

Objections to Dave Hunt & *The Berean Call*

Background: Obviously influenced by Dale Ratzlaff, a former Seventh-day Adventist, the lead article, “God’s Word: Our Guard and Guide,” in Dave Hunt’s paper, *The Berean Call* (March 1997) is an attempt to discredit certain false prophets, teachers, denominations, and doctrines. Among names like Moon, Armstrong, Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Copeland, and Hinn, he includes William Miller and Ellen G. White. Employing such terms as “heresies,” “wrong doctrines,” and “unbiblical doctrines,” Hunt is unsparing in his criticism. The only problem is that he is dead wrong on every count. This sets off alarm bells among loyal Adventists.

On March 26, 1997, having read Hunt’s article, the first elder of my church at that time suggested that the responsible thing to do was to have “some SDA representative . . . take up this challenge” and produce a carefully reasoned direct response to Hunt. Our elder’s suggestion was mailed to several key people. Those key people consisted of the president of the General Conference, the secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association, *Ministry* magazine editor, North American Division president and secretary, Lake Union Conference president and secretary, Michigan Conference Ministerial Department director, Michigan Conference president and secretary, a popular scholar/seminar speaker, ADVENTISTS AFFIRM editor, *Adventist Today* editor, and *Adventist Review* editor. We have all their names but for privacy prefer not to identify them here.

On April 4, 1997, I decided to take up the challenge by composing a letter to Hunt, detailing all the areas of objection. Our first elder mailed it on April 7.

On April 15, in a Michigan Conference *Mailgram* addressed to “Michigan Administrative Committees, Elders, Pastors, and Teachers,” Hunt’s original article is duplicated, followed by my letter of reply. At this point, it became clear that the message had gotten through to many of those key addressees. We here quote from two of the responses to our elder’s challenge.

On April 21, the secretary of the Lake Union Conference wrote: “I . . . appreciate immensely the point by point response to [Hunt’s] article by Jerry Stevens. I think that Jerry Stevens’ response was done very well. . . .”

On April 23, the director of the Biblical Research Institute responded to the same letter as forwarded to him by the president of the General Conference. The letter concludes: “Thanks for sharing your information and the copy of Brother Stevens’ response. It is of a high quality that lends credence to our message.”

Now that we have provided some important background facts, we reproduce Hunt’s original article and my letter protesting his handling of the matter in their proper context.

God's Word: Our Guard and Guide

Dave Hunt

The fruitful man in Psalm 1 meditates upon God's Word "day and night," and not from a sense of duty but because it is his "delight." In his heart and on his mind continually, God's Word guards and guides him. How essential this is! Common sense and logic are helpful. However, without God's Word (which transcends human wisdom) to guard and guide us, we are susceptible to temptation and error, especially when the latter is presented convincingly "in the name of God" by those looked up to as Christian leaders.

God works through His Word: "[M]y word...shall not return unto me void..." (Isa 55:11); "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps 119:11). Satan works to snatch God's Word from the heart: "[T]hen cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart" (Mt 13:19). If it suits him, Satan quotes the Bible (Mt 4:6) and attempts to pervert it in order to deceive. He also inspires false prophets with "new revelations" which subvert the Word. We have many such "prophets" in the church today.

God's Word repeatedly warns about false prophets. We need to heed those warnings. Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets" (Mt 7:15); "[M]any false prophets shall rise...and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Mt 24:11, 24). Christ clearly warns of a last-days false signs-and-wonders movement promoted by false prophets. Paul likens the latter to Jannes and Jambres, who opposed Moses and Aaron (2 Tm 3:8) with signs and wonders done by the power of Satan.

Peter warned that just as there were false prophets in Old Testament times, "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies..." (2 Pt 2:1). The Apostle John declared that already in his day "many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 Jn 4:1). How much more must we beware of false prophets as the prophesied last-days apostasy reaches its climax in preparing the world and a false church for the Antichrist. Knowing, loving and obeying God's Word is the only sure way not to be led astray.

Any one of the Bible's six marks of false prophets is sufficient identification: 1) through signs and wonders they lead astray after false gods (Dt 13:1-4); 2) their prophecies don't come to pass (Dt 18:20-22); 3) they contradict God's Word (Is 8:20); 4) they bear bad fruit (Mt 7:18-20); 5) all men speak well of them (Lk 6:26); 6) they deny that Jesus, the one and only Christ, has come once and for all in the flesh (1 Jn 4:3).

