

# VOLUME III

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE TWO FACES OF FRANK M. WILCOX

by Kerry B. Wynne

I was stunned when I realized the significance of what I had just found in my library of SDA books! Could the author of this unabashed defense of Ellen G. White's prophetic gift really be F. M. Wilcox? Was not Frank M. Wilcox unequivocal in his assertion that her claim to be an inspired prophet was fraudulent as recorded in the "leaked" stenographer's transcript of the **1919 Bible Conference Minutes**? Soon my amazement turned to anger! How could such a thing be possible? How could anyone do such a thing? What could possibly justify such whopping perfidy on the part of a man whose appearance of piety earned him the honor of serving as the editor of the official church paper of Seventh-day Adventists, *The Review and Herald*, from 1911 to 1944?

The book in my hands was his ***The Testimony of Jesus***, published in 1934— just 15 years after he stated that he did not believe her writings were any more inspired than those of any other author. Had it not been for the 1974 discovery, theft, and later unauthorized publication (*Spectrum* magazine, 1979) of this "bomb shell" stenographer's transcript of the secret 1919 meeting— one convened to decide what should be done about Ellen White's fraudulent prophetic claims— we could look back on Frank Wilcox as an Adventist leader of the highest integrity. General Conference President, A.G. Daniells, who conducted the meeting, understood the danger to Adventism that this transcript represented, so he ordered it to be sealed for a minimum of 50 years. He put it in a plain paper bag and banished it to the furthest depths of the huge vault at the General Conference Headquarters in Washington, DC, where **Dr. F. Donald Yost** found it in 1974.

This smoking gun transcript shows the meeting's participants agonizing over the Ellen White problem. Should they repudiate her and deal with the havoc that would ensue, or should they continue trying to cover-up her prophetic blunders? If they decided to continue the present cover-up, how would they keep the truth about her from the Church's seminary students? They discussed her prophetic blunders, biblical and historical errors, and blatant plagiarism in cautious terms. Each participant seems aware that saying too much could finish his or her denominational career. Yet, despite this fear, the hard facts spill out into the open and are addressed with painful caution. That even one of the participants was willing to risk his or her career to speak out on this explosive issue is, in itself, evidence that the Ellen White problem had become impossible to ignore.

Indeed, the transcript reveals that Wilcox was one of the most vocal participants in denouncing Ellen White's prophetic claims. He declares his opinion that her writings are not any more inspired than those of anyone else:

I would like to ask, Brother Daniells, if it could be accepted as a sort of rule that Sister White might be mistaken in details, but in the general policy and instruction she was an authority. . . It seems to me I would have to accept what she says on some of those general policies or I would have to sweep away the whole thing. Either the Lord has

spoken through her or he has not spoken through her; and if it is a matter of deciding in my own judgment whether he has or has not, then I regard her books the same as every other book published. I think it is one thing for a man to stultify his conscience, and it is another thing to stultify his judgment. It is one thing for me to lay aside my conscience, and it is another thing for me to change my judgment over some view that I hold.

Could he have changed his mind during those 15 years that followed?

We now turn to a consideration of how the problems with Ellen White as revealed by the 1974 discovery of the transcript of the *1919 Bible Conference Minutes* might have influenced Dr. Bacchiocchi to challenge her prophetic claims with the publication of his 1977 book, *From Sabbath to Sunday*.

## **100+ YEARS OF ENABLING**

While our readers will find some repetition of what they have already learned, we are now going to present some of what we have already discovered more in the context of proving what Ellen White and her contemporary and subsequent enablers knew, and, to the best of our ability, when they knew those things.

Dudley M. Canright was the most prominent Seventh-day Adventist leader to apostatize. In earlier years he was a constant companion of James and Ellen White. They even went on an extended camping trip together in Colorado. Few of the pioneer leaders of Adventism had such a close relationship. Unfortunately for the Whites, this relationship afforded Canright an opportunity to get a first-hand look at Ellen White's prophetic blunders. Apparently when he had accumulated enough evidence to see that she was a fraud, he began to revisit her teachings. He began to study the Sabbath doctrine in depth, but secretly so. By 1887 he was ready to make his break. He stunned SDA leaders not only by his apostasy but with a body of scholarly research which proved that unless the church could come up with better biblical and historical support for its Sabbath doctrine, the (then) present status of it was that it could not possibly be true. He proved, for example, that it was impossible that the Catholic Church could have “changed” the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday.

Fast-forward to 1974. Samuele Bacchiocchi had been preparing his doctoral dissertation for years to present to a committee of scholars who would review his research. His degree was to be in church history, and he had chosen to write about the history of the Sabbath. We conjecture that the prospects of facing this committee caused him to realize that his approach to Colossians 2:14-17, a known barrier to Sabbatarianism in Catholicism, would have to appear to be based on principles of good scholarship. This is another way of saying that he knew he could not use the traditional defenses that his Seventh-day Adventist up-bringing had provided. We believe that this realization is what led to his bizarre theory that the “shadows” referred to the extra rules and regulations imposed on the observance of the Jewish dietary laws and Sabbaths rather than to the ordinances themselves. It had a nice ring to it, was entirely new in concept, and it was not a simple matter to refute the concept.

