

THE
SANCTUARY,
1844 AND
THE
PIONEERS



Paul A. Gordon

The
Sanctuary, 1844
and the
Pioneers

by Paul A. Gordon

Copyright © 2000
Ministerial Association
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Silver Spring, Maryland

Original copyright, 1983, Review & Herald Publishing
Association, Hagerstown, Maryland. Originally edited by
Gerald Wheeler. All copy has been reset and repaginated.

Printed in U.S.A.
Pacific Press Publishing Association
Nampa, Idaho

ISBN 1-57847-074-9

About This Book

Events of recent decades have pushed the subject of the doctrine of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment into the forefront of interest and discussion as never before. Some have charged that Seventh-day Adventists did not derive it from Scripture, but from the writings of Ellen White.

Elder Paul Gordon has investigated this charge, and convincingly shows that such Adventist pioneers as J. N. Andrews, James White, and Uriah Smith based the sanctuary doctrine on a consensus reached after they had done diligent Bible study. The distinctive sanctuary doctrine does not rest on the writings of Ellen White, as some have mistakenly assumed, but is the result of a long period of careful searching and wrestling with Scripture in light of the 1844 experience. The evidence simply does not support the charge that Ellen White originated the present sanctuary doctrine.

But the author does not intend that the reader consider his book a full and complete account of how the pioneers developed and reached their consensus. Rather, Gordon takes up his study mainly at the point where they have largely come to their consensus. The author doesn't intend his book to prevent further research into how the pioneers grappled with the scriptural issues of the sanctuary and judgment. Nor does he claim that he has fully and exhaustively presented the current consensus.

The author has let the pioneers speak for themselves as far as possible. He felt that it was the fairest way of depicting what the pioneers thought and taught.

Review and Herald Publishing Association, Original Publisher

Contents

About This Book	3
The Purpose of This Book	5
1. Historical Prologue	11
2. What Is the Sanctuary?	34
3. Entering the Most Holy Place in 1844	52
4. The Year-Day Principle in Prophecy	73
5. Seventy Weeks and 2300 Days	82
6. The Little Horn	107
7. The Investigative Judgment	115
8. Cleansing of the Sanctuary	135
9. The Two Goats	150
10. Is the Adventist Position Biblical?	166
11. Historical Reminiscing	175
A Concluding Statement	194
Comprehensive Periodical Listing	202

The Purpose of This Book

The year was 1905, and Ellen White was 77 years old. Settled in her home, Elmshaven, in California, busy preparing books, she did not know whether she wanted to cross the United States to attend the General Conference session in Washington, D. C. As the time neared, however, she wrote, "If I have to bear the burden of the perplexities here at home, and must write constantly to the brethren assembled, I feel that I would prefer to be on the field of battle rather than where it takes two weeks to write and receive a reply."—Letter 111, 1905. And so, having made the decision to go, she boarded a train in northern California for the six-day trip.

At the session, during a series of early-morning hearings before a committee of twenty-five appointed by the General Conference, a minister by the name of Albion F. Ballenger presented his new views on the sanctuary. He maintained that the holy place ministry in the sanctuary was an Old Testament experience. On May 21, Ballenger summed up his position on the sanctuary in nine theses. He then concluded that "when you allow the first apartment work to represent the plan of salvation from creation to the cross, everything is a perfect fit, and all seems beautiful and harmonious."—Partial transcript of meeting before committee of 25.

He also held that when Christ ascended to heaven after His resurrection, He went to the Most Holy Place and began His ministry there as our High Priest. Such conclusions obviously did not harmonize with the historic position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—believed and taught from its

beginning days—that Jesus entered the holy place in heaven’s sanctuary at His ascension, and the Most Holy Place on October 22, 1844, to begin an investigative judgment.