How tragic that God's personal letter of love and guidance to His own is so neglected today by those who call themselves Christians! Many who profess to know God and to serve Him have little or no thirst for His Word. Instead, they seek signs and wonders, emotional experiences, new revelations, the latest "move," or the gifts rather than the Giver. As a result, they are susceptible to "every wind of doctrine" (Eph 4:14) and fall prey to false teachers who "through covetousness...with feigned words make merchandise" (2 Pt 2:3) of them, "supposing that gain is

And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.

Matthew 24:11

godliness" (1 Tm 6:5). The popular lie of "seed faith"—that a gift to a ministry opens the door to miracles and prosperity—deceives and promotes covetousness among millions ignorant of God's Word.

The fulfillment of biblical prophecies is the great proof of God's existence, that the Bible is His Word and that Jesus Christ is the promised Savior. The false prophecies of many of today's Christian leaders are a loud warning. Heed it! Most cults are founded upon false prophecies, which, if pointed out, offer an effective way to open blind eyes and rescue cultists.

Among the false prophets throughout history were a number of the popes. As one example, Pope Gregory XI's papal bull of 1372 (*In Coena Domini*) pronounced papal dominion over the entire Christian world, secular and religious, and excommunicated all who failed to obey the popes and to pay them taxes. *In Coena* was confirmed by subsequent popes, and in 1568 Pope Pius V swore that it was to remain an eternal law. Instead, in 1870, two months after the Vatican pronounced papal infallibility, Rome was liberated from papal dominion

by Italy's army and Pope Pius IX took refuge in the Vatican, all that remained of what had been a vast empire.

Mimicking the popes, Sun Myung Moon prophesied decades ago that he would take over the world. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder of the Transcendental Meditation (TM) movement, declared that 1975 was the first year in "The Age of Enlightenment," 1977 was "The Year of the Ideal Society," and 1978 "The Year of Invincibility of Every Nation." No comment is necessary. Herbert W. Armstrong predicted that his Worldwide Church of God would be raptured to the ancient city of Petra in 1972 and that Christ would return to the earth in 1975 (a favorite date of many cults). In the 1970s Elijah Muhammad prophesied to his Black Muslim followers that God's return to North America was imminent.

Mormonism boasts of its prophets—but they have all been false. In 1833, founding prophet Joseph Smith prophesied that the United States would suffer "unparalleled" multiple disasters ("pestilence, hail, famine and earthquake") which would sweep the wicked (non-Mormons) off the land, leaving Mormons safe in their Zion haven in Missouri. Instead, they fled to Utah. Among Smith's many other false prophecies was the declaration in 1835 that Christ would return within 56 years and many living then would "not taste of death till Christ comes."¹ Smith's successor, Brigham Young, prophesied that the Civil War would not free the slaves.

Charles T. Russell's false prophecies formed the basis for what became The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Russell declared that the Second Coming had taken place invisibly in October 1874, and the Lord was truly present, and that in 1914 the faithful (the 144,000) would be translated to heaven and the wicked destroyed. Armageddon (which began in 1874) would culminate in 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's rulers and the end of the world. C.T. Russell, still on earth, died in 1916.

In the early 1920s, JW's zealously distributed on the streets and from door to door a book titled *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*. It was prophesied, "The year 1925 is a date definitely and clearly marked in the Scriptures, even more clearly than that of 1914...we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of

old...to the condition of human perfection."² The JW's even built a house in San Diego where the patriarchs were to live and tried to deed it to King David. (The house was quietly sold in 1954.)

In the early 1940s, JW's were declaring that Armageddon, *only months away*, would end World War II and the defeat of the Nazis would usher in God's rule on earth.³ Their book, *Children*, suggested that plans to marry and have children be postponed until after Armageddon. It's been a long wait! Not giving up, they later prophesied that God's millennial kingdom would commence in 1975. Again JW's were told not to engage in any plans for this world, including marriage and having children. Many quit their jobs, sold their homes and dedicated themselves to going door to door.