A suppressed chapter out of Seventh-day Adventist history helps to put all of this into perspective. The pioneer Adventist leaders of the 1880's did not appear to have any good answers to Canright's attacks on their belief system, so they launched a campaign to smear his personal character. He was accused of apostatizing because he was jealous of Ellen White's power and wanted a higher position in the Church. Somewhat later the rumor was started that Canright had recanted his apostasy on his death-bed and affirmed his belief in Ellen White and the Sabbath. One such account has him weeping

because he had forfeited his eternal life. Interestingly, Canright had anticipated that the Church would likely start such rumors after his death, and in every book he published he included a section entitled "My Present Standing" to make it more difficult for such rumors to attain credibility. This idea we credit to an article by former Adventist, "Wiredog," on his blog at:

<https://outofadventism.wordpress.com/2011/04/08/canright-be-wrong-give-it-a-rest/>

Also, on March 8, 1916, Canright signed an affidavit attesting to the fact that he had not recanted Adventism. (He died May 18, 1919.) You can see a photocopy of this affidavit at this Internet link, and you can see the text of it by going to our historical time-line to 1916.

<http://outofadventism.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/affadavit2.jpg>

Also, see our historical time-line for 1916 for the text of the affidavit.

Courtesy of the Robert K. Sanders' collection of Adventist-related documents, we are able to present evidence that he did not recant between 1916 and his death in 1919. In 1939, the pastor of the Belden Avenue Baptist Church, Howard C. Fulton, responded to an inquiry by a certain Brother Keithly regarding whether Canright had ever recanted. Fulton responds, as you will see in a photocopy of this letter (See the historical time-line for 1939.) that he has a statement from Canright's niece, put in writing by Canright's daughter, Mrs. Genevieve C. Day [Some sources list her last name as "Dey"], that there was no truth to these rumors. The niece was a Seventh-day Adventist, and she had taken care of him while he was in the hospital where he died. The probable connection here was that Canright had pastored a Baptist church in Grand Rapids Area some time after leaving the Adventist Church.

In **1888**, Adventist leaders published the Church's first anti-Canright book, ***Replies to Elder Canright***, anticipating that he would release a full-length anti-Adventist book shortly. Canright did publish such a book, ***Seventh-day Adventism Renounced***, a year later in **1889**. Thanks to the Church jumping the gun, Canright was able to reference his refutations of their rebuttals to the page numbers of ***Replies to Elder Canright***. Because early Adventist leaders liked to put everything in writing, we have a record of exactly **what** Church leaders knew and **when** they knew it regarding the serious problems with their Sabbath doctrine. Subsequently the Church published a full-length version of its anti-Canright book, ***Replies to Elder Canright's Attacks on Seventh-day Adventists*** (Review and Herald), in **1895**. Canright revised his book several times between 1889 and 1914 (See the 1914 edition of ***Seventh-day Adventism Renounced***). We have a wealth of evidence, therefore, of the exchange of arguments for and against the Sabbath between Canright and the Church leaders of his day, including his rebuke to those leaders for knowing that for forty years they had been unable to explain away the fatal-to-Sabbatarianism implications of Colossians 2:14-17. He knew a lot about the Church's struggle to defend its Sabbath doctrine since he had preached in favor of the Sabbath for decades as a high-profile SDA leader. We can see that after reviewing Canright's research on this key passage, Bacchiocchi had no choice but to develop his new theory that the "shadows" that Paul labeled "obsolete" represented the man-made rules of the Judaizers, rather than the ordinances themselves. At the same time we can easily see why he could not, in his dissertation, follow critical analysis of the theory that the Catholic Church "changed" the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. He would have been the laughing stock of the dissertation committee because those scholars knew that this explanation of Sabbath abandonment was historically impossible. (While a few irresponsible officials of the Catholic Church have boasted that the Church "changed the day," the Church's official position has nearly always been that Sabbath abandonment took place during the time of the apostles and during the life-time of the "first pope," or St. Peter.)

