

FIVE YEARS TO THE GATES OF HEAVEN

Dennis Priebe

This study will focus on the most important five years in the history of Adventism. During this time we were closer to the gates of heaven than at any time before or since. We were closer to a national Sunday law than we are today. The image of the beast was forming piece by piece, as Christian reform groups were forming. The United States was in a major recession/depression, banks were closing, and it was spreading throughout the world. These five years were between 1888 and 1893, over 120 years ago.

We have inspired confirmation of how important those years were in these words written in 1898. "Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving the message of mercy to the world, Christ would have come to the earth, and the saints would ere this have received their welcome into the city of God." (Australasian Record, Oct. 15, 1898)

In this study we are going to break down this five year period. It is my hope, that if we can learn its lessons, the gates of heaven will open to us. I will be very specific and direct in this presentation, and will name the individuals who play a part in this most important five year period in the history of Adventism.

1888--The Beginning

At the 1893 General Conference W. W. Prescott identified the beginning point of this crucial period. "How long has it been since God in a special manner began to send this light and this instruction and this reproof for you and me? Reckon it up. Four years. It is the fourth year since Minneapolis, and going on the fifth....God has waited and sent reproof, and waited and sent reproof--four years." (General Conference Daily Bulletin, Feb. 2, 1893, pp. 104,105)

A. T. Jones tied this time to the beginning of the latter rain. "Well then, the latter rain--the loud cry--...is 'the teaching of righteousness.'...Now brethren, when did that message of the righteousness of Christ, begin with us as a people?...Yes, four. Where was it? What then did the brethren reject at Minneapolis?...The loud cry--the latter rain....I know that some there accepted it; others rejected it entirely....Others tried to stand halfway between....They thought to take a middle course, and although they did not exactly receive it, or exactly commit themselves to it, yet they were willing to go whichever way the tide turned at the last; whichever way the body turned they were willing to go....Instead of standing nobly, in the fear of God, and declaring in the face of that attack, 'it is the truth of God, and I believe it in my soul,' they would begin to yield and in an apologetic way, offer excuses for those who were preaching it....Brethren, the truth of God needs no apology....All that the truth of God needs is that you and I shall believe it,...and stand by it in the face of all the attacks that can be made upon it; and let it be known that you do stand by the messengers whom God sends to preach,...because God sends them with a message." (General Conference Daily Bulletin, February 7, 1893, pp. 183-185)

So many today are trying to take a safe middle course, apologizing for the mistakes of those who are putting their necks on the line for truth. Fence-sitting is very dangerous because the devil owns the fence!

We need to keep in mind the attitudes prevalent in 1888. Meade MacGuire relates G. B. Starr's remembrance of these events in a letter. "The basement under a large building was rented and a number of delegates roomed there at night. A large curtain was hung across the room and Eld. Starr and wife slept in one end, while four or five ministers occupied the other end. One night Eld. Jones had given a powerful discourse, which Eld. Starr and wife appreciated very much. They came to their room deeply impressed and after prayer went to bed. After a while the men came to their apartment, talking and laughing, and rather ridiculing Eld. Jones' statements. One of the men, Eld. C., called Eld. Jones by some unfavorable name...but it shocked the Starrs....The next morning Sister White spoke....She said an angel took her from room to room. Anyway, she finally pointed her finger at Eld. C. and said, 'Eld. C. I am ashamed of you, to call one who is giving a message from the Lord, by such a name.' It was the name that Eld. Starr had heard the man use the night before." (Meade MacGuire to L. E. Froom, Sept. 7, 1961)

In a letter written in 1893, Ellen White confirmed this recollection. "I was led from room to room occupied by our brethren at that meeting, and heard that of which everyone will one day be terribly ashamed, if it is not until the judgment, when every work will appear in its true light....In the rooms...there was a Witness to every remark made, the ungodly jest, the satire, the sarcasm, the wit; the Lord God of heaven was displeased with you, and with everyone who shared in the merriment, and in the hard, unimpressible spirit. An influence was exerted that was Satanic. Some souls will be lost in consequence." (1888 Materials, pp. 1138,1139)

Obviously there was a very serious attitude problem in 1888, which was perhaps the most important failing at that meeting. We need to learn the lesson that ridiculing accomplishes nothing. We need to listen with a Christlike spirit to all serious points of view.