Seventh-Day Adventism (SDA) originated with similar false prophecies about Christ's coming. (We offer an excellent book.) It began with William Miller's prediction that Christ would return in 1843 (revised to October 22, 1844). Miller admitted his error. However, SDA prophetess Ellen G. White (EGW), who had repeatedly endorsed Miller's prophecy, insisted that Christ had indeed come, but not to earth. Instead, He had entered "the holy of holies" in heaven "to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits."⁴ Entitled? Many quotes could be given to prove that EGW taught salvation by works. Here are a few:

Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny...though...forgotten by us, they [our works] will bear their testimony to justify or condemn.⁵

When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life...⁶

Each one of you needs to...[be] working with your might to redeem the failures of your past life. God has placed you in a world of suffering to prove you, to see if you will be found worthy of the gift of eternal life.⁷

This teaching of the "investigative judgment" is the foundational doctrine and major heresy of Seventh-day Adventism; that the atonement was not complete on the Cross but was begun in heaven in 1844 and depends upon our works. According to EGW, the blood of Christ, instead of making "an atonement for the soul" (Lv 17:11) and "cleans[ing] us from all sin" (1 Jn 1:7), brought sin into heaven: "[O]ur sins are, in fact, transferred to the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Christ."⁸ Thus Christ had to begin the work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary (of sins His blood had brought there!)

through the "investigative judgment." EGW declared that "Ministers who would not accept this *saving message*" were hindering God's work and "*The blood of souls is upon them.*"⁹ Millerites who adopted this delusion became Seventh-day Adventists.

EGW made numerous false prophecies: that "Old Jerusalem never would be built up,"¹⁰ that she would be alive at the Rapture,¹¹ that Christ would return before slavery was abolished,¹² that Adventists living in 1856 would be alive at the Rapture,¹³ and many more. Yet her writings are revered like Scripture. Number 17 of the "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists" states,

The Gift of Prophecy: One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry

But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you....

2 Peter 2:1

of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction.

False prophets continue among us and are often seen and heard on Christian television and radio. For example, toward the end of 1975, Kenneth Copeland prophesied, "As you move into the month of January [1976], you shall see more of the outpouring of God's glory than...in the history of this world...limbs that have been amputated put back on by the power of God...instantly...[bald] men's hair grow to a full head of hair...eyeballs replaced where there were no eyeballs...God will cause your automobile...[that gets] 10 miles to the gallon to get 70 miles...the same old car!" These are but a few of Copeland's false prophecies, to say nothing of his false doctrines.

The false prophecies and "words of knowledge" by those associated with John Wimber and his Vineyard churches would fill several volumes. The laughing revival from Toronto and its latest variation (spreading like wildfire) in the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, has spawned a new generation of false prophets. Failure of fulfillment is excused because today's prophets are "different" and errors are normal during the process of learning to become more proficient. Imagine Jeremiah saying, "I'm often wrong, but I'm

improving"!

Benny Hinn is the most popular televangelist/healer today, and many of his false prophecies are documented in *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*. (See books offered.) On December 31, 1989, Benny said, "The Lord also tells me...about '94 or '95, no later than that, God will destroy the homosexual community of America...by fire...Canada will be visited with a mighty revival that will start on the west coast of British Columbia...in the next three years." It only takes one false prophecy to make a false prophet, and Hinn's are legion. He can't even get his testimony straight. In *PTL Family Devotional* he says, "I got saved in Israel in 1968," but in a 1983 message in St. Louis he said, "It was in Canada that I was born again right after '68." Yet in *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, he says he was converted in 1972, during his senior year in high school. But he dropped out before his senior year. When was he saved?

For three years, night and day, Paul wept and warned the Ephesian elders of coming apostasy and that some of them would be among its leaders (Acts 20:29-31)! How feeble is our concern for the state of the church in comparison with Paul's! And what was the remedy he offered? Not spiritual warfare, not prayer and fasting, but obedience to God and His Word: "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace" (v 32).

There is a growing movement of "prayer and fasting for revival." It sounds so good! But the leaders of this movement refuse to heed God's Word, and promote ecumenism and heresies! We need no revival of that! We need repentance for not heeding God's Word. We need reformation, not revival! There are times when prayer and fasting are wrong. After the defeat at Ai, God told Joshua that prayer was inappropriate because Israel had sinned (Jos 7:10-13). How tragic to have a revival led by false prophets promoting false doctrines!