Well before Canright's apostasy, and way before Bacchiocchi's day, J.N. Andrews, the earliest real

Sabbath scholar of the Advent Movement, cited historical sources that stated that Sunday observance was already pervasive by the end of the second century (or 200 AD). In his 1873 revised edition of *History of the Sabbath and the First Day of the Week*, he quotes a respected very early historian, **Joachim Meander** (1650–1680), who said this:

Now let us read what Neander, the most distinguished of church historians, says of this apostolic authority for Sunday observance:

“The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday. Perhaps at the end of the second century a false application of this kind had begun to take place; for men appear by that time to have considered laboring on Sunday as a sin. (Emphasis by authors)

The absurdity of Ellen White’s Roman Catholic Church Theory is self-evident. Andrews could not possibly have failed to see that White’s theory was contrary to all the facts available to him at the time. Canright had not discovered anything new, and Bacchiocchi had not stumbled onto very much that Andrews and Canright had not already known. Bacchiocchi’s research merely gave additional clarification to the process of Sabbath “abandonment” and put a more exact date on when the process had fully matured— 140 AD. Certainly, the process had come to its full development, since by 200 AD it was considered to be a sin to work on Sunday.

It is important for our readers to understand that Andrews, Canright, Bacchiocchi and the four of us who wrote this book, concede that Sunday observance was “universal” by the end of the second century as well as that there have always been small pockets of Sabbath-keeping believers. When we side with Dr. Bacchiocchi on the 140 date, we mean that by this time the vast majority of Christians throughout the world were not keeping the Jewish Sabbath; that the primary recognition of the Sabbath concept was to celebrate it as a festival day at certain points of the liturgical calendar, and that they were worshiping on Sunday. Additionally we know that the Greek Orthodox churches never kept the Sabbath because their well-kept records prove this, and we believe that all the evidence points to the fact that the Church at Rome got its doctrines and practices from the East long before there was such a thing as the papacy or Roman Catholic Church.

Even though Dr. Bacchiocchi was either ignorant of the overwhelming supremacy of the Eastern Church during these early centuries or chose to ignore this fact, he tacitly conceded that Ellen White had lied about her Sabbath visions, and he was forced to develop a set of alternative theories to maintain his personal agenda— to demonstrate, somehow, that the Western Church was never-the-less responsible for the so-called “change of day.” The replacement theory he developed to explain the phenomenon of Sabbath “abandonment” in the West— the Jewish Persecution Theory— was not accepted by biblical scholars because it contrasted badly with the facts of secular and ecclesiastical history. It didn’t help, either, that Bacchiocchi was forced to concede that he could not prove any link between sun worship and the adoption of Sunday observance by Christians. We will discuss this key concession of his in a subsequent chapter.

Seventh-day Adventist leaders pretended the twin disaster of Bacchiocchi’s insult to Ellen White on Colossians 2:14-17 and the pope changing the Sabbath never happened. He became the first Adventist theologian to avoid losing his job as a result of challenging Ellen White on things that she credited to visions from God. Conservative Adventists were appalled. Adventism dared not

acknowledge the existence of some of the newer anti-Sabbatarian arguments, much less try to refute them, because even the mention of them could sow seeds of doubt that might cause a perceptive follower of Ellen White to start questioning things that would be “better left alone.” Instead, the Church continued to pay Dr. Bacchiocchi’s university salary, and he continued to write books to defend his work from the growing storm of criticism from both Adventists and Evangelical sources that the publication of ***From Sabbath to Sunday*** had created. By **1995** Dr. Bacchiocchi was forced to respond to his critics by publishing ***The Sabbath in the New Testament***. In this new book he appears to have opened to the possibility that the Sabbath of Colossians 2:14-17 was a reference to a ceremonial Sabbath feast day— perhaps an annual one— in essence, returning to the traditional SDA position on this text. He seems to have moved closer to trading the difficulties of his iconoclastic views for the impossibilities of the traditional Adventist interpretation. In **1998** he published ***Sabbath under Crossfire*** which was designed to answer the charges leveled at him by his anti-Sabbatarian opponents during the previous two decades. It also modified his position on what exactly was nailed to the cross in Colossians 2:14-17. (See the historical time-line section for 1995 and 1998) His effort to calm the controversy he stirred up was futile. The anti-Sabbatarian movement continued to strengthen. During the later years of his career he published a set of three books that instruct Christians in how to keep the Jewish sacred days that he believed still have relevance which extends into the Christian dispensation— thus still maintaining his unavoidable corollary teaching that Christians must keep all of the Jewish ordinances mentioned along with the weekly Sabbath in this passage.

Thirty years after Dr. Bacchiocchi published his troublesome defense of the Sabbath doctrine, the Church commissioned **Dr. Skip MacCarty** of Andrews University Pioneer Memorial Church to write another full-length apology for the Church’s Sabbath doctrine. One would think that Adventist leaders would want to bury the memory of the Bacchiocchi Sabbath fiasco forever, but such was not the case. Unfortunately, MacCarty’s steering committee appears to have guided him in the preparation of a book that would merely sugar-coat Dr. Bacchiocchi’s ideas. (You can read a complete analysis of his teachings in our book, *Doctors Bacchiocchi, MacCarty, and du Preez Wreak Havoc with the Sabbath and Ellen White.*)

In the aftermath of the Bacchiocchi fiasco, the Church paid the salaries of other Adventist theologians to develop alternative theories that could explain both Sabbath abandonment and Colossians 2:14-17 in ways that did not conflict with Ellen White. Later we will look at the **Out of Easter Theory** as articulated by **Kenneth A. Strand** and the **Animal Sacrifices Theory**, developed by **Dr. Ronald du Preez**, entitled ***Judging the Sabbath: Discovering What Can’t Be Found In Colossians 2:16.*** Additionally we will look at the “**Dual Day Theory**” developed by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists as an alternative to Dr. Bacchiocchi’s failed **Jewish Persecution Theory**.