This spirit didn't die out in the 1890's. In 1945 Norval Pease said about Jones, "In 1893 he was pointed, vehement, almost vitriolic in his utterances. Just a few months after the General Conference session, Jones received a letter from Mrs. White warning him in a very kindly manner against the danger of extreme statements." (By Faith Alone, pp. 157,158)

In 1926 A. G. Daniells looked back 38 years to Minneapolis. "How sad, how deeply regrettable, it is that this message of righteousness in Christ should, at the time of its coming, have met with such opposition on the part of earnest, well-meaning men in the cause of God! The message has never been received, nor proclaimed, nor given free course as it should have been in order to convey to the church the measureless blessings that were wrapped within it." (Christ Our Righteousness, p. 47) This analysis repudiates the idea of some that by 1900 most had accepted the 1888 message.

in 1937 Taylor Bunch wrote, "Just before the end the Advent people will review their past history and see it in a new light....We must acknowledge and confess the mistakes of our fathers and see to it that we do not repeat them and thus further delay the final triumph of the Advent Movement. The history of the past must be reviewed and studied in the light of these mistakes and their consequences in a long delay of the coming of Christ." (The Exodus and Advent Movement in Type and Antitype, p. 168)

In spite of this appeal, a number of leading men made major efforts to deny that there was a rejection of the 1888 message. Following are some samples of authors who denied such a rejection.

A. T. Robinson, "Did the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination Reject the Doctrine of Righteousness by Faith?" Jan. 30, 1931; C. McReynolds, "Experience While at the General Conference in Minneapolis, Minn. in 1888" 1931 (Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis 1888, pp. 333-342)

Norval Pease, *By Faith Alone*, 1962; L. H. Christian, *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts*, 1947; A. W. Spalding, *Captains of the Host*, 1949; General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *The Story of Our Church*, 1956; A. V. Olson, *Through Crisis to Victory 1888-1901*, 1966

Leroy Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 1971; Desmond Ford, "The Doctrinal Decline of Dr. E. J. Waggoner: Its Relationship to the Omega Apostasy" 1970s; Bert Haloviak, "Ellen White and A. T. Jones at Ottawa, 1889: Diverging Paths from Minneapolis" 1981; Arthur White, *Ellen White: The Lonely Years*, 1984; George Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones*, 1987

Those who have suggested that there has been an ongoing rejection of the 1888 message have been portrayed as negative and critical, trying to derail the marvelous progress of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 20th century.

The confusion about whether we accepted or rejected the message is best explained in a letter Waggoner wrote in 1903. "While, after much opposition, the denomination had officially accepted the advance truth of the message, they had not taken it in practically. They took it in as one of the things that 'we as a people believe,' but not as a thing by which to conduct business, teach the sciences, etc. They did not see in the light that the Lord sent, a principle that was to solve every problem, and reorganize, or rather, organize, put life into it, the entire work." (E. J. Waggoner, to A. G. Daniells, July 24, 1903)

At the 1901 General Conference W. W. Prescott said, "Where do we stand now with reference to this message? How far has that truth been received--not simply assented to, but actually received?--Not far, I tell you. How far has the ministry of this denomination been baptized into that Spirit?--Not far, I tell you. For the past thirteen years this light has been rejected and turned against by many, and they are rejecting it and turning from it today." (General Conference Bulletin, April 18, 1901, p. 321)

We have accepted righteousness by faith as a doctrine of the church, but how much has it changed our practical lives? Are we more compassionate now? Are we less judgmental? Are we more courteous? Are we more faithful to God's Word? We have officially said "Yes," but as we will see, we continue to deny the message and denigrate the messengers.

1901 and Reorganization

In 1901 the General Conference was considering major organizational changes. W. W. Prescott spoke to these changes. "The change that is needed is a complete change of heart. When a complete change of heart comes to God's ministry, the power that is in that will sweep away all these extraneous things....It is not in this outward form and plan of operation. That is all right, it ought to be changed; but if our minds are resting upon that, the work will not be accomplished that way." (General Conference Bulletin, April 18, 1901, pp. 321,322)

Prescott's concern about outward organizational changes being made without a heart change should be well noted. Although such changes would be beneficial to the church for years to come, they would not answer the underlying conditions which were holding back the promises of God. We have always found it easier to substitute organizational changes for heart surrender.