Ellen White did not agree either with Ballenger’s methods or with his message. “The Lord has instructed me that he has misinterpreted texts of Scripture, and given them a wrong application.”—Manuscript 145, 1905. Her instructor in vision, she said, wanted her to tell him, “You are bringing in confusion and perplexity by your interpretation of the Scriptures.”—Manuscript 62, 1905. “I am bidden,” she continued, “to say in the name of the Lord that Elder Ballenger is following a false light. The Lord has not given him the message that he is bearing regarding the sanctuary service.”—*Ibid.*

To church leaders at the General Conference session she proclaimed, “In clear, plain language I am to say to those in attendance at this conference that Brother Ballenger has been allowing his mind to receive and believe specious error.”—*Ibid.*

The next year, writing again of Ballenger’s teaching, she said, “Brother Ballenger’s position is not according to the word of God. . . . He misapplies scriptures. Theories of the kind that he has been presenting, we have had to meet again and again.”—Letter 50, 1906.

Not long after the 1905 General Conference, Ballenger separated from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But he was neither the first nor the last to disagree with the sanctuary teaching of the church. B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff, conference officials in Iowa, broke away from the church in the middle 1860s. D. M. Canright departed in 1887. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg left at about the same time as Ballenger. L. R. Conradi, a leading European church administrator, became a Seventh Day Baptist in 1932. And we could add others to the

list. All of them made the sanctuary doctrine a point of opposition. And, not surprisingly, questioning of the inspiration of Ellen White almost always accompanied their rejection, for they could not reconcile her statements with their position.

At the time of the 1905 General Conference, Ellen White gave specific advice as to how to meet Ballenger's arguments against the historic position of the Adventist Church regarding the sanctuary. "Let the aged men who were pioneers in our work speak plainly, and let those who are dead speak also, by the reprinting of their articles in our periodicals."—Manuscript 62, 1905.

In our official church publication she wrote that "we are to repeat the words of the pioneers in our work, who knew what it cost to search for the truth as for hidden treasure, and who labored to lay the foundation of our work. . . . The word given me is, Let that which these men have written in the past be reproduced."—*The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 25, 1905.¹

To a prominent minister she stated, "The standard-bearers who have fallen in death are to speak through the reprinting of their writings."—Letter 329, 1905.

In addition, the church should consider her writings important as well. "The Lord would have us at this time bring in the testimony written by those who are now dead, to speak in behalf of heavenly things. The Holy Spirit has given instruction for us in these last days. We are to repeat the testimonies that God has given His people [her statements], the testimonies that present clear conceptions of the truths of the sanctuary, and that show the relation of Christ to the truths of the sanctuary so clearly brought to view."—Manuscript 75, 1905.

Ballenger's theories did not limit themselves, however, to theological differences on the sanctuary. He was involved

with some aspects of the pantheistic teachings of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, and the "holy flesh" fanaticism centering in Indiana. Both tended to emphasize immediate human perfection, here and now. Ellen White warned both Ballenger and Kellogg that their theories minimized the importance of the Sabbath, Christ's second coming, and other foundation doctrines of the church. She told them that what they taught was a modern application of the evil servant of the parable, who said, "My Lord delayeth His coming" (Manuscript 62, 1905).

That Ellen White urged reprinting of *doctrinal* presentations seems evident from her repeated reference to doctrinal errors. After quoting Jesus' warning against false prophets (Matt. 7:15-27) she said, "Let the simple doctrines of the Word shine forth in their true bearing."—*Ibid.*

Speaking at the 1905 General Conference session, she stated, "We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary."—RH, May 25, 1905.

At the same time she wrote of those "who present strange doctrines, giving the Scriptures a wrong meaning." Continuing, she said: "The doctrines that Elder Ballenger advances, if received, would unsettle our faith in the sanctuary question." Ellen White cautioned that we are not to listen to "the doctrines of men" or "doctrines that denied the truth which in the past had been advocated" [Manuscript 145, 1905].

In 1906 Ellen White again spoke of those who "take texts of Scripture, and misapply them in order to make their doctrines appear as truth. The theories that Elder Ballenger advocated, which remove the sanctuary truth," she said, "are just such as the enemy would bring . . . to shake us from our foundation of faith."—Letter 40, 1906.