Dr. Bacchiocchi proved Ellen White’s claim that God had shown her that the Roman Catholic Church had changed the Sabbath was factually incorrect. If Christianity is supposed to be rational, the rules of logic demand that she be classified as a false prophet. However, this *modus operandi* was nothing new for Adventist leaders. Just three years after the Seventh-day Adventist Church officially organized in **1863**, Iowa Conference leaders, **Snook** and **Brinkerhoff**, documented her lying cover-ups and failed prophecies in their **1866** book, ***The Visions of E. G. White Not of God***. They did not even know about her habit of claiming that God had directly inspired material that she copied from other writers. However Church officials were not impressed. Ellen White herself was one of the primary founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In **1867**, just four years after the Church organized, Thomas J. Preble left Adventism after just four years of membership and published his critical book, ***The First Day Sabbath Proved***. Preble, clearly

a brilliant biblical scholar and historian, presented most of the arguments against Sabbatarian that modern anti-Sabbatarians use today. Additionally he used the facts of ecclesiastical history to prove that the Catholic church could not possibly have “changed” the Sabbath,” and demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that SDA biblical “scholar,” J.N. Andrews, would have to have deliberately twisted historical facts to teach that Sabbath abandonment was the result of some kind of sinister apostasy. Specifically he disassembled Andrews’ claim that significant numbers of the Waldenses kept the Sabbath during the Dark Ages. There is no doubt that Andrews was forced to face his errors, since he and Preble carried out an extensive written debate about these matters, yet Andrews did not withdraw his error-ridden book, *History of the Sabbath*.

Also in the year **1974**, Andrews University history professor, **Donald R. McAdams**, found disturbing similarities between Ellen White’s book, ***The Great Controversy***, and a book written some years prior by First Day Advent writer, **H. L. Hastings**, entitled ***The Great Controversy Between God and Man— Its Origin Progress and End***. He notes that even her chapter titles have similar names and were arranged in similar order. (Cited in **Douglas Hackleman’s**, “***Ellen White’s Habit***,” referencing McAdams, ***Ellen G. White and the Protestant Historians***, 1974.)

Problems with ***The Great Controversy*** were not new. In **1911** the Church was forced to spend \$3,000 to revise this book due to anger over the fact that she had borrowed so much of her material. \$3,000 was a lot of money back in 1911. The revisions were demanded by Church leaders because many of her sources were still not properly credited. The trouble in 1911 began when Battle Creek Sanitarium physician, **Dr. Charles E. Stewart**, stumbled across evidence that she was using material she had found in the works of other authors while claiming and/or implying that the source for this information came to her as a result of direct, divine revelation. Stewart took the time to do some research to find out how extensive her copying was. In a booklet, ***A Response to An Urgent Testimony*** he published in 1907, he placed her borrowing alongside of the original sources she had not credited. Although he did not intend for this booklet to receive wide distribution, the demand for it was very great, especially from individuals within the Adventist community in Battle Creek.

In **1976** **Dr. Ronald Numbers**, then a professor at the Church's medical school, Loma Linda University, published his book, ***Prophetess of Health***, in which he demonstrated that Ellen White got her ideas about health reform from other authors who had preceded her by as much as 20 years— in particular a certain Dr. Jackson. As usual, the problem of her copying was minor compared to her lying about where that information came from. Her actions embarrassed God because much of her health teachings turned out to be dead wrong. For example, the benefits of drinking coffee and tea have been thoroughly established by science just within the last 10 years. Ellen White said that God showed her that it was a sin to drink these beverages.

Recall that In 1982 SDA pastor, **Dr. Walter Rea**, published his devastating book, ***The White Lie***, which became a *New York Times* best seller. Dr. Rea was granted special access to the personal library of Ellen White for a project he was doing, and while he was looking through her books he discovered that she had copied freely, nearly word for word, from these other authors, while claiming that God had shown her these things in vision. In his book, Dr. Rea demonstrated her copying to the point of overkill. Then in 1990, an eight-year, exhaustive study conducted by SDA theologian, **Dr. Fred Veltman**, concluded that over 80% of the material in ***The Desire of Ages*** was “borrowed” from other writers.