Although Ellen White fully supported the organizational changes that were made in 1901, notice what she said in December of that year, in what had to be one of the most heartbreaking predictions she ever had to make. "We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action." (10 MR 277,278)

Remember that she was planning to be translated before 1900, but now she realized that she would have to die along with the pioneers before her. We are discussing these issues today as a direct fulfillment of this prediction, and instead of confessing our responsibility for the delay, we are charging God with the delay whenever we say that Jesus will come at His own predetermined time.

In 1902, Ellen White wrote to the General Conference Committee, "But the work that all heaven was waiting to do as soon as men prepared the way, was not done; for the leaders in the work closed and bolted the door against the Spirit's entrance. There was a stopping short of entire surrender to God. Hearts that might have been purified from error were strengthened in wrong doing. The doors were barred against the heavenly current that would have swept away all evil. Men left their sins unconfessed. They built themselves up in their wrong doing, and said to the Spirit of God, 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee.' The Lord calls for the close self-examination to be made now, that was not made at the last General Conference. (Kress Collection, p. 95)

In 1903 Ellen White wrote to a friend, "The result of the last General Conference has been the greatest, the most terrible sorrow of my life. No change was made. The spirit that should have been brought into the whole work as the result of that meeting was not brought in." (13 MR 122,123)

Clearly, organizational changes which are still a blessing for us today were not really what God was looking for, and what would have allowed Jesus to come to that generation. For us today, all that really matters is entire surrender, hearts purified, sins confessed, and close self-examination if this generation has any hope to see Jesus return.

In 1902 the Review and Herald office burned to the ground. A short time after the fire had destroyed the office building, an article by Ellen White was printed in the Review "in which it was plainly stated that the destruction of the Sanitarium and the Review Office by fire was a visitation from God on account of the persistent departure from His ways, and the failure to act upon the warning and instruction which had been given for many years through the spirit of prophecy." (Editorial note, May 19, 1903)

Ellen White pled with those in Battle Creek who had "resisted light and evidence, refusing to listen to God's warnings," that they would see in the "destruction of the Review and Herald Office an appeal to them from God to turn to Him with full purpose of heart." (RH Jan. 27, 1903) Yet, a short time after the 1903 General Conference session, at a "meeting of the stockholders of the Review and Herald, the

statement was reiterated before a public audience that these fires were not the judgments of God." (Editorial note, May 19, 1903) Our leaders were in denial then just as we continue to be in denial today.

God was doing everything He could to shock the remnant church to repentance so that Christ's coming would not have to be delayed for one hundred years. How many warnings will it take for us to get serious about God's purpose for us?

Warnings and Appeals

Of course, all these warnings and judgments were for the purpose of bringing us to genuine repentance. A. T. Jones made this point at the 1893 General Conference. He said that the latter rain and the loud cry would only be given when they were "of one heart and mind." Therefore he said, "If there are any differences at all between you and any of the people on this earth--whether they are at this institute or not--it is time for you and me to get them out of the way." (General Conference Bulletin, Feb. 6, 1893, p. 165)

O. A. Olson, the General Conference president, spoke at the same conference. "It is sin that is in the way of God's blessings. The sin must be removed before God's Spirit can come in. It don't care where it is, not who it is, whether you have been a minister for a score of years, or whether you are the sinner just being awakened to the first sense of guilt. Sin is sin everywhere; and it is sin that must be taken away before God can come in....But if we fail at one time, the Lord will take us over the ground again; and if we fail a third time, the Lord will take us over the same ground again. Why is He thus taking us over the ground again and again?...It is that we may lay hold of His grace and overcome." (General Conference Bulletin, Feb. 8, 1893, p. 188)

Is there any doubt that God is taking us over the same ground again, hoping that some generation will surrender in genuine lasting repentance?