Mrs. White repeatedly emphasized the continuity of the sanctuary doctrine for “fifty years.” One should remember this when some charge that Ellen White made substantial changes in her later years on the sanctuary doctrine. (See Manuscript Release 760, the Ellen G. White Estate.)

The purpose of this study, however, is not primarily to refute Ballenger or Kellogg, or any other attack on the sanctuary doctrine, past, present, or future. It is, rather, to let the pioneers speak. Even this purpose cannot encompass every issue or minor point. Of the many hundreds of pages of their writings to consider, we will focus on those points that seemed to come up most frequently, and that have been basic to the Adventist position.

Our examination of the pioneers will largely focus on articles that appeared in *The Present Truth* and *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* from 1849 to 1905, when Ellen White urged such a study. More than four hundred articles related to the subject during those years. Although we notice disagreements at times on lesser points, we also find a remarkable general unity.

Certain early writers emerge as spokesmen for the position of the church. Three stand out above all others—J. N. Andrews, James White, and Uriah Smith. They were the major presenters of our beliefs and authored almost 65 percent of the articles on the sanctuary.

Today it might seem to Adventists—and others—that the sanctuary teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have largely developed from the writings of Ellen White. For many years we have had her witness easily available on the subject. But her voice was one of many on this subject, as well as on other doctrines. True, we have considered it a special voice under the direction of the Holy Spirit in visions, but it was not the only one speaking.

The author earnestly hopes that a renewed understanding of our backgrounds will strengthen faith in the divine leading of the Advent Movement. I believe you will discover that the pioneers had something to say worth considering, and that they built those conclusions on careful exposition of the Bible.

Because her books are readily available, this book will give references only for Ellen White's comments at the end of the major chapters. There we will also list those articles from the pioneers we have quoted. The appendix provides the larger bibliography of major articles from 1844 to 1905. Plans are being made to reproduce them in total for the student of Adventist history.

Paul A. Gordon
Ellen G. White Estate
Washington, D.C.
Silver Spring, Maryland

¹ Hereafter abbreviated as RH.

1

Historical Prologue

The preaching of Christ's second coming in 1844 began in such widely scattered places as England, Europe, Asia, India, Russia, Africa, South America, and the United States. Daniel 8:3-27 and 9:20-27 formed the major basis of that preaching.

James White closely tied the parable of the ten virgins, found in Matthew 25, to the expectation of Christ's return to earth. Looking back, he said, "When we take the view of this parable that has been taken by the Advent body, a harmony will be seen. The ten virgins represent those who participated, more or less, in the Advent movement. The going forth with lamps represents the movement of 1843, occasioned by the study and proclamation of the Word. 'Thy word is a lamp' (Ps. 119:105). The tarrying followed, with the slumbering time. The midnight cry in the parable represents the powerful and glorious movement, and work of God on the hearts of His people, in the autumn of 1844."—RH, April 14, 1853.

The Millerites

The Adventists—or Millerites, as they were often called in the United States because of their most prominent preacher, William Miller—were a loosely connected group. Miller himself was a Baptist, but those who followed his lead represented many churches.

At first Miller believed that the cleansing spoken of in

Daniel 8:14 represented the removal of sin from the church. But continued study drew him to the conclusion that the text referred both to the cleansing of the church from sin, *and* the purification of the earth by fire at Christ's second coming. The Millerites actually experienced two disappointments—the first, in the spring of 1844 without a specific date, and the second, on October 22, 1844. The latter one was the more devastating by far to those who went through it. The failure of Jesus to come as expected was a shattering experience. In confusion and uncertainty, many weeping bitterly, they asked, “Where are we now?”