We will address the problem of Ellen White’s habit of “plagiarism” later. For the moment, we add that a noted Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath and Ellen White scholar, Kevin Morgan, has demonstrated that, technically, the term, “plagiarism,” is not accurate in describing how she handled her borrowed



source material. In Morgan's book, *White Lie Soap*, Chapter 6, he explains that her work was far from being totally devoid of source attribution and that much of the source material she used was highly synthesized and often injected with original thought. Specifically, in regard to her book, *Great Controversy*, he notes that her frequent use of ellipses indicated that she was not trying to hide the fact that she was utilizing other sources. He adds that A.G. Daniells was mistaken when, in a secret session of the 1919 Bible Conference, he complained that there were pages and pages in her writings, and specifically in the *Great Controversy*, where she copied material without any indication that she was borrowing the material.

We counter that this kind of defense of Ellen White's actions represents a "Band-Aid" approach to the problem, since the real trouble is that she made a variety of claims that the overall process of writing her books, including *The Great Controversy*, was guided by direct, divine revelation to one degree or another—that however you label her borrowing processes, she lied about how she got the information and inspiration for her books. Along with being deceitful about her sources, many of the prophecies of future events found in the *Great Controversy* did not come true as predicted. We will deal more with these problems in a subsequent chapter. Also, the context of A.G. Daniells' comments related to her plagiarism problem was that her plagiarism was just one part of the evidence that her prophetic claims were fraudulent. In fact, that particular session of the 1919 Bible Conference was to discuss the fact that their Church prophetess was a fraud and to develop a consensus of whether or not it would be in the long-term best interests of the Church to continue its cover-up of this fact. We further observe that it is remarkable that there are present-day apologists for Ellen White who have far more faith in her than did the General Conference president and a whole host of other SDA leaders back in 1919. Most of the delegates recorded in the transcript of this meeting tacitly expressed their conviction that she was a fraud. (See the chapter on the real history of Adventism for additional information and documentation.)

As decades have passed since Dr. Bacchiocchi proved that Ellen White lied about the source of her information for her claim that the Roman Catholic Church changed the Sabbath, one SDA theologian after another has attempted to develop a satisfactory theory to replace her impossible claim. Not one of them has succeeded. If Ellen White had met the biblical tests of a true prophet, no replacement theories would be necessary.

Also, in recent decades researchers uncovered problems with the claims of Ellen White in regard to her statements about the direct, divine revelations she claimed to have had in regard to the tithing system. At first, James White rejected the 10% of income concept. In 1861 he said, "**We do not urge the Israelitish tithing system** as embracing the whole duty of the believers in the third [angel's] message....**That system was necessary in God's plan of the Levitical priesthood;** but in the closing message [it] presents a far greater call for something of the kind." (*R&H, April 9, 1861*, p.164). (Editor's note: This "closing message" was a reference to an article about giving that appeared in an early and obscure Advent Movement publication.) Instead the Church adopted a different method of collecting money from its flock, called "Systematic Benevolence." This fund raising method didn't work very well, and eventually the Church adopted the same Israelitish tithing system that James White had rejected earlier. None other than D.M. Canright pushed for its adoption after seeing that the Systematic Benevolence program wasn't working.

Ellen White claimed that God first showed her that the Systematic Benevolence was the plan God wanted for His Church, and later she claimed that God had apparently changed His mind and wanted them to adopt a variation of the Israelitish system that demanded 10% of each member's income. As we will demonstrate in another chapter, this bastardization of the Israelitish tithing system could not have even been applied to Israel during the Theocracy period of its history. We will enlarge on the

subject of Ellen White and tithing elsewhere.

Our research has uncovered a collection of SDA "smoking gun memos," both written publicly and in secret— that prove that the Church founders knew there were impossible problems with the Church's Sabbath doctrine more than 10 years before the denomination formally organized in **1863**. We mentioned the 1866 findings of **Snook and Brinkerhoff**, the **1867** publication of ***The First Day Sabbath Proved*** by **Thomas Preble**, and the highly damaging evidence brought forward by **D.M. Canright** beginning in 1887, the **1919 Bible Conference Minutes**, the 1982 Walter Rea book, ***The White Lie***, and the **Veltman Report** which was published in *Ministry* magazine in **1990**. However, the business-as-usual way Adventism has used deception and propaganda to cover up the truth about the lack of a factual basis for the three pillar doctrines of Adventism—the Sabbath, Ellen White's prophetic gift, and the Doctrine of the Investigative Judgment.