W. W. Prescott spoke to the same conference. "Now I am perfectly aware that I am speaking with great plainness, and I do not speak this without thought and prayer....I say that it is time for us to be zealous and repent that God's special outpouring of His Spirit may come upon us without destroying us. If we don't make this matter a matter of earnest prayer, I say it simply means death to you and to me....We cannot come to this assembly, this institute and Conference and go day after day in an easy-going manner. It is time for every one to be trembling in earnest for his own soul's salvation....I tell you, we might come and go here, week in and week out, year in and year out, and yet not meet the mind of God concerning this time." (General Conference Bulletin, Jan. 31, 1893, pp. 65-67)

Ellen White wrote in 1895, "How long will you hate and despise the messengers of God's righteousness? God has given them His message. They bear the word of the Lord....But there are those who despised the men and the message they bore. They have taunted them with being fanatics, extremists, and enthusiasts. Let me prophesy unto you: Unless you speedily humble your hearts before God, and confess your sins which are many, you will, when it is too late, see that you have been fighting against God....You will see that these men whom you have spoken against have been as signs in the world, as witnesses for God. Then you would give the whole world if you could redeem the past....Go on a little longer as you have gone in rejection of the light from heaven, and you are lost....If you reject Christ's delegated messengers, you reject Christ....Despise this glorious offer of justification through the blood of Christ and sanctification through the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, and there remaineth no more

sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." (1888 Materials, pp. 1341,1342)

No stronger warning could have been given from the Lord. No clearer statement could have been made that Jones and Waggoner were sent by God to give a translation-fitting-up message. Unfortunately, we are facing the same opposition to that message today.

Opposition to Ellen White

As a result of Ellen White's strong reproofs directed at the leaders of the church, it was inevitable that the arrows of criticism would be turned against her. In 1896 M. L. Andreasen, a new convert, was invited to sit in on discussions of some leading men at Union College. "It was only a matter of eight years since the famous 1888 Conference in Minneapolis, and the conference was frequently the subject of discussion....I was astonished at the freedom with which they discussed personalities....A few of the leaders were waiting for the day when there would be a change in the way the church was run....They did not consider the message of Jones and Waggoner to be the real issue. The real issue...was whether Sister White was to be permitted to overrule the men who carried the responsibility of the work. It was an attempt to overthrow the position of the Spirit of Prophecy. And it seemed the men in opposition carried the day....As interpreted by some, the Minneapolis conference was a revolt against Sister White." (Virginia Steinweg, *Without Fear or Favor: The Life of M. L. Andreasen*, pp. 42-44)

This became the real issue. Would Ellen White be allowed to overrule the leading men? Did she have prophetic authority or were her reproofs just her opinions? This seems identical to the way the Jews treated Jeremiah and John the Baptist.

Ellen White recognized what was happening in 1902. "I shall not appear before you again in our general gatherings unless I am impressed by the Spirit of God that I should. The last General Conference that I attended gave you all the evidence that you will ever have in any meeting that shall be convened. If that meeting did not convince you that God is working by His Spirit through His humble servant, it is because the candlestick has been removed out of its place." (18 MR 195,196)

In 1903 she wrote this poignant appeal. "Physically, I have always been as a broken vessel; and yet in my old age the Lord continues to move upon me by His Holy Spirit to write the most important books that have ever come before the churches and the world....The life that He spares I will use to His glory. And when He may see fit to let me rest, His messages shall be of even more vital force than when the frail instrumentality through whom they were delivered, was living." (8 MR 428)

Today the same challenge faces us. Do we really have a prophetic voice speaking to our consciences, or just an outdated strong-headed woman who wanted to run the church her way?

Present Opposition to Jones and Waggoner

As mentioned earlier, the attacks against Jones and Waggoner and their message are as strong or stronger than during the 1890's. In late November, 1892, a two-part article from Ellen White was published in the Review. "The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ....This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth." (RH Nov. 22, 1892)

Writing in response to Ellen White's declaration, O. A. Tait reported, "The message is rising, brethren and sisters, and the last week's Review informs us in no uncertain language that the 'loud cry' is already begun. We are told, also, in recent testimonies, that the Holy Spirit 'awaits our demand and reception.' Who cannot see that the latter rain is about to be poured out upon us in great measure? Are we ready to receive it? (Review and Herald, Nov. 29, 1892)

This was very logical. There is no way that the loud cry can do its work without the Holy Spirit's power in the latter rain. Both must function together. But listen to this attempt to discredit this obvious conclusion.