Millerites Disperse

The Millerites in the United States then went in at least five directions. 1. Some abandoned any kind of religious belief altogether. 2. Others returned to their former churches. 3. Another group, quite small in number, maintained that Jesus had returned as expected, but that it had been a spiritual coming in His saints. They became known as “spiritualizers.” Within ten years they had virtually disappeared. (We must not confuse them with the spiritualism of table rappings and seances.) 4. The largest segment continued to expect the imminent return of Christ. They became distinguished for “time setting,” and clung to the idea that the earth was the sanctuary to be cleansed. The Advent Christian Church, today numbering some thirty thousand members, traces its roots back to them. 5. The smallest of the groups—no more than fifty to one hundred in number—strongly resisted organization for nearly twenty years. James White early called them “the scattered flock.” Seventh-day Adventists have their spiritual ancestry in them. At the time of the organization of the General Conference in 1863 they still numbered only about 3,500. By 1982 they had increased a thousandfold to more

than 3.5 million members around the world, with more than eighty percent outside the United States.¹

Seventh-day Adventist Roots

From the beginning of its life the small band that was the forerunner of the Seventh-day Adventist Church struggled with enemies committed to its destruction. Some tried to ridicule it into silence. Others determined to prove it false through what they considered to be Biblical answers to the claim for a new understanding of the cleansing of the sanctuary. Others, who had participated in Millerite preaching, simply refused to accept a new understanding of the events of 1844.

The fact that the forerunners of the Seventh-day Adventist Church believed they had someone with the prophetic gift in their ranks seemed only to fuel the fires of opposition further. Some opponents claimed that the explanations of the Disappointment and new interpretations of 1844 had come from Ellen White's visions. The historical record clearly refutes such a claim.

The Investigative Judgment and Shut Door

A new perception of the events of 1844 did not burst upon the sight of Adventists suddenly. For example, from the beginning, many believed in an understanding of a judgment *before* Christ's second coming, though it was a decade and more before the actual term "investigative judgment" appeared in Adventist publications. And though, at the beginning, there was some confusion regarding the "shut door," only a few years passed before Adventists generally agreed that the door of mercy for the world still stood open for those who had not clearly rejected the Advent message. They saw another shut door—the door of the first apartment in heaven's

sanctuary—and an open one into the Most Holy Place, where Christ had entered in 1844.

The Shut Door Changes Meaning

The parable of the ten virgins formed the basis of the use of the term “shut door” at the beginning. The Millerites applied the parable to the close of probation for the world at Christ’s return. For a short time *after* the 1844 disappointment many Adventists, including Ellen White, continued to hold a similar belief. But not for long. Writing in 1883, she said:

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 at first employed the term or in which it is employed by my opponents.

There was a shut door in Noah’s day. There was at that time a withdrawal of the Spirit of God from the sinful race that perished in the waters of the Flood. God Himself gave the shut-door message to Noah:

“My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Gen. 6:3).

There was a shut door in the days of Abraham. Mercy ceased to plead with the inhabitants of Sodom, and all but Lot, with his wife and two daughters, were consumed by the fire sent down from heaven.

There was a shut door in Christ’s day. The son of God declared to the unbelieving Jews of that generation, “Your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38).

Looking down the stream of time to the last days, the same infinite power claimed through John:

"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (Rev. 3:7).

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 pleaded with them.

Those who did not see the light, had not the guilt of its rejection. It was only the class who had despised the light from heaven that the Spirit of God could not reach.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 63, 64.

Observe that Ellen White, before a vision corrected her, believed that probation had ended for the world. Remember, she had been a Millerite who accepted such an interpretation along with others in the movement. But we find evidence that she soon changed her position. In March, 1849, Ellen White corresponded with the Hastings family, close Adventist friends. She spoke of a "Brother Stowell" who was "wavering upon the shut door." With her husband, James, she decided to visit the Stowells, and spent a week with them. The results were good. "Brother Stowell was established in the shut door and all the present truth he had doubted."—Letter 5, 1849.

What does Ellen White mean when she refers to "the shut door"? Further on in the same letter she describes a vision she had on Sabbath, March 24, just prior to visiting the Stowells.

