p. 17.
12. *Ibid.*
13. James White, "Watchmen, What of the Night," *The Day Star*, Vol. 6, no. 7, Sept. 20, 1845, p. 26.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. F. G. Brown, "The Safe Position," *The Advent Herald*, Vol. 8, no. 23. Jan. 15, 1845, p. 177.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Bro. Storrs, "Has not the Savior Come as a Bridegroom," *The Morning Watch*, Vol. 8, no. 6, Feb. 6, 1845, p. 44.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*

21. J. V. Hines, "Is the Door Shut," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, no. 8, Feb. 6, 1845, p. 44.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. A. Hale, "Has the Bridegroom Come?," The Advent Herald, Vol. 9, no. 4, March 5, 1845, p. 28.
27. Ibid.
28. "To the Believers Scattered Abroad," The Day Star, Vol. 5, no. 6, March 25, 1845, p. 22.
29. Ibid.
30. J. Litich, "Did the Bridgroom Come in 1843," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, no. 15, April 18, 1845, p. 119.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. B. T. Young, "Has the Door of Mercy been Closed," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, no. 8, Feb. 20, 1845, p. 62.
34. Ibid.
35. J. V. Hines, "An Open Door in Canada," The Advent Herald, Vol. 9, no. 4, March 5, 1845, p. 25.
36. J. V. Hines, "Canadian Tour," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, no. 14, April 3, 1845, p. 110.
37. William Miller, "Letter from Bro. Miller," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, no. 12, March 20, 1845, p. 91.
38. "Mutual Conference of Adventist at Albany," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, no. 19, May 8, 1845, p. 150.
39. Ibid. p. 152,
40. "Conference of Adventists at New York," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, no. 20, May 15, 1845, p. 157.
41. "Advent Conference in Boston," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, no. 24, June 12, 1845, p. 186-187.

- 42 . Ibid. p. 187.
- 43 . D.Bartholomew, "Letter from Bro.D.Bartholomew," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, no. 21, May 22, 1845, p. 167.
- 44 . J.V.Hines, "Editorial Correspondence: Visit to Portland with Bro.Miller-- A Good Hearing, State of the Cause-- Duty of Adventists," The Morning Watch, Vol. 8, 24, June 12, 1845, p. 192.
- 45 . raid.
- 46 . James White, Sketches of the Christian Life and Public Labors of William Miller, p. 346.
- 47 . Ibid. p. 364-365.
- 48 . Ibid.
- 49 . Ibid.
- 50 . Ibid. p. 371-372.
- 51 . Ibid. p. 374.
- 52 . Enoch Jacobs, "The Door of Matt. 25:10 is Shut," The Am Star, Vol. 6, no. 7, Sept. 20, 1845, p. 28.
- 53 . J.D.Pickands, "Letter from Bro.Pickands," The Dix Star, Vol. 6, no. 7, Sept. 20, 1845, p. 25.
- 54 . John Pearson Jr., "To the Readers of the line of Israel," The Advent Herald, Vol. 10, no. 4, Sept. 3, 1845, p. 54.
- 55 . Ibid. p. 26.
- 56 . Ibid. p. 27.
- 57 . John Pearson Jr., "Letter from Bro.J.Pearson," The Advent Herald, Vol. 10, no. 7, Sept. 24, 1845, p. 54.
- 58 . Ibid.
- 59 . Ibid.
- 60 . CH Pearson, "Letter from Bro.C.H.Pearson," The Dm Star, Vol. 7, no. 10,
- 61 . CH.Pearson, "Dear Brethren and Sisters of the Household of Faith," The Voice of Truth, Vol. 8, no. 2, Oct. 8, 1845, p. 477.
- 62 . James White, "Letter from Bro. White," The Day Star, Vol. 7, No. 10, Oct. 11, 1845, p. 47.
- 63 . Ibid.

64. Ibid.
65. O. R. L. Crosier, "Letter from Bro. O. R. L. Crosier," *The Day Star* Vol. 7, no. 10, Oct. 11, 1845. p. 50.
66. Present Truth, May 1850, p. 78.
67. O. R. L. Crosier, "Letter from Bro. Crosier," *The Hope of Isreal*, Vol. 3, no. 1, April 17, 1845, p. 4.
68. Lucinda Burdick, "Statement of Lucinda Burdick, Concerning the Shut-Door Visions of Ellen G. Harmon," Sept. 26, 1909.
69. Please refer to Chapter VI for additional documentation that lends credibility to Mrs. Burdicks statement.
70. Hiram Edison, "Letter from Brother Edison," *The Jubilee Standard*, May 29, 1845, p. 90-91.
71. James White, "Watchmen, What of the Night," *The ax Star*, Vol. 6, no. 7, Sept. 20, 1845, p. 26.
72. Ibid.
73. H. B. Woodcock, "The Morning Watch," *The Day Star*, Vol. 8, no. 13, Dec. 20, 1845,
74. F. D. Hahn, "The Time is at Hand," *The ay Dawn*, Vol. 2, no. 2, April 2, 1847, p. 6.
75. Joseph Bates, An Explination of the Typical and Antitypical Sanctuary, by the Scriptures. 1850, p. 10-11.
76. James White, *Word to the Little Flock*, 1847, p. 22.
77. E. G. Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harm, *The Day Star*, Vol. 10, no. 2, March 14, 1846, p. 7.
78. James White, "Letter from Bro. White," *The Day Star*, Vol. 8, no. 9, Nov. 29, 1845, p. 35.
79. E. G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, p. 422.
80. Eli Curtis, "Letter from Bro. Curtis," *The Day Star*, Vol. 8, no. 10 & 11, Dec. 6, 1845, p. 38.
81. E. G. White, "Letter to Bro. Eli Curtis," *A Word to the Little Flock*, P. 12.
82. E. G. Harmon, "Letter from Sister Hanson," *The Day Star*, Vol. 9, no. 7 & 8, Jan, 24, 1846, p. 31.

83. E. G. Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harmon," *The Day Star*, Vol. 10, no. 2, March 14, 1846, p. 7.
84. E. G. White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," *The Present truth*, Vol. 1, no. 3, Aug, 1849, p. 22.
85. E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 63.
86. E. G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, 1858, p. 120.
87. Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther says: An Anthology*, Vol. 1, p. 75.
88. E. G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 422.
89. Joseph Bates, *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps*, 1847, p. 67-68.
90. James White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," *Present Truth*, Vol. 1, no. 2, July 1849, p. 6.
91. James White, "Letter from Bro. White," *The Day Star*, Vol. 9, no. 7 & 8, Jan. 24, 1846, p. 61.

## Chapter IV

### THE SHUT DOOR AND CHRIST'S ENTRANCE INTO THE MOST HOLY PLACE

As mentioned in Chapter III, it was Joseph Turner's concept of Christ's coming as the Bridegroom to the heavenly marriage (published in the Advent Mirror in January, 1845) that initially allowed the Shut-door Adventists to retain faith both in the October 22 date and in the Shut door. Turner tended to see the priestly work of Christ as finished, which implied that all true believers were already sealed and could not be lost. Since sins were no longer being forgiven, it was a short step from this assumption to a belief in the perfectionism of man.

Although E. G. White's vision of February, 1845 helped to correct the errors of Turner's view of the Bridegroom by showing that Christ did indeed have a continuing ministry in the Most Holy Place, she continued to perpetuate the Shut-door error by linking it with Christ's entrance into the Most Holy Place:

"The Lord has shown me in vision that Jesus rose up, and shut the door, and entered the Holy of Holies, at the 7th month, 1844. . ." <sup>1</sup>

As she understood it, when Christ's work as High Priest in the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary ceased on October 22, 1844, He had shut that door and opened the door into the Most Holy Place. This same February, 1845 vision underlined what she saw to be the critical importance of understanding that Christ had moved from the Holy into the

Most Holy Place. It also showed the condition of those shut out in Oct. 22, 1844.

"Then Jesus rose up from the throne and most of those who were bowed down rose up with him. And I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to this careless multitude after he rose up, and they were left in perfect darkness. . .

Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to him in the holiest, and pray, 'My Father, give us thy Spirit.' Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.

I turned to look at the company who were still posed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. 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, 'Father, give us thy Spirit.' Satan would then breathe upon 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." <sup>2</sup>

That the Adventist regarded what Ellen White related in vision as finding its fulfillment in their time, rather than at some point in the future, is clarified by an article in Present Truth, December, 1849 by David Arnold. After making an extensive parallel of the parable of the Ten Virgins with the Adventist experience of 1844 and onward, he explains the significance of Christ's entering the Most Holy Place and shutting the door to the first apartment. Just as the typical High Priest fulfilled Lev. 16:17, so also Christ in the antitypical fulfillment in 1844 would:

“ . . . . . cease to be a priest in the first apartment of the true tabernacle for the sins of the whole world, and put on the holy garments, and, with the true Israel of God inscribed on His breast-plate of Judgment, go in with them before the mercy-seat, . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Further in the article he continues that Christ,

passed within the second veil, bearing before the Father, on the breast-plate of judgment, all for whom he is now acting as intercessor. If this is the position that Christ now occupies, then there is no intercessor in the first apartment; and in vain do misguided souls knock at the door saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us'." <sup>4</sup>

Arnold goes on to answer the objection that children below the age of accountability can not now be saved by commenting:

"...as they were then in a state of innocency, they were intitled to a record upon the breast plate of Judgment as much as those who had sinned and received pardon; and are therefore subjects to the present intercession of our great high priest."<sup>5</sup>

Further, in order to counter all the claims of conversions which were being advanced as proof that the door was not shut,

Arnold wrote:

"Therefore they are converted to the religion of the various sects; but not to God, and the high and holy standard of the Bible. The prophet Hosea saw this timer and for 'our learning and guide' has written, 'They have dealt treacherously against the Lord; for they have begotten strange children'." <sup>6</sup>

Lest it be argued that Ellen White herself did not agree with Arnold's conclusions, it should be noted that she refers to Hosea 5:6-7 in the same manner and for the same purpose when writing in the Present Truth of March, 1850:

"The excitements and false reformations of this day do not move us, for we know that the Master of the house rose up in 1844, and shut the door of the first apartment of the heavenly tabernacle; and now we certainly expect that they will 'go with their flocks', 'to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself (within the second veil from them'. The Lord has shown me that the power which is with them is a mere human influence, and not the power of God.

"Those who published the 'Watchman' have removed the land-marks. I saw, two months ago, that their time would pass by; and then some honest souls, who had been deceived by this time, will have a chance to receive truth. I saw that most of those who preach this new time do not believe it themselves. I saw that our message was not to the sheperds who have led the flock astray, but to the poor hungry, scattered sheep."

It should be noted that in this last paragraph Ellen White is referring primarily to Adventists who did not have the truth concerning the Shut-door and the Sabbath. To a lesser degree she may have been willing to include other Christians who had not heard the Advent message; however, she is not here including sinners or the wicked world. A more complete treatment of this point is given in Chapter VI.