In (circa) 1853, **J. N. Andrews** attempted to refute the idea, expressed in an anti-Sabbatarian paper by **O. R. L. Crosier**, that the Sabbath was not instituted at Creation. This proves that Andrews, from the very beginning of his Sabbath research efforts, was familiar with the logic and facts behind the concept that the Sabbath was not given to His people until the Exodus. In the same paper, "**Review of Objections to the Seventh-day Sabbath**," Andrews concedes that Sunday observance began during apostolic times:

1. We have never said that the keeping of Sunday as a festival, began with Constantine, or originated from the law which he enacted in its behalf. On the contrary, we believe that the Papal apostasy as stated by Paul began even in the days of the apostles. 2 Thess. 2. Hence we are not surprised that sometime after the days of the apostles, men began to pay some regard to Sunday, as also to Good Friday and to Holy Thursday. (p. 8, Para. 8, "Review of Objections to the Seventh-day Sabbath.")

This document is not dated, but it seems to have been written no later than 1853. You can access this document at this web address for the Early Advent Pioneer Resource Library # 1:

<http://temcat.com/L-1-adv-pioneer-lib/Advent-Pioneer.htm>

While Ellen White and J.N. Andrews were embellishing their impossible Roman Catholic Church theory, a contemporary of theirs, Scottish biblical scholar, **Robert Cox**, had been conducting exhaustive research on the Sabbath-Sunday Question. We know that Andrews was familiar with Cox's work because he quotes him, but only to the advantage of his own Sabbatarian agenda—something made possible because Cox's document contains both the arguments for and against Sabbath-keeping. In **1865**, just two years after the **1863** official organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and only one year prior to the unmasking of Ellen White as a false prophet in **1866** by Snook and Brinkerhoff's book, ***The Visions of E. G. White Not of God***, Cox published his comprehensive two-volume set, ***The Literature of the Sabbath Question***.

As a catalog of ideas, Cox's work was about as objective as a book on this controversial study could be. However, as neutral as his presentation was, **just the facts as listed in his work proved one thing for certain, and that is that Sabbatarianism has always been opposed by the Christian Church on well-articulated biblical grounds, and many times has been opposed on both biblical and historical grounds. Cox demonstrated that this principle is true whether looking at the writings of the Early Fathers, the Reformers, or the theologians and biblical scholars from the Reformation until the present time.** Andrews cites Cox in his later versions of his (Andrews) ***History of the Sabbath***, according to Canright, but he seems oblivious to the many



fatal-to-Sabbatarian concepts cataloged within its pages. At the conclusion of his section on the writings of the Early Fathers in *Volume One*, Cox made these generalizations:

## Did They Consider the Sabbath as Abolished by Christ?

It is universally admitted that they often speak of it as abolished with the other Jewish institutions, and that, if they ever recognize a primeval Sabbath at all, they nowhere allude to it as an institution surviving in Christian times. In the fact of this silence, Holden sees no adequate reason for concluding that they did not however believe in the continued existence of a Sabbath instituted at the Creation; while Domville maintains that the whole tenor of their teaching about the Sabbath is incompatible with the notion that they so believed. (See Heylin, Part I, Ch. ii. Iii. iv.; Holden, 42, 330; Domville, ii.130-148; Cook, ii. 291-8; James,142.) It was a prevailing opinion among them, as after-wards among the Reformers, that the Creator's rest on the seventh day, and likewise the Sabbath of the Jews, were typical of the Christian's rest in the present world from evil works, and in the next from sublunary toils and troubles. This "spiritual Sabbath" on earth they frequently contrast with the "carnal Sabbath" or bodily rest of the Jews (Neale, 88; Domville, I. 295-9; but see Holden, 323-330, and James, 123-6), which no writer before the promulgation of Constantine's Edict recommends to be observed by Christians on Sunday.

## Did the Fathers Regard the Lord's Day as either the Sabbath Shifted to the Beginning of the Week, or a Substitute for the Sabbath?

All who claim any knowledge of the works of the Fathers say these ancient writers usually, if not invariably, speak of the Lord's Day as an independent institution, of which neither the Fourth Commandment nor a primeval Sabbath is once referred to as the foundation (Heylin, Part II. Ch. II.; Taylor, *Life of Jesus*, Part II. Sect. Xii Disc. x. ss 24, and Duct. Dubit., B. II.ch.ii. Rule VI. SS, 49-53— *Works*, Heber's ed., iii.29; xii.415-421; Baxter, *Pract. Works*, xiii. 385; Cook, ii.291-303; Holden, 334; Bannerman, 130; Neale, 90, 237; Domville, I. 291-9; Bunsen, *Hippolytus and his Age*, iii.76). Certainly both institutions were long kept, each on its appropriate day, by the oriental Christians; but whether even the converts from Judaism observed the Saturday Sabbath so early as the first century is disputed by some, in spite of Acts xxv.8 and xxviii. 17, Rom. XIV 5, Gal. iv.10, Philip. Iii. 6, and Col. Ii.16, 17. (Bingham, *Antiq. Of the Christ. Church*, B. XIII Ch. IX. Ss 3; Kneader, *Hist. Of the Christ. Church*, I. 410; III. 421-2; Holden, 335; James, 157, 164, 169, 170, 179-1818, 193-4, 255; Coleman, 533; Cox, 279-281, 527-9.) How the two institutions were respectively kept, is told by Bingham, B. xvi. Ch. Viii., and B. xx.ch.ii and iii.