Not all Seventh-day Adventists embrace EGW's heresies. Pray that SDA leaders will admit to EGW's false prophecies and repent of wrong doctrines. Pray that evangelical leaders will face up to the fact that their ranks are filled with false prophets. Pray for a great outcry against unbiblical doctrines. Pray that today's evangelical leaders will faithfully correct false prophets.

And may the rest of us be faithful in our small spheres of influence. May God help us to love His Word, to meditate upon it day and night, to obey it in our daily lives, and to stand firmly against the perversion of that Word by the false prophets and false teachers of our day. May His Word truly be our guard and guide!

TBC

counselors, as Scripture encourages, and have found the preterist view to be more scriptural. Mr. Hunt appears to think that anyone who does not share his premillennial eschatology is a borderline heretic. I am beginning to be annoyed by this arrogance.

Answer: If we have ever given the impression that it is heresy not to believe "premillennial eschatology," it was not intended. As for the preterist position that the Olivet discourse (Mt 24-25) and Revelation 1-20:6 were all fulfilled in A.D. 70 (Nero was the Antichrist, etc.), that is easily refuted.

In Matthew 24:21 Christ declares that the "great tribulation" of which He speaks will be the worst that "ever shall be." Inasmuch as the persecution of both Jews and Christians under Hitler, Stalin, Mao and others since the 1940s has been far worse than that suffered by the Jews in A.D. 70, this verse was not fulfilled then.

Christ then warns (v 22) that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." Obviously this was not fulfilled in A.D. 70, for there was no danger at that time that all flesh would be wiped out. Its fulfillment can only be future. Verses 27-31 present further events which clearly did not happen in A.D. 70: the coming of Christ like lightning across the sky; the appearance of "the sign of the Son of man in heaven and His visible 'coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory'; and His angels gathering 'together his elect from the four winds....' Since these events have not happened, they must yet be future. I would respectfully offer this as solid evidence for the futurist position.

Question: I wondered about your explanation in the Q&A column about II Thessalonians 2:1-3. You say "obviously Paul had taught the Thessalonians that the Rapture came first," that is, before "the Day of Christ." It is not at all obvious.... What is obvious is that the Rapture of verse 1 is included in the "day of the Lord" of verse 2, and that the two items of verse 3 must come first.... The evil person, the opponent of God in verse 4, will be destroyed by the "appearance" of the coming of Christ in verse 8. It must be, therefore, that the "lawless one" will appear before the Rapture.

Answer: I believe it is obvious that to be told the Day of the Lord had come would not distress those believing in a prewrath, midtrib or post-trib rapture, or amillennialists. Only those believing in a pretrib rapture would be disturbed, because if the

Day of the Lord had already come and they were still on earth, either Paul had lied or they had been left behind. Since Paul was concerned that the Thessalonians would be distressed by such a report, it does follow logically that he had taught them a pretrib rapture.

As for verse 8, it refers to the Second Coming, an event distinct from the Rapture. There must be two events because what Christ says about His coming cannot occur in one event or in one time-frame. For example, He says that on the basis of all the signs having been manifest, those waiting will "know that it [His coming] is near, even at the doors" (Mt 24:33). Yet in verse 44 He says that His coming will be an unexpected surprise. Christ is either contradicting Himself, or He is referring to two comings: the Rapture, and the Second Coming.

He plainly tells us (Mt 24:37-38; Lk 17:26-30) that His coming will be at a time of peace, prosperity, thriving business and pleasure. Yet we know the Second Coming occurs in the midst of Armageddon when famine, pestilence and numerous disasters have already ravaged the earth and the most horrible war in history is underway. Again, He is either contradicting Himself, or is referring to two events.

Both Jude 14 and Zechariah 14:4-5 tell us that when Christ returns to the Mount of Olives He brings "all the saints" from heaven with Him. Thus, prior to the Second Coming He must have taken the saints into heaven. That could only have occurred at the Rapture, a prior and separate event.

As for the Day of the Lord, 2 Thessalonians 2:3 says that the apostasy must come first. It does not say that the Antichrist must be revealed first. It is not straining the text to interpret it as saying that the Day of the Lord will not come without the Antichrist being revealed in that day. This fits with Paul's statement that someone is preventing the Antichrist from being revealed. The One preventing could only be the Holy Spirit indwelling the believers, and that special presence of God could only be removed by catching away the church in the Rapture.