That the Shut-door Adventists saw Christ's entrance into the Most Holy Place in terms of the close of probation is made abundantly clear in an article by James White in the May, 1850 Present Truth:

"At that point of time [1844] the Midnight Cry was given, the work for the world was closed up, and Jesus passed into the Most Holy Place to receive the Kingdom, and cleanse the Sanctuary."<sup>8</sup>

He continues by explaining that the reason the advent believers no longer felt a burden for sinners was that Christ had entered the Most Holy Place and shut the door. While objecting to the idea that the door of mercy was closed, James White clearly states that any sinner ". . . who had rejected the offer of salvation, was left without an advocate, when Jesus passed from the Holy Place, and Shut that door in 1844."<sup>9</sup>

Of the churches who had rejected the Advent message he writes:

“. . . they go 'to seek the Lord', as still an advocate for sinners; but, says the prophet Hosea

5:6,7 , 'They shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord; for they have begotten strange child ren. <sup>10</sup>

O. R. L. Crosier was the first Adventist to write out a complete understanding of Christ's entrance as High Priest into the Most Holy Place. Of Crosier Ellen White wrote in 1847:

"The Lord shew me in vision more than one year ago that Brother Crosier had the true light on the cleansing of the sanctuary, and that it was his will, that Brother C. should write out his view which h J1 gave us in the Day Star extra, February 7, 1846.

It was Crosier's basic contention that every aspect of the type in the levitical earthly tabernacle and its service must be fulfilled. From there he attempted to show how Christ had fulfilled all the Jewish yearly festivals, save for the Day of Atonement. This, he contended, must be fulfilled at the end of the 2300 days in 1844, which must take place in the heavenly sanctuary above, since the earthly sanctuary had been destroyed in 70 A. D. Crosier specifically deals with Hebrews 6:19-20 and Hebrews 9 and denies that either of these passages refers to Christ's entrance into the Most Holy Place at his ascension. Thus, the traditional Adventist understanding of Christ's entering the Most Holy Place in 1844 rests on the assumption that Crosier correctly understood Hebrews to be showing that Christ entered the Holy and not the Most Holy Place at his ascension.

Unfortunately, Crosier's basic argument that as in the type, so in the antitype is faulty. He employs this assumption to demonstrate the need for the future fulfillment of the Day of Atonement in the anti-type because the heavenly sanctuary must have a Holy and Most Holy Place,

as did the type. However, following the same faulty reasoning one could also conclude that Christ must be sacrificed often in order to fulfill all the various offerings in the type.

Importantly, rather than emphasizing the parallels between Christ's sacrifice and the levitical sanctuary service, Hebrews continually emphasizes the contrasts between and the superiority of Christ's High Priestly work over that of the earthly high priests

Christ As <u>High Priest</u>	<u>Earthly High Priest</u>
1. Without sin	Sinful
2. Lives forever	Died
3. His sacrifice completely dealt with sin	Blood of animals could not remove sin
4. Has complete and full access to God	Limited access but once a year
5. His work was finished and He sat down at God's right hand	His work was never finished

That Crosier's interpretation of Hebrews is indeed seriously flawed has been well demonstrated, not only by theologians such as Norman H. Young<sup>12</sup> and Desmond Ford<sup>13</sup>, but also by the primary testimony of the Scrip-

tures themselves. While it is true that the Greek word ta hagia can be translated, "holy place", "Most Holy Place", or "Sanctuary", it is the context of Hebrews 9 and 10 which indicates positively that ta hagia is meant to apply to the Most Holy Place in Hebrews 9:12, 25-28, 10:19-20. Thus, the context supports the New International Version's translation of ta hagia:

"He (Christ) did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place

once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 1:12, NIV).

The wonderful message of Hebrews which the early Adventists overlooked was that because Christ had already made a complete atonement for sins (Heb. 9:26, 28; 10:12), sinful man who accepts by faith Christ's completed atonement can "... have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us, through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith. . ." (Heb. 10:19-22, NIV)

At this point it is important to note that Crosier had repudiated both the Shut-door and his Sanctuary teaching by 1899. In a letter written that year, he explains:

"When 'the 10th day of the 7th month' time passed in the fall of 1844, he [William Miller] and others (with few exceptions) who were interested in the Midnight Cry, as they called it, believed that the door of mercy was then shut—that no more sinners would or could be converted. That opinion prevailed in 1845 and 1846. In the latter year I published in an Extra of The Day Star, a paper published by Enoch Jacobs, at Cincinnati, an exposition of the Sanctuary and its service in the Law of Moses, to explain how and why the door of mercy was shut. On account of our ignorance of the Scriptures my argument was more fully and more widely accepted than it deserved to be. In the next three years (47-49) I saw and published its defects as to the Shut door."<sup>14</sup>

Mention should also be made of the Dorchester vision given Ellen White in November of 1848, which has often been cited by Adventist apologists as evidence that at least by November, 1848 Mrs. White clearly envisioned an Open-door ministry of salvation for the whole world. To further substantiate this claim the apologists quote a state-

ment in Life Sketches (1915 edition) in which E. G. White writes:

"After coming out of vision, I said to my husband: 'I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first: but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown me to be like streams of light that went clear around the world.'"<sup>14</sup>

This, indeed, would be an important exhibit in support of the premise that Mrs. White no longer believed that the door of salvation was closed to sinners, if it could be shown that she actually expressed this in November, 1848. The first written account of this vision comes from<sup>g</sup> Joseph Bates who recorded Mrs. White's words while she was in vision:

"Yea, publish the things thou hast seen and heard, and the blessing of God will attend. Look yet that rising is in strength, and grows brighter and brighter. That truth is the seal, that's why it comes last. The Shut door we have had. God has taught and taught, but that experience is not the Seal."<sup>15</sup>

Thus, Bates records her reference to the Shut-door shortly after she speaks of publishing the truth. However, nothing in this version of the vision indicates a world-wide publishing ministry of salvation to the whole world. Moreover, apparently even James White did not perceive any Open-door implications in this vision, because the magazine which he published as a direct result of this vision WAS dedicated to explaining that salvation for sinners had ended in 1844 when Christ had shut the door!

One further consideration is the fact that nowhere in the 1880

edition of Life Sketches is any mention made of this Dorchester vision. Neither does it indicate that at this time E. G. White clearly realized that their publishing work would herald a message of salvation to the entire world.<sup>16</sup> The first mention of anything resembling the Dorchester vision is not offered by Mrs. White until 1887, and even then the time and location of the vision are not identified.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the Dorchester vision cannot successfully be used to explain away the many Shut-door visions that Ellen White did have from 1844-1851—visions which can be dated in articles published during that time period.

## FOOTNOTES

1. E. G. White, "Letter to Eli Curtis," A Word to the Little Flock, 1847, p. 12.
2. E. G. Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harmon," The Day Star, Vol. 10. no. 7, March 14, 1846, p. 7.
3. David Arnold, "The Shut Door Explained," The Present Truth, Vol. 1, no. 6, p. 44.
4. Ibid. p. 45.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. p. 46.
7. E. G. White, The Present Truth, Vol. 1, no. 8, p. 84.
8. James White, "The Sancturay, 2300 Days, and the Shut Door," The Present Truth, Vol. 1, no. 10, May 1850, p. 78.
9. Ibid., p. 79.
10. Ibid.
11. E. G. White, "Letter to Eli Curtis," A Word to the Little Flock, 1847, p. 12.
12. See Appendix VI, Norman H. Young, "The Checkered History of the Phrase 'Within the Veil', "Cited in D. Ford's Daniel 8:14 : The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment, p. A-16 - A-23.
13. See Appendix VII, Ibid., p. 115-127.
14. O. R. L. Crosier, "Letter to A. F. Dagger, Feb. 20, 1899.
15. E. G. White, Life sketches of E. G. White, 1915, p. 125.
16. See Appendix VIII, Joseph Bates version of the Nov. 1848 Dorcestor Vision.
17. James & Ellen White, Life Sketches of Bid. James White and His Wife, Mrs. Ellen G. White, 1880, p. 254-260.
18. E. G. White, Review and Herald, Vol. 64, no. 30, July 26, 1887, p. 466.

## Chapter V

### THE SHUT DOOR AND THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

To the Adventist pioneers the first angel's message had been fulfilled in the Midnight Cry that Christ was coming October 22, 1844. The second angel's message found fulfillment in true Adventists leaving the churches that had rejected Miller's date setting. Finally, when they came upon the Seventh-day Sabbath they embraced it as the perfect fulfillment of the third angel's message of Revelation 14:1-12.

In her March 24, 1849 vision Ellen White saw that it was only after the door to the Holy Place had been shut and the door opened to the Most Holy Place that the true light of the Sabbath was to shine forth.<sup>1</sup> Thus, to believe that one could find access to God in the same way he had before 1844 would be to deny that the door was shut.

"I saw that the enemies of the present truth have been trying to open the door of the Holy Place that Jesus has shut, and to close the door of the Most Holy Place, which he opened in 1844, where the Ark is, containing the two tables of stone on which are written the ten commandments by the finger of Jehovah."

The seriousness with which the pioneers considered this change of access to God is indicated by Ellen White's comparison of the Jews' inability, following their rejection of Christ, to find God in the same way their forefathers had with the Adventist experience of 1844. Writing as late as 1884 in *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, she says:

"The condition of the unbelieving Jews illus-

trates the condition of the careless and unbelieving among professed Christians, who are willingly ignorant of the work of our merciful High Priest. In the typical service, when the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place, all Israel were required to gather about the sanctuary, and in the most solemn manner humble their soul] before God, that they might receive the pardon of their sins, and not be cut off from the congregation. How much more essential in this anti-typical day of atonement that we understand the work of our High Priest, and know what duties are required of us."<sup>3</sup>

She continues by asserting that the present duty required of us is to keep the Seventh-day Sabbath.

This belief, then, served to reinforce the Shut-door Adventists' conviction that there were no true conversions taking place among other Christians or Open-door Adventists, because these professed converts did not accept the Sabbath test of the third angel's message.

Writing in the December, 1850 Review and Herald, Joseph Bates asserts:

"We know that these people are saying, and will insist, that they have reclaimed hundreds of backsliders, and that scores have been converted to God, under their teaching, since the Albany Conference of 1845 (a meeting of Open-door Adventists) .