"I saw the commandments of God and shut door could not be separated. I saw the time for the commandments of God to shine out to His people was when the door was opened in the inner apartment of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844. Then Jesus rose up and shut the door in the outer apart-

ment and opened the door in the inner apartment and passed into the Most Holy Place, and the faith of Israel now reaches within the second vail where Jesus now stands by the ark."—*Ibid.*

The description of her vision in the letter closely parallels an account in *The Present Truth* of August, 1849, and in *Early Writings*, pages 42-45. Observe that Ellen White applied the term "shut door" not to the close of probation, but rather to the shut door of the first apartment of heaven's sanctuary.

In 1851 James White revealed a transition of understanding among the Adventist pioneers regarding the "shut door." He began by quoting Revelation 3:7:

"Behold I set before thee an open door." This door Christ opens, while He shuts another. As the Philadelphia church applies to no other period than the time of the termination of the 2300 days, when Christ closed His work for the world in the Holy, and opened the door of the "Holiest of all," the conclusion seems irresistible that the open and shut door of Revelation 3:7, 8, refers to the change in the position and work of our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. He then closed the work or "door" of the daily ministration in the Holy, and opened the door of the Most Holy. "*The tabernacle of the testimony*" was then opened; but before this could be done, the "door," or work of Christ's continual mediation in the Holy, had to be closed. This may well be "likened" to the shut door in the parable.

The idea that the door of God's mercy is closed or ever was to be closed to those who do not reject the offers of mercy is not found in the Bible. No such door is mentioned in Scripture. But that there ever has been a point, beyond which men may go, where, according to the plan of salvation, the intercession of Christ could not benefit them is evident.—RH, June 9, 1851.

Later White spoke of the parable of the ten virgins and the application of the term “shut door”:

But what is represented by the shut door in the parable? We have shown the absurdity of applying it to the Second Advent. We can see no other application of the shut door that will harmonize with other parts of the parable, and with other scriptures, than to our High Priest entering upon the antitype of the ancient tenth day of the seventh month atonement, at the end of the 2300 days, in the autumn of 1844. His work, performing the antitype of the daily ministration, then must cease in the Holy Place of the true tabernacle, in order for him to enter the Most Holy Place to cleanse the sanctuary. And as His work closed in the Holy, it commenced in the Most Holy.—RH, April 14, 1853.

Sanctuary Foundation Beliefs

Adventist belief early established certain positions or understandings. Regarding the sanctuary, they include the following:

1. The year-day principle of prophetic interpretation applies to the seventy weeks and 2300 days of Daniel 8 and 9.
2. Daniel 8:14 speaks of the cleansing of *heaven's* sanctuary.
3. The seventy weeks and 2300 days began in 457 B.C. and the entire period ended in 1844.
4. The date, October 22, 1844, marks the moving of Christ, our High Priest, from His work in the holy place in heaven's sanctuary to the Most Holy Place.
5. The purification of the sanctuary on earth was a shadow of the cleansing of heaven's sanctuary by Christ.
6. The cleansing includes (1) an investigative judgment of all who have claimed to accept the death of Christ as payment for their sins, (2) the applying of the merits of

Christ's atonement in a final reaffirmation of the faith of the genuine believer, and (3) the blotting out of the records of pardoned sins.

7. The investigative judgment begins with the professed righteous who have already died and concludes with the avowed followers of God who are still alive. When the task is completed, probation for the world ends and Jesus prepares immediately to return to earth as King of kings.
8. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has come on the scene at the right time to preach the last message the world will receive while probation lasts.
9. The message of the first angel of Revelation 14 that "the hour of his judgment is come" is an integral part of the "everlasting gospel."
10. The sense that we are living in the time of the judgment with probation about to close gives us a special urgency as we look soberly at being found ready for Christ's return, and at the same time makes us joyful in anticipation of that great event.

Our examination will focus on the preceding aspects.

The Sanctuary Related to Other Beliefs

The pioneers among Sabbathkeeping Adventists early developed what they considered to be a system of truth. "Such is the connection, relation and dependence of one great truth upon another," Uriah Smith wrote, "that every additional evidence upon one, proportionably strengthens all the rest; and thus, by this reciprocal strength which each point furnishes to the others, the great platform of truth is established, on which God's people will finally be found standing, and which will abide the test of the great day."—RH, July 25, 1854.