News Alerts

World, 1/11/97: With the new year and the clock ticking ever closer to the year 2000, many Christians are wondering if there is a connection between the new Millennium, the return of Christ, and the Last Judgment. Computer experts are expecting another kind of Armageddon

in the year 2000. On January 1 of that year, at 12:00:01 a.m., when the digital clocks in all the world's computers roll over from the year "99" to "00," operating systems and software will react as if it were literally the End of Time.

Short-sighted computer programmers and designers have for years saved disk space by leaving out the "19-" century prefix for the computers' internal clocks. Recently they realized that as the sequence of years builds up to the next century, computers will interpret the double zeros not as A.D. 2000 but as A.D. 0.

This will affect more than the clock feature on individual computers, since computer programming languages also are tied to time-functions. All time-based calculations and software will be thrown into chaos. The computers that track social security, interest rates, insurance, home mortgages, and business operations will be thrown into chaos. (For example, a credit union calculating interest payments between 1988 and 2000 will use the figure of minus 88 years.)

Experts think they can solve the problem by arduously rewriting thousands of lines of code, but the cost to the economy may be as much as \$600 billion.

Christianity Today, 2/3/97: Man Thi Jones, a 54-year-old nurse from Folsom, California, was released December 3 after two months under arrest in Phan Rang, Vietnam. Her husband, Jack Wade Jones, paid a \$1,000 fine because his wife gave away ballpoint pens with Christian crosses on them. Man Thi Jones is a native of the Vietnamese village; she became a naturalized U.S. citizen 22 years ago. Since the United States normalized trade relations with Vietnam in 1995, at least 10 Americans have been fined and expelled for religious activities.

Endnotes

- 1 *History of the Church* (vol. 2), 182; (vol 5), 336.
- 2 "Millions Now Living Will Never Die," *The Watchtower* (July 15, 1924), 89.
- 3 *Watchtower*, Dec. 1941.
- 4 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 480.
- 5 *Op. cit.*, 486-490.
- 6 *Op. cit.*, 483.
- 7 *EGW, Testimonies for the Church* (vol. 3), 530.
- 8 *EGW, Spirit of Prophecy* (vol. 4), 266.
- 9 *EGW, Early Writings*, 234.
- 10 *Op. cit.*, 75.
- 11 *Op. cit.*, 15-16.
- 12 *Op. cit.*, 35, 276.
- 13 *EGW, Testimonies*, 131-132.

April 4, 1997

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My Dear Brother in Christ:

A friend passed me a copy of the March 1997 issue of *The Berean Call*, featuring your article, "God's Word: Our Guard and Guide." I am unsure of your credentials but assume that you are an ordained minister. I write you as a concerned layman and Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

You are not the first to label SDA's as cultic, nor will you be the last. You are in serious error, however, with regard to *each and every* premise by which you judge SDA teachings to be either cultic or erroneous. I believe you owe it to your readers to give them unvarnished truth. The very name you adopted for your paper implies the sort of scholarship and integrity that marked the noble Bereans of the Apostolic era: They "received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Paul contrasts them with the Thessalonians, who were not of similar honest-hearted persuasion.

Your article exudes the aura of a swashbuckling crusader, vanquishing one cult after another: the Unification Church, the TM movement, the WCG, the Black Muslims, the LDS (Mormons), JW's. Your sword still dripping with blood, you gleefully essay to dispose of what you view as the epitome of all false prophets, the SDA's, fully expecting to eliminate this hated sect in the same fell swoop. But alas! the rapier's edge has become blunted through much use, and the accuser is instead found to be tilting at a windmill. Read on.

1. Let us begin with your first objection (and your gasp of mock horror is palpable), that of Ellen White's allusion to man's *entitlement* (there, I too have said it!) to the benefits of Christ's atoning sacrifice as set forth in *Great Controversy*, p. 480. The very next lines, which you leave unquoted read thus: "In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God." As of old, refusal to confess and repent of one's sins excludes that person from the camp of God: one's *entitlement* can be despised and thus lost, similar to Esau's cavalier but inexcusable squandering away of his birthright. No, there is no taint of "salvation by works" in EGW's *Biblically* sound message; acceptance of Christ's atonement is an act either of pure faith or of abject faithlessness.
2. Your bracketed allusion to EGW's use of "works" is unjustified and misleading, for she does not here use that term—you supply it. The overarching context, however, beginning at p. 482 of *Great Controversy*, happens to make it quite evident that she affirms the

Biblical teaching of man being accountable to God for the works done in this life. She quotes Eccl. 12:13, 14 and James 2:12. Objections such as yours, taken out of context, lack the Berean nobility of truth-seeking. At a minimum, the entire chapter, “Facing Life’s Record,” should be read before proceeding to *any* conclusions.