"We say, that as long as they continue rebellious against their lawful Prince, it is morally impossible for them to beget for him one peaceful subject. God has a true test, by which to try every individual since the Midnight Cry. It is 'the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.' Rev. 14:9-12g

In the January, 1851 Review and Herald Bates continued his attempt to demonstrate the interrelationship between the Sabbath and the Shut-door and to show that the term "shut door" included all sinners and backsliders:

"When the Master of the house (the Lord Jesus) rose up and shut to the door, all honest believers, that had submitted to his will, and children that had not arrived to the years of accountability, were undoubtedly borne in on his breast-plate of Judgment which is over his heart. The names of all that fully keep the commandments are retained. Those that do not, will have their names erased before Jesus leaves the Holiest. . . Sinners and backsliders cannot get their names on the breastplate of Judgment now."<sup>5</sup>

While E. G. White conceded in a vision of 1847 at Topsham, Maine that there were some of God's children who as yet did not see and keep the Sabbath<sup>6</sup>, the implications of this change of access were, nonetheless, clear. Prior to 1844 people could be saved without Sabbath observance, because the door into the Most Holy Place had not been opened. However, after 1844 salvation for non-Sabbatarians was not possible, for the shutting of the door in 1844 was just as significant to the Adventist pioneers as was the death of Christ in A. D. 31. They sincerely believed that as the Jews who did not accept Christ as Messiah were shut out from God, so were all those who after 1844 did not accept the new way of access to God through the Most Holy Place, by means of the Sabbath test.

While Adventists today project this test into the future, till sometime just prior to Christ's Second Coming, the Advent pioneers believed that in 1844 they had already entered those last days. Thus, after stating that the Sabbath was a test, E. G. White wrote in his vision of March 24, 1849:

"Satan is now using every device in this sealing time to keep the minds of God's people from the present truth [Sabbath] ; and to cause them to waver."<sup>7</sup>

The question that surfaces at this point is, if there is to be a test of obedience to God, should it be a doctrine that can only be understood in light of the faulty prophetic interpretation of the Shut-door Adventists, or should it not rather be a truth clearly enjoined upon the Gentile believers in the New Testament? Ellen White makes clear the relationship she saw between the Shut-door and the Sabbath in the same March, 1849 vision:

“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.”<sup>8</sup>

The fact remains,<sup>\*</sup> however, that in all of the epistles written to Gentile believers, not one commands Sabbath-keeping. Nor is it ever listed as one of the sins that will certainly keep one from the kingdom of heaven. To the contrary, Paul warns-- not once, but three times --against forcing Gentile believers to keep holy days, including the Sabbath, which were only shadows, the reality being Christ (Rom. 14:5-6; Col. 2:16, 17; Gal. 4:10). Moreover, where does the New Testament even hint that the centrality and glory of Calvary will be eclipsed by yet another equally important event in salvation history, and that believers will be able to gain access to heaven only through a means other than that one and only gospel affirmed by the apostle Paul? Do we not find, rather, that the S. D. A. pioneers, for all their sincerity, managed to turn people away from the clarity of the

gospel and back into Old Covenant shadows?

In fact, this sense of another gospel's being espoused is very clearly indicated in a vision Mrs. White experienced in Oswego, N. Y. on July 29, 1850:

"Then I saw those whose hands are now engaged in making up the breach and are standing in the gaps, that have formerly since '44 broken the Commandments of God and have so far followed the pope as to keep the first day instead of the Seventh, would have to go into the water and be baptized in the faith of the Shut door and keeping the Commandments of God and in the faith of Jesus coming to sit on the throne of his Father David and to redeem Israel."<sup>9</sup>

Finally, at the close of the March 24, 1849 vision E. G. White speaks of the attempts at reformation and conversion of sinners by those who did not recognize that the door was shut. Here she makes strong Shut-door and close of probation statements:

"I saw that the mysterious signs and wonders, and false reformations would increase and spread. The reformations that were shown me, were not reformations from error to truth; but from bad to worse; for those who professed a change of heart, had only wrapt about them a religious garb, which covered ma the iniquity of a wicked heart. Sane appeared to have been really converted, so as to deceive God's people; but if their hearts could be seen, they would appear as black as ever.

"My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked, but could not see it; for the time of their salvation was past."<sup>90</sup>

Republishing this vision in 1851 in Experience and Views, Mrs. White omitted the underlined sentences. Further, in a Supplement to Experience and Views, published in 1854, Ellen White relocates

to a time in the future the false reformations, and attempts to explain that it is those who have rejected the light on the Advent doctrine who no longer have travail of soul for sinners.

In fact, however, the context demands that these reformations were, as White saw it, the result of those who were the enemies of present truth; for she saw them in the early part of the vision,

“.....trying to open the door of the Holy Place, that Jesus had shut; and to close the door of the Most Holy Place, which he opened in 1844, where the Art is, containing the two tables of stone, on which are written the ten commandments by the finger of Jehovah.”

Furthermore, it was the Shut-door believers who no longer, according to the vision, had travail of soul for sinners, because they no longer believed that sinners could be converted. James White makes this point clear when he writes of the Advent experience after 1844 in the June 9, 1851 Review and Herald:

"A few days before the tenth of the Seventh month, thousands were running to and fro, giving the cry, and papers containing the message were scattered everywhere, like the leaves of autumn. But about the tenth, every Advent paper was stopped, and the traveling brethren returned to their homes, feeling that they had given their last message to the world. The state of feeling throughout the entire body of Advent believers can be accounted for in no other way, than that a change then took place in the position of the 'Vine' (Jesus), and the living 'branches' felt it. And as he ceased to plead for the world, and moved within the second veil, the living branches were called away from the world, and their sympathy was with Jesus, and with each other."<sup>13</sup>

Finally, Ellen White's statement, "Some appeared to be converted, so as to deceive God's people. . . ."<sup>14</sup> must also be understood

in the context in which it was given. How could these conversions deceive God's children? Apparently, by convincing them that the door was not in fact shut. Writing in the December, 1849 Present Truth just four months after Mrs. White's March 14, 1849 vision first appeared in print, David Arnold argued:

"The professed conversions, through the instrumentality of the different sects, are also urged as positive proof that the door is not shut. I cannot give up the clear fulfillment of prophecy, in our experience, which shows the Shut door in the past, for the opinions, fancies and feelings of men, based upon human sympathy and a superstitious reverence for early imbibed views. God's Word is true, though it prove all men liars."<sup>15</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

1. E. G. White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," Present Truth, Vol. 1, no. 3, August, 1859, p. 4.
2. Ibid.
3. E. G. White, The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 4, p. 270.
4. Joseph Bates, The Review and Herald, Vol. 1, no. 3, Dec., 1850, P. 24.
5. Joseph Bates, "Duty to Our Children," The Review and Herald, Vol. 1, no. 5, Jan. 1851, p. 39.
6. E. G. White, Early Writings, p. 33.
7. E. G. White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," The Present Truth, Vol. 1, no. 3, August, 1849, p. 21.
8. Ibid.
9. E. G. White, Vision in Oswego, N. Y., Dated July 29, 1850, copied by Hiram Edson, See Appendix XII For the full text of this vision.
10. E. G. White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," The Present Truth, Vol. 1, no. 3, August, 1849, p. 22.
11. See Appendix XI, An Example of the Continued Suppression of Shut-door Statements in E. G. White's Writings.
12. E. G. White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," The Present Truth, Vol. 1, no. 3, August, 1849, p. 21.
13. James White, The Review and Herald Vol. 1, no. 13, June 9, 1851, p. 102.
14. E. G. White, <sup>9E</sup>. cit.
15. David Arnold, "The Shut Door Explained," The Present Truth, Vol. , no. 6, December, 1849, p. 45-46.

## Chapter VI

### THE CRITICS' AND THE PIONEERS' REMEMBRANCES OF THE SHUT DOOR YEARS

As we consider the testimony of both defenders and critics of Ellen White as they look back in later years, we must be aware of several factors which are bound to affect the accuracy of any such testimony. First of all, memory can be selective or faulty, and thus, even the most honest recollections can mislead. Ellen white herself acknowledged in 1883 that she no longer had access to some of her early printed visions and desired that any who had possession of her visions published before 1851 send them to her.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, because Mrs. White's visions during the Shut-door era had become a point of controversy, it is a real possibility that an overly zealous attempt either to defend or to discredit her gift could lead both her critics and the pioneers to consciously or unconsciously offer only a partial and thus distorted account of the facts. Because of these two quite likely possibilities, we will attempt to check the reliability of the testimony of critics and pioneers by perusing the primary documents published during the Shut-door years, 1845 - 1851.

In *Ellen G. White and the Shut-door Question* Arthur White devotes several pages to an attempt to demonstrate from the testimony of S. D. A. pioneers that James and Ellen White were not Shut-door adherents, since they actively sought the conversion of sinners from 1845 - 1851.<sup>2</sup> On page 21 Arthur white draws attention to the testimony of a Mrs. Truesdail, who in the summer of 1845 was concerned about a friend that had been pre-

vented from attending Adventists meetings. Mrs. Truesdail was subsequently assured by E. G. Harmon that, "God never has shown me that there was no salvation for such persons."<sup>3</sup>

In this incidence we find Ellen Harmon expressing the same understanding of the Shut-door as that explained by Hale and Turner's Advent Mirror of January, 1845:

"We know that at the closing of the door of mercy, all who fear God and work righteousness, according to the Light they have, must be embraced by his arms of mercy; though as the measure of the light they have differs, the apparent form of their character must differ. And there may be changes in the form of their character, which we might call conversions, though it would imply no change in their inward character before God. That such may be found, for whom we should labour, there can be no doubt; and in fact, it is with such a class only, few indeed is their number, that our labours are in any sense successful."

Certainly, both E. G. Harmon and Joseph Turner, who was considered an extreme Shut-door believer, could agree that the young woman mentioned by Mr. Truesdail was one who did "fear God and work righteousness according to the Light" she had.

Arthur White proceeds by quoting from J. N. Loughborough to the effect that immediately after the February, 1845 vision in Exeter James and Ellen White, "labored for some who made no profession before 1844, which was directly contrary to the practice of those who held the extreme view of the Shut-door."<sup>5</sup> However, a full examination of Loughborough's account published in the September 25, 1866 Review and Herald reveals two crucial paragraphs which precede the one Arthur White quotes:

"The question came up, that evening, whether Sister White believed in the doctrine of the Shut-door after the time passed in 1844. Said Bro. White, in

response to this question, Bro. Carver, I will make an admission to you, which, of course I would not make in public to a sharp opponent. She did believe it”<sup>6</sup>

Referring in the next paragraph to the Exeter vision of 1845, James White continues:

“..... Considering her youthfulness, and her belief in the Shut door and the views of the Advent people, it would not have been considered very strange, if her vision had received a coloring, in writing it out.”<sup>7</sup>

It should be remembered that James White's conversation with H. E. Carver was in the context of a heated controversy over E. G. White's Shut-door visions and that within a few months of that conversation Carver, Snook, and Brinkerhoff were to reject Mrs. White as a prophet of God, subsequently leaving the S. D. A. church.