## Did the Fathers Ascribe the Observance of Sunday to the Injunctions or Example of Jesus or his Apostles?

In regard to the Fathers who wrote before the reign of Constantine and whose opinions

are alone of importance, Domville, after elaborate inquiry, answers this question in the negative; nor can he discover that any of them has appealed to the Christian Scriptures in proof of a Christian Sabbath (vol. i. p. 302, and Supp.; see also Cox, 531, note). Equally unable is Mr. Baden Powell to find that "these writers in any instance pretend to allege any Divine command, or even apostolic practice, in support of its observance." (Kitto's *Cyclop. of Bibl. Lit.*, ii. 270, 1st ed.) Two of them however, Barnabas and Justin Martyr, assign other reasons, of which those given by the one writer differ from those given by the other; each, as Domville shews, assigning as one of his reasons what is either too absurd or too improbable for belief. The credible reason alleged by Justin is, that on Sunday Jesus Christ our Savior arose from the dead. (Domville, i. 307-9.)

In addition to the work of Cox, we know from our study of J.N. Andrews' work that he was also familiar with Peter Heylyn's 1636 book, ***History of the Sabbath***. Access to the 1636 edition of this book has always been available to researchers. This authoritative book saved the Church of England from becoming a nation of Sabbath-keepers by demonstrating the biblical and historical impossibilities of the concept that Christians must keep the Jewish Sabbath. We will tell you more about the research of Heylyn and Cox elsewhere. No wonder neither J. N. Andrews nor Ellen White cared to say much about its content.

Despite his knowledge of the works of Heylyn, Cox, and "apostate" Adventist and scholar, Thomas J. Preble, J.N. Andrews published a revised and expanded edition of his **1859** classic, ***History of the Sabbath and the First Day of the Week***, plus a new book, ***Testimony of the Fathers of the First Three Centuries Concerning the Sabbath and the First Day***, in **1873**. With the subsequent release of these books, we have proof that Andrews had immersed himself even more deeply in a wealth of information that should have told him that the papacy could not possibly have been responsible for a shift from Saturday to Sunday observance— whether Sabbatarianism were true or not. Andrews' writings are inconsistent in that he conceded on one hand that Sabbath "abandonment" was virtually immediate— evidence, he said, that the "apostasy" began very early— but still pushed the idea that the Roman Catholic Church, which did not come into existence until around 600 AD, "changed the day." He appears to have placed more faith in the supernatural manifestations of Ellen White's visions than in the facts that were hitting him smack in the face from the pages of the history books he was reading.

A wide number of eyewitnesses of various persuasions testify to the supernatural activity that frequently accompanied Ellen White's visions. These testimonies cannot easily be dismissed as merely stories concocted to substantiate a legend, and some of the eye-witness accounts come from outside the control of Adventist circles. After studying a variety of statements by these witnesses, it is our opinion that it is not reasonable to conclude that her visions were not of supernatural origin. Even table-tipping was observed by an eyewitness at one of her visions. While we will have much more to say about this subject in a subsequent chapter, we cannot be too harsh on J. N. Andrews for going along with what he believed were special revelations directly from God.

## THE "SISTER" CHURCH'S RESPONSE

The Worldwide Church of God and the Seventh-day Adventist Church developed from the same group of post-Millerite Sabbath-keeping believers. This group split shortly after the Great Disappointment of 1844 over the **Doctrine of the Shut Door** adopted and taught by Ellen G. White after a vision showed her that it was the truth. The Church of God Seventh Day split into two factions

in 1933, and eventually Herbert W. Armstrong branched off of one of those factions, and his followers metamorphosed into what later became **The Worldwide Church of God** in **1968**. Thus, these denominations had shared the same Sabbath heritage from the beginning. (See *Wikipedia*, “Grace Communion International.”) Note: This is the new name adopted by The Worldwide Church of God a number of years after it repudiated the Sabbath and allegedly became a fully Gospel-oriented denomination.

In **1995**, The Worldwide Church of God renounced Sabbatarianism, opened its doors for “business” on Sundays, and became a more Gospel-oriented denomination. No greater rebuke to the perfidy of Adventist leaders could be offered. The turning from a religious cult to an orthodox, grace-oriented, Evangelical Christian denomination had never happened before to our knowledge.

Unfortunately, despite ridding itself of the heresy of Sabbatarianism, the cultic behavior of the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God continued despite the change in theology to conform to a more “orthodox” view. Splinter groups broke away and continued to teach that Christians must keep the Jewish Sabbath. It appears that the desire for income over ethics was still extant, and that the split that occurred was anticipated so that the ministry, despite whether they accepted the changes or not, were still guaranteed an income, seeing as the “replacement” Sabbatarian church was already set to go.