George Knight asks the question, "Is there in Ellen White's writings...a strong connection between righteousness by faith and final events? No!...Some of Ellen White's interpreters with an interest in the 1888 message, influenced by the presentations of the misled Jones and Prescott...have developed emphases not present in her writings but quite in harmony with their own agenda." (A User-Friendly Guide to the 1888 Message, pp. 164,165) "It is true that A. T. Jones did read a great deal into the loud cry statement, but that does not mean he was correct." (Angry Saints, p. 59) "Ellen White did not say that the latter rain had begun with the preaching of Christ's righteousness at Minneapolis. She plainly said it was the loud cry. Such men as Jones, Prescott, and G. B. Starr drew the latter rain conclusion." (Angry Saints, pp. 126-128) I guess that we are not to assume that this was the only logical conclusion possible! Knight continues, "Several preachers, including A. T. Jones, G. B. Starr, and W. W. Prescott, transformed her claim in November 1892 that the loud cry had begun....We must emphasize again that neither Jones nor Prescott were entirely reliable guides in matters of the Holy Spirit by the time of the 1893 meetings." (A User-Friendly Guide to the 1888 Message, pp. 112, 128)

Another attack on Jones is based on a mistake he made by endorsing some supposed visions by Anna Rice. When Ellen White reproofed him for doing this, he read her reproof in church and said, "I am wrong." Again, this mistake is portrayed by George Knight as evidence that Jones was untrustworthy. Scattered throughout his many books on the history of 1888 are allusions to the Anna Rice incident, but with few or distorted details. The purpose of using this episode is, of course, to discredit Jones. Knight summarizes this incident: "Adventists can be thankful that Jones did not receive a free hand at the 1893 session [by being allowed to read Anna Rice's letter], since by that time he was not a totally reliable guide. His 'latter rain revival' might have led Adventism down strange paths indeed, and it could have changed the nature of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by moving it closer to the then-developing Pentecostalism." (A User-Friendly Guide to the 1888 Message, p. 127)

Often when A. T. Jones is mentioned in modern times, it is only with a passing derogatory comment, thanks in part to years of depicting him negatively by some Adventist historians. George Knight has made these charges for more than twenty-five years, claiming that the 1892-1893 revival movement was based on fanatical excitement. "It was Jones and Prescott, rather than Mrs. White, who built the 1893 excitement into grand proportions....The ever-excitable Jones was not altogether a safe leader in 1893....We should never forget that he had the perennial problem of extremism." (From 1888 to Apostasy, pp. 100,101)

Perhaps it is relevant to note here that George Knight is the same person who believes that Eve sinned before eating the forbidden fruit. He has been described by his supporters as a revisionist historian. He has described our denomination's origins in fanatical Adventism.

The 1893 General Conference

Of all the tactics Satan used to derail the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry, his inciting of those in responsible positions to identify the 1892 week of prayer and the 1893 General Conference session revivals as merely the results of fanatical excitement, extremism, and fanaticism brought his devilish plans the most success. Identifying the work of the Holy Spirit with fanaticism at Minneapolis in 1888 had brought four years of struggle, conflict, rebellion, and delay. Now the call for Laodicean repentance had been visited with manifestations of the Holy Spirit, especially during 1892 and 1893. To respond to such manifestations with the same accusations of excitement, extremism, and fanaticism would prove detrimental to God's remnant movement. Uriah Smith, J. H. Kellogg, and many others leveled such charges against the revivals.

In 1894 Ellen White gave a strong warning to those doing just what we have reviewed. "Let not those who have neglected to receive light and truth take advantage of the mistake of their brethren, and put forth their finger, and speak words of vanity, because the chosen of God have been too ardent in their ideas, and have carried certain matters in too strong a manner. We have need of these ardent elements; for our work is not a passive work; our work is aggressive....The chosen agents of God would have been rejoiced to link up with the men who held aloof from them, questioning, criticizing, and opposing....But if the men who should have used their experience in furthering the work, have labored to hinder it, and mistakes have occurred that would not have occurred if they had stood in their allotted place, whom will God hold accountable for these late errors? He will hold the very men accountable who should have been gathering light and united with the faithful watchmen in these days of peril. But where were they?--They were holding themselves in the position of those who were non-receivers of the light for themselves, and intercepting the light that God would send to others." (1888 Materials, pp. 1246-1248)

Thus the blame was laid at the feet of those who had been fighting against the truth for so long, who otherwise would have been able to benefit Jones and Prescott with their past experience. Notice the phrases she used to describe the messengers--"chosen of God," "faithful watchmen." The only ones attacking Jones and Waggoner in the early 1890's were those who consistently opposed the 1888 message, and the only ones attacking them today are those who have consistently opposed the same message.