James white may well have wished to believe that he and Ellen were actively preaching to sinners immediately following February, 1845: however, all of the evidence indicates the contrary. Even Robert Olson of the White Estates acknowledges that the evidence demonstrates that Mrs. White believed her visions taught the close of probation until 1847.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, in the fall of 1845 James White held that the Atonement had ended October 22, 1844.<sup>9</sup> Just what James and other Shut-door believers meant by the Atonement's having ended on October 22, 1844 is clear from an account by John F. Lewis, a fellow Shut-door believer, in the October 25, 1845 Day Star:

"On the 10th day of the 7th month, the Priest

always entered into the Holy of Holies, and after an atonement, came out on the same day and blessed the people. This type had its complete fulfillment, or anti-type last fall. . .

"There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary,' and consequently there are no more offerings for sinners. The gospel dispensation is ended. So far as the salvation of sinners is concerned, it would seem the Judge has decided their case. And their execution is now pending. 'Why then stand ye without, knocking, and saying, Lord, Lord, open to us!' Know ye not that the blood of Christ can not avail any longer, with the Father, for the world? Seeking mercy, by those whose condemnation is sealed, upon their very foreheads only serves to provoke the Divine Justice: For 'when once the master of the house hath risen up and shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and knock, saying Lord, Lord, open unto us,' he will then say depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you.'"<sup>10</sup>

Lest any offer as apology that James White did not fully agree with John Lewis, let us examine James' own statements coming as late as May, 1850, concerning the Shut-door:

"When we came up to that point of time [Oct., 1844] all our sympathy, burdens and prayers for sinners eased, and the unanimous feeling and testimony was, that our work for the world was finished forever."<sup>11</sup>

Several paragraphs further he continues:

"He is still merciful to his Saints, and ever will be; and Jesus is still their advocate and priest. But the sinner, to whom Jesus had stretched out his arms all day long, and who rejected the offer of salvation, was left without an advocate, when Jesus passed from the Holy Place, and shut the door in 1844."<sup>12</sup>

That James and Ellen White did actively labor to spread the

third angel's message to Adventists who had accepted the first and second angels' messages is clear from a vision Ellen had at Topsham, Maine in 1847:

"I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected light upon it."<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the fact that James and Ellen White sought to bring the Sabbath truth to Bro. and Sister Patch does not adequately argue against the fact that they believed probation had closed for sinners in 1844, as Arthur White contends.<sup>14</sup>

Nor was it inconsistent with their Shut-door beliefs to see James and Ellen White concerned about the salvation of children, for as Joseph Bates explained in the January, 1851 Review and Herald:

"When the Master of the house (the Lord Jesus) rose up and shut to the door all honest believers, that had submitted to his will, and children that had not arrived to the years of accountability, were undoubtedly borne in on his breast-plate of Judgment which is over his heart. . .

"It is true, some persons that are ignorant of this message may, and undoubtedly will be saved if they die before Jesus leaves the Holiest. I mean those that were believers before 1844. Sinners and backsliders cannot get their names on the breast- plate of judgment now. "<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the view of the Shut-door as explained by Bates harmonizes with the testimony of various believers, including Ira Abby, who remembered James and Ellen White's concern for the salvation of the children.

Even the experience of Herman Churchill, who made no public confession of religion until 1845, can be harmonized with Hale's and Turner's original understanding of the Shut-door. As the August, 1850

Advent Review makes clear, "He had never opposed the Advent, and it is evident that the Lord had been leading him, though his experience had not been just like ours."<sup>16</sup> Thus, Churchill could have been one whom Hale and Turner viewed as honest in heart and who was, as such, embraced in God's arms of mercy when the door was shut.<sup>17</sup>

As late as April of 1851 the Shut-door was still defined by James White as excluding rebellious sinners. In response to a Brother Truesdail, who wished to know what the Shut-door meant, James White replied:

". . . We believe that those who heard the everlasting gospel message and rejected it or refused to hear it are excluded by it. We have no message for such."<sup>18</sup>

Those who could still be converted were erring brethren-- open-door and first-day Adventists;<sup>19</sup> children who had not reached the age of accountability in 1844;<sup>20</sup> and precious souls in the churches who had rejected the Miller's message, but who were themselves living up to all the light that they possessed. When these would hear the third angel's message (the Sabbath), they would be converted from error to the truth.<sup>21</sup>

The point that must be repeated is that a thorough examination of all the Shut-door believers' writings from 1845 - 1851 does not yield even the faintest suggestion that the gospel could still be proclaimed to a wicked world. Even Uriah Smith, writing in defense of Ellen White's early visions in the June 19, 1866 Review and Herald, comments:

"So far therefore, as individual cases are concerned, the visions do positively teach that there are some, how many we of course know not, whose pro-

bation has not yet ceased, but who are yet to be converted to God or sealed to destruction. . . But for the world, the wicked in general, we can not pray. Our prayers could neither reach nor benefit them. Their hearts are hopelessly closed against the reception of truth, by which alone people can be sanctified and saved."<sup>22</sup>

Now let us examine the testimony of several who in later years became critics of E. G. White. In reading the testimony of those who had heard E. G. Harmon in 1845, we should note that Robert Olson has recently commented that Ellen Harmon misunderstood her first vision of December, 1844 to mean, ". . . that no one could accept Christ after October 22, that only the Little Flock remaining in the household of faith would be saved. and that everyone else would be lost."<sup>23</sup>

If that is the case it should not be surprising that we find critics recalling incidents such as those following:

"John Megquier, Saco, Me., a man noted for his integrity, writes: 'We well know the course of Ellen G. White, the visionist, while in the state of Maine. About the first visions she had were in my house in Poland. She said that God had told her in vision that the door of mercy had closed, and that there was no more chance for the world.' The True Sabbath by Miles Grant, p. 70."<sup>24</sup>

Concerning Ellen White, Mrs. Lucinda Burdick wrote:

"Ellen was having what was called visions: said God had shown her in vision that Jesus Christ arose on the tenth day of the seventh-month, 1844, and Shut the door of mercy; had left forever the mediatorial throne; the whole world was doomed and lost and there never could be another sinner saved." The True Sabbath, p. 72.<sup>25</sup>

O. R. L. Crosier, another shut-door Adventist who wrote out his view of the Sanctuary doctrine in the Day Star Extra of February, 1846, a

view E. G. White endorsed by vision,<sup>25</sup> declared in a letter on December 1, 1887, "Yes, I know that E. G. Harmon, now Mrs. White, held the Shut door theory at that date."<sup>27</sup>

However, Mrs. White responded to at least some of her critics by denying the truthfulness of what Mrs. Burdick and Miles Grant had asserted. In a letter to J. N. Loughborough, August, 1874, she wrote:

"I thereby testify in the fear of God that the charges of Miles Grant, of Mrs. Burdick, and others published in the Crisis are not true. The statements in reference to my course in forty-four are false.

"With my brethren and sisters, after the time passed in forty-four I did believe no more sinners would be converted. But I never had a vision that no more sinners would be converted. . . "<sup>28</sup>

"I never have stated or written that the world was doomed or damned. I never have under any circumstances used this language to anyone, however sinful. I have ever had messages of reproof for those who used these harsh expressions."<sup>29</sup>

Responding to further charges made by critics concerning her early Shut-door statements, she explains in 1883:

"For a time after the disappointment in 1844, I did hold in common with the advent body, that the door of mercy was then forever closed to the world. This position was taken before my first vision was given to me. It was the light given me of God that corrected our error, and enabled us to see our true position."<sup>30</sup>

If indeed Mrs. Burdick did grossly misrepresent Ellen White's vision of 1845, and if her visions did in fact clearly indicate that the door of salvation was open wide to sinners, how can one account for visions given Mrs. White from 1844 to 1851 that harmonize with Mrs. Burdick's

recollection of Mrs. White's vision in the fall of 1845? In fact, almost every point recalled by Mrs. Burdick concerning both James and Ellen Harmon's teachings can be substantiated from published statements and visions recounted during the same time period.

Lucinda Burdick offered a more complete statement of her encounter with James White and Ellen Harmon during 1845, and it is interesting to compare her account with published letters and recorded visions of the Whites<sup>31</sup>:

Burdick's Account

1. In the fall of 1845 she recalls having heard

James White speak:

"In the afternoon of this same Sunday, White preached at the home of Andrew Badge about a half mile from my uncle's residence, and the whole burden of his sermon was that the door of mercy had been closed the tenth-day of the Seventh month in the year of 1844; that there was henceforth no salvation for sinners and that God was revealing himself to his people through visions."

Burdick's Account of the 1845 Visions

1. "I first heard of Miss Ellen G. Harmon (afterwards Mrs. Ellen G. White) in the early winter (Jan. or Feb.) of 1845, when my uncle Josiah Little came to my father's house and repeated that he had seen one Ellen Harmon in the act of having visions which she claimed were given her of God. He said

J. White's Published Letters

1. "The fall of Babylon commenced in the spring of 43 when the churches all around, began to fall into a cold state, and was completed on the 7th month 44, when the last faint ray of hope was taken up from a wicked world and church."32 (September, 1845)

"Bless God, dear Brother, there are many in Maine, who stand firm on the truth, unmoved, fixed, that we have had the 'True Midnight Cry,' and of course the Bridegroom has come, and the door is shut; if not, a true Midnight Cry has told a lie."33 (September 29, 1845)

Other E. G. White Visions

1. White commenting on her Feb., 1845 vision:

"There was one Sister there that was called very spiritual . . . She was truly a mother in Israel. But a division had risen in the band on the Shut door. She had great sympathy, and

that she declares that God revealed to her that the door of mercy was closed forever, and that there was henceforth no salvation for sinners."

could not believe the door shut . . . Most of them received the vision and were settled on the Shut door."<sup>34</sup>

2. "... Jesus Christ had risen from the Mercy Seat and entered the Holy of Holies in heaven, and that the door of mercy was shut forever."

2. "It was then I had a vision of Jesus rising from His mediatorial throne and going to the holiest . . . Most of them received the vision and were settled upon the Shut door."<sup>35</sup> (February, 1845)

3. "... that the world was helply doomed."

3. "It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the city, as all the wicked world which God has rejected."<sup>36</sup>  
(December, 1844)

"Some appeared to have been really converted, so as to deceive God's people; but if their hearts could be seen, they would appear as black as ever, My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked, but could not see it; for the time for their salvation is past."<sup>37</sup> (March 24, 1849)

4. "... The devil had taken possession of the Mercy Seat and was deceiving the people, who were praying for the Holy Spirit, by casting upon them certain exhilarating influences which they mistook for the Spirit."