3. *Great Controversy*, p. 483. Same chapter, but once again a portion of the paragraph is omitted. The sentence begins, as you cite: “When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life [let us proceed to complete this passage, ignoring your telltale ellipsis:], and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God’s remembrance.” EGW supports this teaching by quoting *Scripture* (Ex. 32:33 and Ezek. 18:24). Ironically, this completion of your truncated citation explodes your earlier objection at point 2, above!
4. *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 530. Once more, the convenient ellipses omit key words that reveal a much broader context. Here is the corrected citation: “Each of you needs to be [we here supply the elided portion and replace your bracketed insertion] awake and face square about to get out of the cart rut of selfishness. Improve the short, probationary time given you by working with your might to redeem the failures of your past life. God has placed you in a world of suffering to prove you, to see if you will be found worthy of the gift of eternal life.” Notice the use of the word *gift* here? Does this sound like works-trip mentality? Set in its proper context, this testimony bares the sin of man neglecting his fellow man, and is titled “Man’s Duty to His Fellow Men,” beginning on p. 527. In asserting that EGW supposedly advocated salvation by works, would Brother Hunt go so far as to condone a Corban-like Pharisaical neglect of filial love and duty? Such an attitude contravenes common sense, *Biblical* teaching, and also one of Christ’s major missions: to set God’s teachings in a balanced light. He said, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.” Mt. 22:29.
5. *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. IV, p. 266. Again, the context of the quotation has been wrested to support a contrived point. It is clear that a major function of the atonement, anciently and modernly, is to determine who “are entitled to the benefits of the atonement” because of “repentance of sin and faith in Christ.” The heresy, if any be discovered, turns upon the *false accuser*, who blatantly perverts the beautiful *Biblical* truths here so clearly expounded.
6. *Early Writings*, p. 234. Permit me to quote you verbatim: “EGW declared that ‘Ministers who would not accept this *saving message*’ were hindering God’s work and ‘*The blood of souls is upon them.*’” This objection is glaringly heinous, for even a casual reading of this chapter, “The First Angel’s Message,” reveals the fact that EGW here treats of another topic altogether from that to which you stridently object. Her comments pertain to the first angel’s pronouncement as expounded in *Scripture* (Rev. 14:6, 7), a passage dealing with apocalyptic events, *not* the “investigative judgment” teaching you so vehemently oppose.
7. Your objection to EGW’s prophecy that “Old Jerusalem never would be built up” (*Early Writings*, p. 75) contradicts a fact well attested by history, for the *Old Jerusalem* that Jesus knew was destroyed, as *He* predicted, in A.D. 70. But again, the context makes evident the real thrust of her comment. Far from being an isolated prediction, merely, of coming world events, she here addresses a then contemporary issue wherein certain misguided church members carelessly allowed themselves to become distracted from

gathering in nearby precious souls, instead courting infatuation with “the great error of believing that it is their duty to go to Old Jerusalem.” Reading through to p. 76 as well as the Appendix note on p. 300 makes it clear that EGW was justifiably concerned. Another writer commented on this very issue in the Oct. 7, 1851 edition of *The Review and Herald*.