Now we must examine the 1893 General Conference carefully. I will admit that I have always had a negative impression of this conference because of the allegations made by our historians. It is very important to take a second look when prejudice rears its head.

This report was printed in the Review following the second Sabbath of the meetings. "As the climax was reached, and the blessed results of Christ's work for us were pictured before us, the sermon [by Jones] ceased, and the vast congregation, crowding every available space in the Tabernacle, involuntarily resolved itself into a praise meeting. The ministers scattered through the congregation to the number of thirty or forty, rose up and took charge of groups in their respective localities, and hundreds of testimonies of praise to God for His goodness and salvation were borne all over the house. It was such a meeting as has never been seen before in Battle Creek." (Editorial note, Feb. 28, 1893)

Following is a letter by O. A. Olsen, the General Conference president: "The Spirit of the Lord wrought marvelously, and the convicting and converting power of God was manifested in a wonderful measure."

For Olsen the most interesting and the most memorable case of all was the confession of J. H. Morrison. "I have listened to many confessions, but this I must say, that I never listened to one like his. While it was cool and deliberate, as is the nature of his temperament, it was a most thorough-going, and most deep in its work, that I have ever witnessed. And I never saw any congregation so affected by a confession as on this occasion." Morrison was one of the most vocal opponents of Jones and Waggoner in 1888. "The institute and the Conference from first to last was a most remarkable season. I never before attended a meeting anywhere like it. The Lord's presence seemed to be realized in a very large measure. And at different times the power of God rested down upon the people in a very marked manner. Everything passed off with remarkable harmony and unity....I think I never attended a Conference where there seemed to be such perfect freedom, no human restraint, yet I never saw any meeting where every speaker seemed to have such regard for the feelings and sentiments of others....On leaving, the brethren all felt greatly encouraged, and never have delegates left any of our Conferences with the same feeling and spirit with which they left the one just past." (Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis, pp. 242,243)

W. W. Prescott wrote to Ellen White, "The Lord came very near by His Spirit during our Conference, and we feel that great good was accomplished for all whose hearts were open to receive the light and blessing from God." Prescott stated that he had "never known the laborers to go forth with such a degree of hope in the Lord." (March 23, 1893) This hardly sounds like fanaticism and extremism.

O. A. Olsen said that "it had been the best meeting over which he had ever presided." (General Conference Bulletin, March 7, 1893, p. 493) W. A. Spicer said it "was the greatest meeting that has been held." (Spicer to W. C. White, March 24, 1893) C. H. Jones affirmed that the "Conference was the best meeting I ever attended, without any exception....As we studied the Bible, rays of light shone in upon the sacred page, and many souls were made to rejoice in the Lord." (Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis, p. 248)

Ellen White declared that she had "found a rich feast in reading" the daily sermons. (1888 Materials, p. 1184) Years later, she was "instructed to use those discourses," specifically of A. T. Jones, "printed in the General Conference Bulletins of 1893 and 1897." (9 MR 278) Does this really sound like Jones was vehement, vitriolic, and extreme?

In an 1893 letter, Ellen White addressed the genuineness of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the 1893 General Conference. "All the revelations of God at the Conference, I acknowledge as from Him. I dare not say that work was excitement, and unwarranted enthusiasm. No, no. God drew near to you, and His Holy Spirit revealed to you that He had a heaven full of blessings, even light to lighten the world." (10 MR 346) Yet, "in the minds of many there was left a feeling of contempt, an impression that they might have been deceived, that they were too ardent....It is even questioned whether it was the work of God, or a wave of fanaticism. And O how Satan exults!" (E. G. White Estate Shelf Documents, No. 249a, pp. 3-7)

Writing to Uriah Smith a short time later, who himself had been instrumental in laying the charge of fanaticism against the 1892-1893 revivals, Ellen White strictly cautioned him from taking such a stance: "That which was light from heaven has been called excitement. I have been made sad to have this matter viewed in this light. We must be very careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in pronouncing the ministration of His Holy Spirit a species of fanaticism....God had wrought in a marked manner" and no one should "venture to say this is not the Spirit of God." Ellen White explained to Smith that Satan

had led many to fall to temptation, that he "could make his suggestions to many minds, that the light sent from heaven was only fanaticism, excitement....They will call light darkness, and darkness will be chosen rather than light....I have been afraid, terribly afraid that those who felt the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness--for I have not one doubt but that they did receive the Holy Spirit--will come to the conclusion that God's heaven-sent blessings are a delusion." (1888 Materials, pp. 1210-1213)