4. "Then I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne. They did not know that Jesus had left it. 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 upon them an unholy influence."<sup>38</sup> (February, 1845)

Thus, the testimony of the Advent pioneers does confirm that James and Ellen White actively labored for certain classes of people-- Millerites

-94-

(Page was missing in this copy)

## FOOTNOTES

1. E. G. White, Selected Messages, Book I, p. 60.
2. See Appendix IX, Authur White, "Ellen G. White and the Shut-door Question," p. 21, 27-32.
3. Ibid.
4. A. Hale, J. Turner, "Has Not the Savior Come as the Bridegroom," The Advent Mirror, Vol. 1, no. 1, Jan., 1845.
5. J. N. Loughborough, The Review and Herald, Sept. 25, 1866, p. 134.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Robert Olson, One Hundred and One Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White, p. 58-59.
9. James White, "Watchman, What of the Night," The ay Star, Vol. 6, no. 7, Sept. 20, 1845, p. 26. See Ch. III for the full account of his views.
10. J. F. Lewis, "Letter from Bro. Lewis," The lay Star, Vol. 8, no. 2-3, Oct. 25, 1845, p. 8.
11. James White, "The Sanctuary, 2300 days, and the Shut Door," Present Truth, Vol. 1, no. 10, May, 1850, p. 79.
12. Ibid.
13. E. G. White, Experience and Views, 1851, p. 27.
14. See Appendix IX.
15. Joseph Bates, "Duty to our Children," The Review and Herald, Vol. 1, no. 5, Jan. 1851, p. 37.
16. James White, "Our Tour East, The Review and Herald, Vol. 1, no. 2, Aug., 1850, p. 15.
17. A. Hale, J. Turner, 2E,.. cit.
18. James White, "Answering a Letter from Bro. Truesdail," The Review and Hearld, April, 7, 1851, p. 64.
19. Void.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.

22. Uriah Smith, "The Visions -- Objections Answered," The Review and Herald, Vol. 28, no. 3, June, 19, 1866. See Appendix XI.
23. Robert Olson, 2E. cit..
24. D. M. Canright, Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, 1889, p. 143.
25. Ibid.
26. E. G. White, A Word to the Little Flock, 1847, p. 12.
27. D. M. Canright, 22. cite..
28. E. G. White, "Letter to Loughborough," August, 1874, Selected Messages, Book I, p. 74.
29. Ibid.
30. E. G. White, Selected Messages, Book I, p. 63.
31. Lucinda Burdick, Statement of Mrs. Lucinda Burdick, Concerning the Shut Door Visions of Ellen G. Harmon. See Appendix X for the full text.
32. James White, "Watchman, What of the Night," The Day Star, Vol. 6, no. 7, Sept. 20, 1845, p. 26.
33. James White, "Letter from Bro. White," The Day Star, Vol. no. 10. Oct, 11, 1845, p. 46.
34. E. G. White, "Letter to Joseph Bates," July 13, 1847. See Appendix III for the full text.
35. Ibid.
36. E. G. Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harmon," The Day Star, Vol. 9, no. 7-8, Jan. 24, 1846, p. 31. See Appendix IV.
37. E. G. White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," The Present Truth, Vol. 1, no. 3, Aug., 1849, p. 21. See Appendix XI.
38. E. G. Harmon, "Letter from Sister Harmon," The Day Star, Vol. 10, no. 2, March 14, 1846, p. 7. See Appendix V.

## Chapter VII

### THE TRANSITION FROM THE SHUT TO THE OPEN DOOR

As we have noted earlier, the Shut-door Adventists employed the term "open-door" after 1844 to refer to the fact that Christ had on October 22, 1844 shut the door to the Holy Place and opened the door to the Most Holy Place. Their use of this term was very different from that of Open-door Adventists, such as J. V. Himes, who in an article entitled "Open Door in Canada" (March 5, 1845 Advent Herald) rejoiced:

"Our brethren in this region are publishing a free and full salvation to sinners. And they assure me, if ever God heard their prayers and converted souls by their instrumentality, he is doing it now. . ."<sup>1</sup>

The Shut-door Adventists by contrast believed that their work to save sinners and to awaken a formal church was finished. As years passed, they were willing to accept the fact that there might be a few honest-hearted people who were ignorant of the Advent message, or children too young in 1844 to have made a decision, who might yet be converted. Nonetheless, Shut-door adherents remained convinced that the door was shut for four classes of people:

1. Sinners who had rebelliously rejected the gospel prior to October, 1844
2. Professed Christians who had heard and rejected the Advent teaching that Christ was coming in October, 1844
3. Adventists who gave up faith that in October, 1844 the first and second angels' messages had been fulfilled, when Christ

shut the door (In this class some allowance was made for those who had been ignorantly deceived by false sheperds)

4. Those Adventists who had accepted the significance of October 22, 1844, but who later refused to accept the Sabbath or third angel's message

That S. D. A. pioneers still endorsed this view of the Shut-door until at least June of 1851 can be demonstrated by various statements made by Joseph Bates and James White, which appeared in the Review and Herald. Writing in January of 1851, Bates explains:

"When the Master of the house (the Lord Jesus) rose up and shut to the door, all honest believers, that had submitted to his will, and children that had not arrived to the years of accountability, were undoubtedly borne in on his breast-plate of Judgment which is over his heart. The names of all that fully keep the commandments are retained . . .

"It is true, some persons that are ignorant of this message may, and undoubtedly will be saved if they die before Jesus leaves the Holiest. I mean those that were believers before 1844. Sinners and backsliders cannot get their name on the breast-plate of Judgment now."<sup>2</sup>

When James White was asked to define his understanding and use of the term "shut door" in the April 7, 1851 Review and Herald, he offered this explanation:

"Conversion, in the strictest sense, signifies a change from sin to holiness. In this sense we readily answer that it does not 'exclude all conversions', but we believe that those who heard the 'everlasting gospel' message and rejected it, or refused to hear it, are excluded by it. We have no message to such."<sup>3</sup>

He continues by signifying those whom he feels might yet be converted: 1) Erring brethren, meaning Adventists who had been part of the 1844 movement,<sup>4</sup> 2) Children who had not reached the age of accountability

in 1844;<sup>5</sup> and 3) Christians in the churches who had lived up to all the light they possessed, but who had not yet heard or rejected the third angel's message.<sup>6</sup>

In the June, 1851 Review and Herald James White makes further allusions to the Shut-door's meaning that probation had closed:

"But about the tenth, every Advent paper stopped, and the traveling brethren returned to their homes, feeling that they had given their last message to the world. The state of feeling throughout the entire body of Advent brethren can be accounted for in no other way, than that a change then took place in the position of the 'Vine' [Jesus] and the living 'branches' felt it. And as he ceased to plead for the world, and moved within the second veil, the living branches were called away from the world. and their sympathy was with Jesus, and with each other."<sup>7</sup>

Ellen White expressed some strikingly similar ideas in her last recorded Shut-door vision, given in Camden, N. Y., approximately June 20 - 22, 1851:

"Then I saw that Jesus prayed for his enemies; but that should not cause us or lead us to pray for the wicked world, whom God has rejected-- when he prayed for his enemies, there was hope for them, and they could be benefited and saved by his prayers, and also after he was a Mediator in the outer apartment for the whole world; but now his spirit and sympathy were withdrawn from the world; and our sympathy must be with Jesus, and must be withdrawn from the ungodly . . . I saw that the wicked could not be benefited by our prayers now . . . ."<sup>8</sup>

While questions have been raised concerning the authenticity of this vision, it seems proper to accept it as valid for several reasons. First of all, the obvious similarity of expression concerning the mean-

ing of Christ's entrance into the Most Holy Place in 1844 between James White's June Review and Herald article and the Camden Vision is evident.

Secondly, Uriah Smith in 1866 appeared to accept this vision as authentic. This is doubly significant in light of the fact that Snook and Brinkerhoff had rejected Ellen White's prophetic claims in 1865, partly because of this vision. They claimed in a booklet published in 1866 that Mrs. White had acknowledged to them that the Camden Vision was genuine. If, then, this vision was generally regarded as spurious, it would seem that Uriah Smith would have said so.

Instead, writing in the Review and Herald in answer to objections to the visions, Smith said that they would confine themselves to "what had been published under Sr. White's own supervision and by her authority, and what appears in manuscript over her own signature in her own handwriting."<sup>10</sup> Further in the article he quotes several sentences from the Camden Vision to illustrate the Shut-door statements which critics were objecting to:

"His Spirit and sympathy are now withdrawn from the world, and our sympathy should be with him. The wicked could not be benefited by our prayers now. The wicked world whom God has rejected."<sup>11</sup>

When these expressions are compared with parts of the Camden Vision emphasized above, it is apparent that the first three of them are found only in the Camden Vision.

A third indication of the validity of the Camden Vision arises from the fact that its dating does not pose the problem which some who would discredit this vision have suggested. The fact that it is dated June 29, 1851, when Ellen and James were only in Camden from

June 20 - 22<sup>12</sup> is understandable, considering that another vision of Ellen White's, which also occurred at Camden on June 21 of that year, was copied out at Milton, N. Y. and dated June 29, 1851. It is probable, then, that something similar took place with regard to this disputed Camden Vision, viz., in later recopying it retained the June 29, 1851 date.<sup>13</sup>

July 21, 1851 can be cited as offering the first clear indication that a departure from the earlier understanding of the Shut-door towards a more credible position was under way. On this date a Review and Herald Extra, not intended for general circulation, was released in which an interesting reason is given for this transition:

"But as many are prejudiced against the visions, we think it better at present not to insert anything of the kind in the regular paper. We will therefore publish the visions by themselves for the benefit of those who believe that God can fulfill his word and give visions in the last days."<sup>14</sup>

The promise was made that a Review and Herald Extra, which would keep the believers informed of the visions, would be published every two weeks. In fact, no other extra ever appeared, and Ellen White's visions did not reappear in the Review and Herald for over five years. It appears that both James and Ellen White were shocked that her early visions had been erroneous in their support of the belief that probation had closed. Thus, as late as 1855, James continued to distance the Review and Herald from his wife's visions:

"What has the Review to do with Mrs. W.'s views? The sentiments published in its columns are all drawn from the Holy Scriptures. No writer of the Review has ever referred to them as authority on any point.

The Review for five years has not published one of them. Its motto has been, 'The Bible, and the Bible alone, the only rule of faith and duty.' Then why should these men charge the Review with being a supporter of Mrs. W.'s view."<sup>5</sup>

On the first page of the Review and Herald Extra, July 21, 1851, Ellen White traces a sketch of her childhood, conversion, and first visions. Noticeably absent was any mention of the term "Shut-door." On the second page she republishes her December, 1844 vision without change, as it had first appeared in The Day Star of January 24, 1846 with one crucial exception: two incriminating sentences (emphasized below) were omitted:

"Others rashly denied the light behind them, and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out which left their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and got their eyes off the mark and lost sight of Jesus, and fell off the path down in the dark and wicked world below. It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the city, as all the wicked world which God had rejected. They fell all the wax along the path one after another, until we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming."<sup>16</sup>

Concerning this deletion, Mrs. White explained:

"In this view I saw only a very few of the events of the future. More recent views have been more full. I shall therefore leave out a portion and prevent repetition."<sup>17</sup>

Despite her explanation, it is clear that the omitted portion of the vision is repeated nowhere else.

The only mention of any Shut-door ideas in the July 21, 1851

Review and Herald Extra is in connection with the Camden Conference.