Smith went on to demonstrate the connection between the Sabbath and the sanctuary. "It becomes then the duty of all those who by faith understand the work of our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary; who follow Him into the Most Holy, where He performs the last act of His ministration; who behold there the ark before which He ministers, and the immutable law which it contains—it becomes the duty of all such to restore the breach which has been made by Antichrist, and keep the commandments according to the requirements of God. All who believe and understand this work will do this. Thus we see that the subjects of the sanctuary and the Sabbath are inseparably connected."—*Ibid.*

More than twenty years later, he connected the sanctuary with another doctrine. This time it involved the second coming of Christ:

The cleansing of the sanctuary leads us into a series of subjects of the most important and timely character, subjects which explain some statements of the Scriptures which are otherwise obscure, harmonize lines of prophecy otherwise disconnected, and answer some otherwise unanswerable queries which arise concerning events connected with that crowning of all events, the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For instance, when Christ comes a change passes instantaneously upon the people of God, and all others are passed by. The righteous who are in their graves are raised in power, glory, and immortality, and the rest of the dead are left in their graves for a thousand years, and the righteous who are living are changed from mortality to immortality, while the rest of the living are given over to perish under the judgments of the Almighty. And this change for God's people is wrought instantaneously at the last trump. But before this change can be wrought it must be decided who are the people of God, and who are the incorrigibly

wicked. This point must be decided before the Lord comes; for there is no time then for investigation and decision of character. But this work of decision is a work of judgment; and such a work of judgment must transpire before the Lord comes —RH, Aug. 17, 1876.

Roswell F. Cottrell also recognized the close relationship of the sanctuary to the Ten Commandments, especially the Sabbath: "We find not only that the sanctuary in heaven is the grand center of the Christian system, as the earthly was of the typical, but that this subject is the center and citadel of present truth. And since our temple is in heaven, and in that temple, 'the ark of his testament,' containing 'the commandments of God,' and in the very midst of these commandments, the Sabbath of the Lord, fenced around by nine moral precepts that cannot be overthrown, it is no wonder that the enemies of the Sabbath should not only strive to abolish the ten commandments but to demolish the true sanctuary in which they are deposited beneath the mercy seat—the throne of God."—RH, Dec. 15, 1863.

Even D. M. Canright, who later left the denomination, connected the judgment in heaven's sanctuary with the doctrine of nonimmortality. "All believers in the mortality of man and the sleep of the dead agree that it is a great absurdity to teach that the righteous are taken to heaven at death, and the wicked sent to hell, and then after hundreds of years are called back, the saints from heaven, and the wicked from hell, to be judged! What can be the use of such a judgment? Is there danger that God has made a mistake in taking some to heaven who ought not to have gone there, and has sent others to hell who ought to have been in heaven? Such a judgment must be only a mockery. Hence we say, That theory must be false. God will not reward men till He has judged them to ascertain what each should have."—RH, Jan. 19, 1869.



Paul A. Gordon served for more than 30 years at the Ellen G. White Estate. He is author of several books and many articles for church journals. He has traveled extensively, visiting more than 120 countries to hold seminars. He and his wife, Donna, have two sons and twin daughters.

THE SANCTUARY, 1844 AND THE PIONEERS

Events during recent decades have brought the doctrine of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment to the forefront as never before. Voices both within and outside the church have charged that Seventh-day Adventists did not derive this teaching from Scripture, but rather from the writings of Ellen White.

Elder Paul Gordon decided to investigate this charge. This book, a condensation of a larger study, convincingly demonstrates that such pioneer Adventist leaders and thinkers as J. N. Andrews, James White, and Uriah Smith based the sanctuary doctrine on the consensus they had reached as a result of a long period of Bible study in the light of the 1844 experience. Nor did the pioneers quote Ellen White as authority for the teaching. The sanctuary concept, they firmly believed, was clearly based on Scripture itself.

This book reaffirms the Seventh-day Adventist Church's faith in its pioneers as people devoted to the study of Scripture.



9 781578 470747