In 1894 she wrote, "He who charges the work of God to undue excitement, and calls it fanaticism, is certainly standing on dangerous ground....They are sinning against the Holy Ghost; and as a result of their resistance, they place themselves where they cannot recognize the Spirit of God." (RH Feb. 13, 1894) Ellen White warned those who might question the good work of the Holy Spirit in Battle Creek over the past year and attribute it to fanaticism. (RH Feb. 6, 1894) "I know that the Lord has wrought by His own power in Battle Creek. Let no one attempt to deny this; for in so doing they will sin against the Holy Ghost." (1888 Materials, pp. 1254,1255)

It is crystal clear that Ellen White supported the genuine revival of the Holy Spirit during 1893, in decided contrast to the prejudice of critics, then and now.

During the ministerial meetings before the 1893 General Conference, S. N. Haskell made the obvious connection between the loud cry and the latter rain. "This is the outpouring of the Spirit of God. It is the loud cry of the third angel's message." (General Conference Bulletin, Feb. 5, 1893, p. 136) A. T. Jones added, "Prayers are ascending daily....Now the day is going to come when the last prayer that will be necessary to bring that blessing will have ascended. Then what? It will come. The flood will burst, and out will pour the Holy Spirit [like] the day of Pentecost." (General Conference Bulletin, Feb. 5, 1893, p. 149)

1893 was an all-out attempt to see the fulfillment of the latter rain promises to propel the loud cry to all the world. G. C. Tenney reported to those in Australia and New Zealand that "it was the wonderful manifestation of God's blessing manifested from the first and increasing in power to the close. Never has it been our privilege to attend such meetings as these. The Comforter came to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Tenney reported that the Bible studies by Haskell, Jones, and Prescott brought out "much light on the sacred Word," and the reception of that light "increased the joy in the hearts of those uniting in the study....With deep humility wrong feelings were confessed, and hearts that had been somewhat estranged were drawn together and united in the closest of bonds." Tenney could now unapologetically state, "We have reached the time of the latter rain, and the time when the Lord says to His people, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.'" (The Bible Echo, May 1, 1893, p. 152)

None of this sounds remotely like extremism or fanaticism, but like the beginning of the fulfillment of the final prophetic predictions. With this in mind, let us review Ellen White's clear 1898 statement in DA 633,634. "Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory."

Conclusion

So my conclusion is quite simple. The five year period between 1888 and 1893 marked the highest point in the 150 year history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We were closer then to the gates of

heaven than at any time before or since. The latter rain/loud cry experience almost happened, with the inevitable fulfillment of predictions of the Sunday law, the close of probation, and the seven last plagues.

So what happened? Why are we still here? 1893 was followed by opposition, criticism, disunity, and very quickly slipping back into Laodicean apathy, doing the best we could, which will never be good enough. The following century brought compromise and outright disobedience in our medical work, in our educational institutions, and in our publishing work. Halfway through the century we reached out to evangelical Christians to gain respectability, and we compromised the most basic foundation of the Christian faith--the gospel. A few years later we were questioning the sanctuary truth, and our unique understanding of how end-time events would vindicate God in the great controversy struggle.

When some began to recognize what had really happened between 1888 and 1893 and urged a careful restudy of the translation-preparation message of that time, full-blown opposition and character assassination of the men of that time came from our leading historians and theologians in books, camp-meeting presentations and seminars, putting us back into the Laodicean sleep-mode.

Now we are reduced to proclaiming loudly our growth in the Southern Hemisphere, praying for revival, and watching what the pope is doing, while doing our best to ignore the messages that were to prepare us to receive the latter rain in 1893.

If we have any hope of seeing the gates of heaven open to us any time soon, we must humble our hearts and receive those messages into our hearts, no matter what ridicule and rejection we will face. May God give us the courage to be the last generation to live under Satan's plan to ruin this planet and our lives.

[This presentation was adapted from very thorough research done by Ron Duffield in his landmark book, Wounded In the House of His Friends. It is available from Amazon Books and Orion Publishing.]