It was stated concerning a Brother Thompson who had attended that conference:

"Bro. Thompson was intimately acquainted with Bro. Miller, and traveled much with him. But when our work for the world closed in 1844, instead of setting himself to work, as sane did, to try to re-arouse the churches to the subject of the Advent, he remained silent, until he heard the message of the third angel-- Rev. 14:9-12."<sup>18</sup>

An announcement was also made in this July 21, 1851 Review and Herald Extra of plans to publish Experience and Views, and this was accomplished in August of 1851. It was later republished as the first part of Early Writings in 1883. The first nineteen pages of Experience and Views was a simple reprint of pages one and two of the July 21 Review and Herald Extra.<sup>19</sup> It contained the same Shut-door deletions from her December, 1844 vision, previously mentioned. The remainder of the sixty-four pages contained other of her visions. However, the chronological order of the visions was broken up and some of the visions, of which the February, 1845 Exeter Vision is an example, appear undated under the heading, "End of the 2300 Days" with other visions given in 1850.

Certain visions were only partly reprinted, or at times the vision was divided with parts of it dispersed among several other visions. An example of this was a vision given in Oswego, N. Y., July 29, 1850. Part of this vision is reprinted in two separate places in Experience and Views.<sup>21</sup> The part of the vision that referred to the need to be baptized into the faith of the Shut-door is not reprinted at all.<sup>22</sup> Another vision given on March 24, 1849 was reprinted under the title, "An Open and Shut door." However, key Shut-door phrases were deleted

(as indicated below) and were not reprinted in Experience and Views:

"The reformations that were shown me, were not reformations from error to truth; but from bad to worse; for those who professed a change of heart, had only wrapt about them a religious garb, which covered up the iniquity of a wicked heart. some appeared to have been really converted, so as to deceive God's people; but if their hearts could be seen, they would appear as black as ever. My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked, but could not see it, for the time of their salvation is past."<sup>23</sup>

Other visions, such as her then recent Camden Vision with its strong Shut-door ideas, were not reprinted at all. Still, the Whites offered no other reason for their deletions than Mrs. White's original explanation in the July 31, 1851 Review and Herald Extra, viz., ". . . shall therefore leave out a portion and prevent repetition."

Apparently, some of the advent believers were upset when they noticed that some of the visions had been completely omitted and parts of others deleted. Mrs. White refers to this surprise in a letter written in 1906:

"My husband handed the little pamphlet to Elder Hart, and requested him to read what was printed on the title page. 'A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Mrs. E. G. White,' he read.

"For a moment there was silence, and then my husband explained that we had been very short of means, and were able to print at first only a small pamphlet, and he promised the brethren that when sufficient means was raised, the visions should be published more fully in book form."<sup>25</sup>

This promise was never fulfilled, as Early Writings, published in 1883, merely reprinted Experience and Views with all of its omissions.

While James and Ellen White claimed that economic considerations

prevented a full reprinting of all of her early visions, critics charged them with a deliberate attempt to cover up the fact that her early visions had in fact taught that probation had closed for sinners.<sup>26</sup> This was accomplished, according to the critics, by omitting certain visions, such as the Camden Vision, and of deleting shut-door phrases from other visions, such as her December, 1844 and March 24, 1849 visions.

The S. D. A. apologists, on the other hand, maintain, that there was no design behind the deletions, and pointed to other shut-door phrases remaining in Experience and Views as evidence.<sup>27</sup> More recent apologists have, in addition, rejected the Camden Vision altogether as spurious, although Uriah Smith appears to have accepted it as genuine.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the apologists contend, one must allow Ellen White herself to explain what her early visions meant.

In 1951 F. D. Nichol took the latter approach when he noted the.

critics' charges:

"Mrs. White is said to describe sinners and the sinful world, in the years just following 1844, in language so strangely like that used by men who were teaching that probation had closed that her words should be understood in the same sense."<sup>29</sup>

After commenting that a prophet is limited to the language of the time in which he writes, Nichol continues:

"We believe we may as properly protest this kind of reasoning when it is employed against Mrs. White. The true meaning of specific statements by Mrs. White may much more safely be determined by comparing those statements with her other writings rather than with the writings of others."<sup>30</sup>

Having accepted the methodology suggested by Nichol, Ellen

White's defenders maintain that she never believed her visions taught the close of probation. Therefore, they accept such statements from her pen, as the following from 1883, as a full and satisfactory explanation of all of her visions from 1844 - 1851, and offer this as proof that Mrs. White concealed nothing:

"For a time after the disappointment in 1844, I did hold, in common with the advent body, that the door of mercy was, then forever closed to the world. This position was taken before my first vision was given me. It was the light given me of God that corrected our error, and enabled us to see the true position.

"I am still a believer in the Shut door theory, but not in the sense in which we first employed the term or in which it is employed by my opponents."<sup>31</sup>

After citing what she saw to be Biblical examples of other Shut-door occurrences (the Flood, Sodom, and the unbelieving Jews in Christ's day), Mrs. White continued:

"I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a Shut door in 1844. All who saw the light of the first and second angels' messages and rejected that light, were left in darkness. And those who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterwards renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion (she here refers to Open-door Adventists), thereby rejected the spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them."<sup>32</sup>

All of the apologists' explanations, however, can not negate the fact that the last Shut-door statements of James and Ellen White did occur in June of 1851. From that point onward one can find none of the hard-core close-of-probation ideas in either of their writings.

Thus the evidence clearly indicates that in the years 1851 -

1854 the Whites were indeed involved in an attempt to redefine the Shut-door in a way that would allow them to proclaim the Advent message to the world without having to admit that they had earlier been mistaken regarding their original Shut-door explanations. They certainly realized that both of them had written too extensively to simply deny that they had ever held to Shut-door positions. This appears to be the reason only selected Shut-door statements were omitted, while others were retained in their writings.

The policy the Whites appeared to have pursued from 1851 - 1854 was to effect a gradual reinterpretation of the Shut-door that would avoid alarm or an actual schism within the Seventh-day Adventist community. That this was their procedure becomes clear as one examines not only Experience and Views, but also the Review and Herald from August of 1851 - 1854.

During the remainder of 1851 James White, as editor, reprinted several articles by early Shut-door proponents, such as William Miller, J. B. Cook, and A. Hale; however, he said nothing directly on the topic himself. This is illustrated in the August 19, 1851 Review and Herald, which contained on the front page an article, "Addressed to Advent Believers," written by Miller on December 29, 1844. While reassuring to Shut-door believers because Miller believed in the Shut-door at the time, the article itself contained no hard-core Shut-door phrases. This issue also expresses some interesting Open-door ideas:

"Now the door is open almost everywhere to present the truth, and many are prepared to read the publications who have formerly had no interest to investigate. Now we may all do something for the Lord who has done so much for us. To those

who love, and rejoice in the present truth we would say, there are others who would prize it as highly as you do, if they could have it taught to them in its purity."<sup>33</sup>

That the Open-door ideas expressed above could still be incorporated within a Shut-door framework is evidenced by a letter from Joseph Bates on the same page. He makes it clear that when Christ ceased his mediatorial work for the whole world in 1844 ". . . then the door was shut against the Sardis church [Protestant churches who had rejected the Advent message] and the wicked world."<sup>34</sup> Christ had after October, 1844 gone into the Most Holy Place to plead only for the true Israel:

"Mere a question arises, who are meant by the whole house of Israel? We believe they comprise all honest, obedient believers, that had up to that time overcome [Rev. 3:5) , and also children that had not come to the years of accountability . . . The call to come out of Sardis, because she was the fallen Babylon, the apostate church, was clear, and as far in the past as a cry at Midnight. But it is said they have converts. Yes, but they are strange ones, because they come after the house of Israel have their names borne into the Holiest."<sup>35</sup>

Bates views the Shut-door Adventists who have embraced the Sabbath or third angel's message as being the church of Philadelphia. But those who rejected the shut-door became Laodicean when they preached a wide door of salvation to the world, because they were trying to again open the door to the Holy Place shut by Christ in 1844. However, Bates believed those honest in heart would hear Christ's call to the Laodicean church to repent.<sup>36</sup> He closed with the following appeal to the Philadelphians:

“ . . . to carry out the purpose of our divine Lord and Master, to the poor Laodiceans, by searching them out wherever they can be found, and teaching them the present truth.”<sup>37</sup>

In the September 16, 1851 Review and Herald James White continued the reprinting of early Shut-door articles, placing A. Hale's, "Has the Bridegroom Come?" (which originally appeared in the March 5, 1845 Advent Herald) on the front page. White introduced this article under the heading, "Call to Remembrance the Former Days," and offered these comments:

"It is also evident that to 'suppose,' as A. Hale does in this article, that the condition of things at the Shutting of the door, would be very much as it was after the day of Atonement among the ancient Jews, is incorrect. The Shutting of the door of the Holy Place, is preparatory to the antitypical tenth day atonement for the cleansing of the Sanctuary.”<sup>39</sup>

Other Open-door Adventists continued to regard the Seventh-day Adventists as Shut-door believers. The Harbinger, an Open-door paper, reported in its January 31, 1852 issue a conversation its editor had had with James White in which the editor had referred to White as a "Prominent leader among those of the Shut-door and Seventh-day

Sabbath theory.....”<sup>40</sup>

In response, James White attempts to redefine the Shut-door in the February 17, 1852 Review and Herald by rejecting the concept that the Shut-door was the door of mercy, but rather that it was part of the parable of the Ten Virgins:

"That event (shut-door) shuts out none of the honest children of God, neither those who have not wickedly rejected the light of truth, and the influence of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>41</sup>

Further, after noting the Open-door of the Philadelphia church (Rev. 3), he comments:

"This Open Door we teach, and invite those who have an ear to hear to come to it and find salvation through Jesus Christ. There is an exceeding glory in the view that Jesus had opened the door into the holiest of all, or has passed within the second veil, and now stands before the Ark containing the ten commandments . . . If it be said that we are of the Open Door and Seventh-day Sabbath theory, we shall not object, for this is our faith."<sup>42</sup>

Yet, acknowledging that he wished to be known as an Open-door and Seventh-day Sabbath Keeper, did not lead James White to openly admit that he had been wrong in his belief that probation had closed in 1844. To the contrary, the March 2, 1851 Review and Herald printed several articles on its front page, one of which was a poem, "The Seventh Month," of which James White wrote:

"The following lines from the Voice of Truth of 1845 beautifully express the real spirit and trials of the past advent movement. They are well calculated to call to remembrance the former days."<sup>43</sup>

Following this was an article by J. B. Cook written in 1846 and entitled "The Only Safe Position," which urged the true believers of the 1844 movement to stand firm in their conviction that God was leading them.