8. You claim EGW prophesied “that she would be alive at the Rapture”—might you be implying that she taught the doctrine of a “secret rapture”? If so, this is total heresy, but it is *yours*, not hers! Read her words for yourself (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 31, 1888): “Well may the children of God be filled with hope and courage, with joy and rapture, as they contemplate the things which God has prepared for them that love him.” Just past this sentence comes the “then we which are alive and remain” affirmation of Paul’s oft-quoted 1 Thess. 4:17 lines. The elevated emotion connoted by joyous, even rapturous expectation, in no way bears relationship with the *Biblically untenable* notion of a “secret rapture.” What thinking reader possibly could be hoodwinked by such an obvious gross distortion of a commonly accepted dictionary definition?
9. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 205. You claim EGW prophesied “that Christ would return before slavery was abolished.” Here is what she really wrote: “Some act as if slavery had never been abolished.” Ever sympathetic toward downtrodden Blacks, she confronted certain strongly prejudiced Whites in her church in a pointed chapter titled “Proclaiming the Truth Where There Is Race Antagonism,” beginning on p. 204. Written in 1908, some 43 years after the abolition of slavery, this testimony connotes something vastly different from your offhanded implication that she wrote of Christ returning *before* the abolition of slavery!
10. *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 132. You claim EGW prophesied “that Adventists living in 1856 would be alive at the Rapture.” Beginning at p. 131, we learn that the context of this chapter titled “Conformity to the World” pertains to a Michigan Conference held in November 1855 in Battle Creek. (As a sidelight of history, Battle Creek was then the generally acknowledged center of “Adventism,” but a denomination to be known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church would not be born there for another 8 years, and so there was no denomination in existence just yet.) The context: In vision, an angel informs EGW that of those present, “Some [would be] food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus.” As any serious student of the inspired Word knows, expectancy does not necessarily equate with fulfillment, for the reason that much of prophecy is conditioned upon man’s obedience. Examples in *Scripture* abound. To sum them up in a few words, let us merely remind our brother of the generally accepted term *dispensationalism*. The final rejection by the Jews, not only of Jesus, but also of His servant Stephen—the former consummated by a crucifixion and the latter by a stoning—amply demonstrates the utter refusal of the Jewish nation to abide by the terms of the first covenant, and the consequent offering by God of a new covenant to believing Christians (“Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”). Galatians 3:26–29 eloquently addresses the rationale for this change.
11. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . : A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*, p. 216. You artfully delete the final sentence, a fact which forcibly unmasks your false assertions of Adventism and your own subtle meanspiritedness. In a pathetic attempt to imply that EGW’s “writings are revered like Scripture,” you provide only that portion of

the quote supporting your contention. That last omitted sentence changes everything and removes all doubt that your intentions could be honorable. Here it is: "They [EGW's writings] also make clear that the *Bible* [emphasis mine] is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested." This has ever been the position of the SDA Church. It is not questioned that some have misused her writings, but that is a side issue involving misguided or overzealous individuals, not a denomination-wide practice or teaching.

But the coup de grâce of all omissions is your failure to produce a list of references to corroborate your footnotes. As it so happens, this presented no problem to me personally, a CD-ROM of the voluminous corpus of EGW's works coming to the rescue. But your omission must have left very many unsuspecting Bereans a bit bewildered. It is no easy task to check "whether those things are so," when the honest searcher is deprived of both chart and compass. Would you make *Thessalonians* of Bereans? We sorrowfully shake our head.

Perhaps you depended upon the "scholarship" of ex-Adventist Dale Ratzlaff or someone else, and that is the reason for many of your article's most flagrant errors. If so, you are the more culpable for passing off poorly documented, slanted rhetoric, instead of first verifying whether they offer plain fact. Such unscholarly practice is a shame to all Christendom, a blight upon Christ's very name.

My brother, how will you stand in the great Day of Assizes, when God asks how you handled the truth He so graciously shed upon your pathway? Will you then try to justify the artful use of ellipses, the missing sentences, and the distorted, truncated contexts and innuendos which condemn you instead of "proving" your preconceptions and misrepresentations? Do such methods honor Christ? Jesus once rebuked some truly false shepherds: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." John 9:41.

My sincere prayer is that you will stop right where you are: turn square about, lest the blood of souls be upon you. Doubtlessly, you assumed that none would question your charges, as many readers reside their trust in what they deem their enlightened spiritual leader. But a shepherd is accountable for his sheep: which way have you led your flock? God asks, "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" Jer. 13:20.

You do not know me from Adam, nor could you know that I happen to have read, still possess, and study all of the books you cite. I cherish the hope that you either will publish this letter in your next issue, or print a complete retraction. You are treading on razor-thin ice and are trifling with a God Who loves, oh yes, but Whose recording angels also keep meticulous accounts. I do not envy you for a moment. Please, I beg of you, make things right at your earliest opportunity.

In Christian love,

Jerry Stevens
(Address intentionally withheld)