Whereas Ellen White could say in vision on March 24, 1849 that the Sabbath and the Shut-door could not be separated <sup>45</sup> and whereas "present truth" had been identified as the Sabbath and the Shut-door by Bates and James White in 1848 - 1850, in his editorial in the May 6, 1852 Review and Herald James spoke in positive terms about how the Sabbath

truth was spreading-- without making any mention of the Shut-door:

"But this work is not confined to those only who have had an experience in the past advent movement. A large portion of those who are sharing the blessings attending the present truth were not connected with the advent cause in 1844. Their minds not being particularly called to it then, consequently they did not reject it . . ."<sup>46</sup>

By mentioning that these new converts had not rejected the Advent message in 1844, James White remained technically within his former interpretation of the Shut-door; however, it is clear that his intent is to move beyond it.

The editorial proceeds with a brief sketch of the past from 1844 to 1849. No mention is made of the Shut-door at all, but the total focus is on the development of the Sabbath. Concerning the present work he sees before the church, James White writes:

"The Lord is opening the way before us. A spirit of inquiry is awakening, and many who have formerly been prejudiced against our views, or indifferent, are now anxious to hear and read the evidence of our position."<sup>47</sup>

That this gradual shift away from their former Shut-door posture was noticed by Open-door Adventists is clear from the answer Crosier offered in the March 5, 1853 Harbinger to a series of questions concerning his present view of the Sanctuary, about which he had written in The Day Star Extra of February 7, 1846. Speaking of the Seventh-day Adventists, Crosier, who had given up both the Sabbath and the Shut-door in 1849, wrote:

"The above named persons appear to me insincere in quoting from that article, because they

know that it was written for the express purpose of explaining the Shut door, which they now, I understand, disclaim. . . I think we have no means of knowing the precise time when the anti-type of the ancient 10th day of the 7th month service did or will begin; but we have evidence that it will not close the door of mercy against all the previous impenitent."<sup>48</sup>

Remarking on Crosier's Harbinger article, James White writes:

"On the above we will first remark, that as C. has informed the readers of the Harbinger that we disclaim the doctrine of the Shut door, that paper should no longer reproachfully call us 'shut-door Sabbatarians.' But we say that C.'s article on the law of Moses, no more goes to prove a Shut-door than it does an open door. It is in harmony with the Bible doctrine which we hold, that at the termination of the 2300 days, in 1844, there was a change in the work of our High Priest-- a door was then opened into the Most Holy, while another was Shut."<sup>49</sup>

Thus, while rejecting the term "door of mercy" as being unbiblical, James White still concurs with Crosier's basic understanding, for he continues:

"But the truth that C. wished to state here, for truth it is, is this, that there would be those who might come to God through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and find pardon of their sins, after the work of the antitype of the tenth day of the Seventh month service should commence. This, to us who believe that this is the period of the antitypical tenth day service, is an important truth. While the great work of saving men closed with the 2300 days, a few are now coming to Christ, who find salvation."<sup>50</sup>

The following month in an article entitled, "The Shut door", James White discusses the parable of the Ten Virgins and while applying it to 1844, he notes that it referred only to those within the Advent

movement:

"The ten virgins represent only those who participated in the Advent movement. Those who were not in the movement, and did not reject its light, stand on the same ground for salvation, as though such a movement had never taken place."<sup>51</sup>

Thus, the shut-door was redefined to mean only that Christ ended one phase of ministry in the Holy Place and " . . . entered upon the anti-type of the ancient tenth day of the seventh month atonement, at the end of the 2300 days, in the Autumn of 1844."<sup>52</sup>

"Although there is a shut door which excludes those represented by the foolish virgins (those moved by the proclamation of the Advent, who had none of the grace of God, no real faith), and also those who were foolish and wicked enough to reject, and fight against the glorious news of a soon-coming Savior, yet we rejoice to publish to those that have an ear to hear, that there is an Open Door. 'Behold,' says the True Witness, 'I set before thee an Open Door.' O, that precious souls would come to this open door, and share the Savior's pardoning love."<sup>53</sup>

William Ingrahm parallels James White's treatment of the Ten Virgins in an article in the June 9, 1853 Review and Herald. Of the Shut-door he remarks:

"But I hear many saying, 'Away with your Shut-door theory, and no mercy doctrine. But not quite so hasty! If you should move under the influence of a wrong Spirit in opposing the Shut-door, if our merciful High Priest should open another, in your haste you would not be likely to discover it. Perhaps no point has been more bitterly opposed than what some call the Shut door, and no-mercy doctrine. If we believed in the no-mercy system our opponents would have some cause to reproach us."<sup>54</sup>

After noting that the Shut-door applies only to the termination of Christ's work in the Holy Place in 1844 and of his entrance into the Most Holy Place, Ingrahm returns to what he sees as other mistaken views of the Seventh-day Adventists' Shut-door position:

"It is believed by some that we hold a Shut-door that really and forever debars the sinner from coming to Christ. Let me ask such a question.

"What does this parable have to do with those who were not brought under the influence of the Advent movement? It is true that the class represented by the foolish virgins have something to do with it: this is manifested from the fact that they were participators in the work. I have yet to learn that the relation those sustained to Christ who were not tested by the preaching of the speedy coming of Christ was in the least affected when Christ closed his daily ministrations in the heavenly Sanctuary.

"That there is an open door for such as did not reject the glorious news of our soon coming Lord as proclaimed in 1843 and 1844, is evident from God's word."<sup>55</sup>

It is readily apparent that while James White and William Ingrahm have effectively explained away the concept that probation had closed in 1844 for most people, still they acknowledge neither that they had once held that belief, nor that they are changing their beliefs now. In fact, Ingrahm leaves the distinct impression that this charge of no-mercy for sinners is simply a misunderstanding on the part of those outside the Sabbatarian Adventist group.

As editor of the Review and Herald, James White does a skillful job of reinterpreting the Shut-door concept. He has redefined the Shut-door so that it does not apply to all sinners, and he places responsibility for all close of probation statements in the 1850-1851 Review and Herald issues on the teachings of Shut-door advocates, such

as William Miller, J. B. Cook, and Joseph Marsh. This is apparent in the July 4, 1854 Review and Herald, which claims to merely be responding to the Harbinger's misrepresentation of Seventh-day Adventists:

"From this, the uninformed would receive the idea that we believed that which is called 'Door of Mercy' is closed, when we believe no such thing. It is true that in 1850 we published statements of Wm. Miller, J. B. Cook, Joseph Marsh, and others in which they gave us their opinion that the door was shut, and that the harvest of the earth was ripe, but nothing of the kind can be found in any of our publications for the last two years."<sup>56</sup>

Further in the article James White speaks of a Mrs. Seymour who in the June 10 Harbinger had, he felt, misrepresented certain statements of Mrs. White, as published in Experience and Views. Then he calls attention to Supplement of Experience and Views, which contains some important clarifications of certain statements published in Experience and Views.

The misrepresentation that Mrs. Seymour had supposedly made concerning certain of E. G. White's visions had to do apparently with the close of probation. James White explains the problem this way:

"She [Mrs. Seymour] then states, speaking of Sabbath-keepers, 'they have ceased preaching repentance, saying it is too late/ They have stifled their sympathies for the impenitent, and have virtually said, Sinner, you cannot turn to God and live, etc.' Now all this is entirely false. Those who have read our publications, especially for the past two years, and have known anything of the labours of the brethren in the Sabbath cause, know that Mrs. S. has penned untruths, and that the Harbinger has published the same . . .

"It is true that Case, Russel, and some others (they had been disfellowshipped and had rejected E. G. white's visions) took exclusive views relative to the Shut door, and for a while manifested a rash spirit; but such errors have been fully corrected, and Brn. Cornell, Cranson, Frisbie, Fitch

and others have been preaching to the sinner repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in Michigan, from the time they commenced to speak in vindication of the Sabbath, and many sinners have been converted to God as the result."<sup>57</sup>

With this July 4, 1854 article in the Review and Herald the process of redefining the Shut-door is now complete. There are several important facts to note both in what was said and in what was left unsaid.

First of all, the article nowhere acknowledges that the Sabbath-keepers had from 1844 - 1851 believed that the door was shut against all impenitent sinners. Nor does it acknowledge that E. G. White's visions helped to confirm them in this belief in the Shut-door.

Thirdly, the article suggests that the Shut-door ideas which were published in the Review and Herald were the personal opinion of early Shut-door believers, such as Miller, Cook, and Marsh. The impression is thus given that the Review and Herald did not necessarily endorse these same opinions.

Another important fact evidenced by the Review and Herald's attempt to redefine the Shut-door is that fanatics like Case and Russel, who had been disfellowshipped and who had rejected the visions of Mrs. White, were represented as the only ones who had held extreme Shut-door views. The final point which the Review attempted to establish was that despite the problems created by these fanatics, the true preachers of the Sabbath had been involved in publishing a full salvation to sinners, which had resulted in many accepting Christ.

The critics continued through the 1850's to the 1880's to

charge James and Ellen White with willful deception in attempting to conceal evidence which pointed to the fact that they had both believed and the visions had taught that probation had closed in 1844. That both the whites had attempted to obscure the full extent of their beliefs concerning the Shut-door and of the intimate involvement with this belief which Mrs. White's visions had maintained during 1844 - 1851 is evident, not only in the July 4 Review and Herald article, but also in later statement of Mrs. White, such as this one from 1883:

"For a time after the-disappointment in 1844, I did hold in common with the advent body, that the door of mercy was then forever closed to the world. This position was taken before my first vision was given me. It was the light given me of God that corrected our error, and enabled us to see the true position."<sup>58</sup>

Unfortunately, later S. D. A. apologists continued this same pattern of concealing or obscuring what had actually taken place in the years from 1844 to 1851.<sup>59</sup>

Despite the seriousness of the implications raised by the evidence, it does not seem feasible that James and Ellen White's behavior arose simply out of dishonesty. Rather, it seem clear that Ellen White was firmly convinced by her visionary experiences that she was receiving true revelations from God. For her to have denied this would, she fully believed, have been to grieve away the Holy Spirit and cause the loss of her salvation, as she felt had been the case with Hazen Foss, when he failed to relate visions given to him in the early 1840's.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, when attacked by harsh critics who were asking her to deny that God had given her visions, because they had incorrectly taught that probation had closed, was simply more than she could do.

James White himself admitted this difficulty in 1865:

"Bro. Carver, I will make an admission to you, which of course, I would not make in public to a sharp opponent. She did believe it shut door . And so, as you know, did nearly all of the Advent people."61

This continued need to defend the visions which Mrs. White genuinely believed to be of God, prevented her from being candid. Unfortunately, it has been this same need on the part of S. D. A. apologists that has likewise caused them to obscure, rather than to clarify what actually occurred from 1844 to 1851.

## FOOTNOTES

1. J. V. Mimes, "An Open Door in Canada," The Advent Herald, Vol. 9, no. 4, March 5, 1845, p. 25.
2. Joseph Bates, "Duty to our Children," The Review and Herald, Vol. 1, no. 6, Jan. 1851, p. 39.
3. James White, The Review and Herald, April 7, 1851, p. 64.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. James White, The Review and Herald, June 9, 1851, p. 102.
8. E. G. White, "Camden Vision," June 29, 1851. See Appendix XIII for the full text.
9. B. F. Snook, Wm. H. Brinkerhoff, The Visions of E. G. White, Not of God, 1866, p. 7.
10. Uriah Smith, "The Visions - - Objections Answered," The Review and Herald, Vol. 28, no. 3, June 19, 1866, p. 17. See Appendix XI.
11. Ibid. p. 18, emphasis supplied.
12. James White, "Our Tour of this State," The Review and Herald Extra, Vol. 2, no. 1, July 21, 1851, p. 3.
13. E. G. White, "Time Setting Vision, June 21, 1851, Camden, N. Y.
14. James White, Op. cit..
15. James White, "A Test," The Review and Herald, Oct 16, 1855, p. 61.
16. E. G. White, "To the Remnant Scattered Abroad," The Review and Herald 7 Extra, Vol. 2, no. 1, July 21, 1851, p. 2.
17. Ibid.
18. James White, Op. Cit., p. 3.
19. E. G. White, "Experience and Views," Early Writings, p. 11-24.
20. Ibid. p. 54-56.
21. See Appendix XII: Three Early Visions of Mrs. E. G. White, Copied la Hiram Edison An Evaluation.
22. Ibid.

23. see Appendix XI: An Example of the Continued Suppression of Shut-door Statements in E. G. Whites Writings.
24. E. G. White, "Experience and Views," The Review and Herald Extra, Vol. 2, no. 1, July 21, 1851, p. 2.
25. E. G. White, Letter 225, 1906.
26. See Appendix XI Note: Snook and Brinkerhoff, The Vision's of E. G. White, Not of God.; H. E. Carver, Mrs. E. G. White's Claims to Divine Inspiration Examined.
27. See Appendix XI Note: Uriah Smith's June 1866 Review and Herald articles for an example of this type of defence.
28. See Appendix XIII The Camden Vision Reconsidered.
29. Francis D. Nichol, Ellen White and Her Critics, 1951, p. 234.
30. Ibid.
31. E. G. White, Selected Messages, Book I, p. 63.
32. Ibid.
33. James White, The Review and Herald, Vol. 2, no. 2, Aug. 19, 1851, p. 13.
34. Joseph Bates, "Our Labor in the Philadelphia and Laodicean Churches," The Review and Herald, Vol. 2, no. 2, Aug. 19, 1851, p. 13.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. A. Hale, "Has the Bridegroom Come?" The Advent Herald, Vol. 9, no. 4, March 5, 1845, p. 26-28.
39. James White, "Call to Remembrance the Former Days," The Review and Herald, Vol. 2, no. 4, Sept. 16, 1851, p. 29.
40. James White, "Call at the Harbinger Office," The Review and Herald, Feb. 17, 1852,
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. James White, editorial note, preceding "The Seventh Month," The Review and Herald, Vol. 2, no. 13, March 2, 1852, p. 97.

44. J.B. Cook, "The Only Safe Position," The Review and Herald, Vol. 2, no. 13, March 2, 1852, p. 97.
45. E. G. White, The Present Truth, Vol 1, no. 3. Aug., 1849, p. 21.
46. James White, "The Work of the Lord," The Review and Herald, Vol. 3, no. 1, May 6, 1852, p. 4-5.
47. Ibid. p. 5.
48. O.R.L. Crosier, "Inquiry- The Sanctuary," Harbinger, Vol. 4, no. 38, March 5, p. 300-301.
49. James White, "The Sanctuary," The Review and Herald, March 17, 1853.
50. Ibid.
51. James White, "The Shut Door," The Review and Herald, April 14, 1853.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. W.S. Ingrahm, "The Parable - - - Matt. 25," The Review and Herald, Vol. 4, no. 2, June 9, 1853, p. 10.
55. Ibid.
56. "The Advent Harbinger," The Review and Herald, Vol. 5, no. 22, July 4, 1854, p. 172-173.
57. Ibid.
58. E. G. White, Selected Messages, Book I, p. 63.
59. See Appendix XI.
60. E. G. White, Letter 37, 1890 as quoted by A. White, Messenger to the Remnant, p. 29-30.
61. J. N. Loughborough, "Response," Review and Herald, Sept. 1866, p. 134.

## Chapter VIII

### SOLUTIONS: A FORWARD LOOK

God has always revealed Himself to man in history. If, for example, Christ did not in historical fact die on the cross and rise from the dead, Christianity has lost its soul— its very reason for existence. This is true despite the fact that one can demonstrate that Jesus offered much wonderful counsel concerning how to love and treat one's fellowmen. As Paul so effectively worded it, ". . . If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins," 1 Corinthians 15:17.

Likewise, if Ellen White's visions from 1844 - 1851 are in fact erroneous, upon what basis can one uphold her prophetic claim? This dilemma exists, despite the fact that she has written some beautiful statements about God, Christ, and the plan of salvation.

In fact, Ellen White's visions during those Shut-door years are crucial in determining the validity of her prophetic claim. First of all, as James White noted in 1847, Mrs. White's role as a prophet was established by her comments about the Shut-doors:

" . . . the author does not 'obtain the sentiments' of her visions 'from previous teaching or study.' When she received her first vision, Dec., 1844, she and all the band in Portland, Maine (where her parents then resided), had given up the Midnight-Cry and shut door, as being in the past. It was then that the Lord shew her in vision, the error into which she and the band in Portland had fallen."<sup>1</sup>

In other words, since her vision confirmed the door's being shut and was accepted as truth from God by her community of faith, Mrs. White was established in their eyes as God's prophet.

A second point to consider is that during the Shut-door era Ellen White claimed the highest authority for her visions:

"I was shown that in striking against the visions they did not strike against the worm-- the feeble instrument that God spoke through; but against the Holy Ghost. I saw that it was a small thing to speak against the instrument, but it was dangerous to slight the words of God."<sup>2</sup>

A third reason for Ellen White's Shut-door visions being critical to the denial or establishment of her prophetic claim is that she steadfastly refused to allow others to decide which parts of her writings were of God, and which were not:

"Do not by your criticisms take out all the force, all the point and power, from the Testimonies. Do not feel that you can dissect them to suit your own ideas, claiming that God has given you ability to discern what is light from heaven and what is the expression of mere human wisdom. If the Testimonies speak not according to the Word of God, reject them. Christ and Belial cannot be united."<sup>3</sup>

Finally, E. G. White never admitted that her Shut-door visions were incorrect, nor did she ever attempt (as have some apologists) to explain away these visions as being the result of misinterpretations on her part.

In short, this writer believes that the major points of this paper will stand up under the most thorough research, both historically and biblically. Thus, we cannot-- however much we might wish to --ne-

gate the fact that Mrs. White experienced repeated visions during the Shut-door era which were clearly erroneous in that they continued to affirm that the door of salvation was closed to sinners.

Some Adventist theologians and historians seem willing to concede this point, while attempting through various means to retain a continued faith in E. G. White's prophetic ministry to the Seventh-day Adventist church. There are those who offer as apology that Mrs. White was ignorant, weak, and young, which caused her early visions to be mistaken, but that God through progressive revelation corrected her mistakes and caused her to mature in her spiritual insights.

Others suggest that the visions themselves were correct, but that she misunderstood them. This disclaimer is offered, despite the fact that, as we have already seen, Ellen White never admitted this and forbade anyone to attempt to divide her visions into what was truly of God and what might have resulted from her own thinking and, as such might be mistaken.

S. D. A. apologists have proposed a third solution, by acknowledging that her visions from 1844 - 1851 were in error in that they did teach that probation had closed for sinners. While conceding that the visions themselves were erroneous, this viewpoint seeks to confirm White's inspiration and prophetic claims by asserting that God had never been able to communicate accurately through any of his prophets, since they have acquired from their community of faith misinformation concerning Him. In order to establish their point, these apologists are prepared to acknowledge that, although the Bible contains the Word of God, it also contains major theological errors, and that the writings of Bible prophets reveal equally as many mistaken visions (due to their

misunderstandings about who God is) as did Ellen White's.

The task remaining to the Seventh-day Adventist community, according to this perspective, is to search for the underlying truths about God contained in both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, while discarding what is erroneous. Thus, we must sift through Ellen White's visions in an attempt to determine which are in truth from God, and which resulted from or were influenced by her own faulty understanding of God. This would be, admittedly, an ongoing process which, while neither perfect or complete, would hopefully result in a clearer and more accurate understanding of who God is.

However, any such attempt to acknowledge the major mistakes of Ellen White's shut-door visions and yet to retain faith in her visions as being of God seems to be dividing truth into what Francis Schaeffer has called the rational and the irrational levels. In his book Escape from Reason,<sup>4</sup> Dr. Schaeffer demonstrates the way in which modern man (especially liberal Christian theologians) has divided truth:

FAITH – UPPER STORY – NONRATIONAL

---

FACTS (HISTORY, SCIENCE) – LOWER STORY – RATIONAL

Such a division allows these men to admit on the one hand that they no longer believe Christ historically rose from the dead, yet on the other hand to continue to express faith in the spiritual truth of the resurrection:

NONRATIONAL: I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION

---

RATIONAL: THE RESURRECTION DID NOT OCCUR IN HISTORY

To attempt, then, to acknowledge that Ellen White's Shut-door visions were wrong, while still expressing faith that she did have some visions from God is to do precisely what the liberal theologian has done. The problem with this, however, is that over time this approach will affect not just one's perception of Ellen White and her prophetic gift, but it will also come to include all Canonical inspiration. Indeed, alleged Biblical inaccuracies, both historical and theological (and here we do not refer to minor inaccuracies, such as the question of one demoniac vs. two, but substantive errors, affecting the validity of the Christian faith) have been most often cited by S. D. A. theologians as their way of handling the entire Shut-door dilemma.

This apparent solution initially appears more acceptable than a decided rejection of Ellen White's prophetic claims in favor of maintaining a view of inspiration which refuses to allow religious truth to be separated from historical truth. In fact, however, the ultimate outworking of such a "solution" will be devastating. For we as Christians will be left with no rational basis for confidence in the very foundations of the Christian faith. Instead, all that will remain to us will be some irrational "hope" which we may still choose to label "God", but which will have no content, certainty, or power for our lives.

While it is true that this writer has encountered no Adventist theologian who has traveled the whole distance from negating the rational belief in portions of God's Word to accepting it purely on the irrational level, it seems clear that when we have taken that first step

--permitting God's prophets a wide "margin of error" --whether unwittingly or not, we are certainly in route.

FOOTNOTES

1. James White, A Word to the Little Flock, 1847, p. 22.
2. E. G. White, "To those who are receiving the seal of the living God," Broadside, Jan. 31, 1849.
3. E. G. White, Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 691.
4. Francies A. Schaeffe