See: <http://www.exitsupportnetwork.com/resrch/oiu%27s/oiu3pt2.htm#The%20United%20Church%20of%20God%20is%20Born>

Never-the-less, the story of the circumstances that led its sister Sabbath-keeping denomination to repudiate Sab-batarianism represents a stern rebuke to the refusal of Adventist leaders to acknowledge the (by now) unequivocal evidence against its Sabbath doctrine that had accumulated by 1995. To follow is the story of how it all happened.

**Dale Ratzlaff**, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and Bible teacher, left Adventism in **1981** because he could not find biblical support for Ellen White’s Doctrine of the Investigative Judgment. Eventually he also studied his way out of the Sabbath doctrine by reading the research of Robert D. Brinsmead, Carson, and others. In **1990** Ratzlaff published his own refutation of the Sabbath doctrine, ***Sabbath in Crisis***, which since has been renamed ***Sabbath in Christ***, and is now widely recognized as the most extensive and authoritative book on the Sabbath heresy. Meanwhile the leaders of **The Worldwide Church of God** were searching for answers due to most of Armstrong’s prophecies revolving around 1972 and 1975 failing to come to pass. Even in his last book before he died, Armstrong was claiming the end time events leading up to the return of Christ would come about before the end of the twentieth century (*The Mystery of the Ages*; p. 298).

Somehow one of the leaders of The Worldwide Church of God came across the writings of Brinsmead and Ratzlaff. The WWCG ordered large numbers of Ratzlaff’s book. These findings were presented to the Pastor General, **Joseph W. Tkach, Sr.**, by his son, **Joseph W. Tkach, Jr.**, and a few trusted associates. After studying the evidence, Joseph W. Tkach Sr., initiated the doctrinal change that did away with the Sabbath doctrine, and in 1995 this former cultic denomination became a Grace-oriented, Sunday-observing Church. Joseph Tkach Sr. died in 1995, and his son, Joseph Tkach Jr., fully implemented the doctrinal changes that led to the denomination’s relatively recent acceptance into the National Association of Evangelicals (WWCG Video, “Called to Be Free”, 2004). There is no doubt that this astonishing development struck terror into the hearts of Seventh-day Adventist leaders everywhere, but there was no effort on their part to follow in the footsteps of their sister church. Apparently they observed the financial disaster that ensued as a result of The Worldwide Church of God’s profound doctrinal changes, and they decided the financial risk of major doctrinal reform was too great.

Money has been a huge problem for both denominations. Here are several remarkable similarities that beg comparison:

1. Both churches had a prophet figure that required their followers to tithe and give generously to the organization on the basis that the “church” is the one and only true church.
2. Both denominations taught a version of the Jewish tithing system that is so twisted in its concept that it could not have been applied to Israel back in the days of the theocracy.
3. Both organizations developed financial and moral corruption that was way out of proportion to membership size.
4. Both the Seventh-day Adventist Church and The Worldwide Church of God developed this unprecedented financial and moral corruption at almost the same time.
5. Both denominations appear to have developed this large scale corruption because their leaders became increasingly aware that they were following false prophets and that they were teaching their followers to believe what they, themselves, did not believe.

Here is a summary of these parallel developments:

**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH** – The Seventh-day Adventist Davenport Scandal came to a head in 1980-1981 after multiple revelations of the problems with Ellen White in the 1970's. SDA physician, Dr. Donald Davenport, had managed to bilk over 25 million dollars of SDA Church funds—mostly tithe funds— from various SDA entities, as well as from private SDA investors. (You will learn more about this scandal in a subsequent chapter on Adventist corruption. It is being mentioned here because it is relevant to the story of these sister denominations at this point.) A quick look at our historical timeline for the 1970's lists a set of astonishing developments, including the discovery and subsequent publication of the *1919 Bible Conference Minutes* in 1974-1975, which proved that SDA leaders had known she was a fraud since no later than 1919.

**WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD** - A huge financial scandal came to light in 1979 after a series of revelations that the cult's founder and prophet, Herbert W. Armstrong, had prophesied things that did not happen, the surfacing of the moral problems of Herbert W. Armstrong and his son, Garner Ted Armstrong, and their lavish life-styles. For a comparison with the details of the Adventist record of corruption, here is a condensed version of what happened with The Worldwide Church of God:

Garner Ted Armstrong blamed Stanley Rader (legal counsel to HWA) for his two-time ousting from his father's church. Garner Ted and other former and discontented members of the Worldwide Church of God prompted the State of California to investigate charges of malfeasance by Rader and others involved with the AICF [Ambassador International Cultural Foundation]. By 1979, California Attorney General George Deukmejian had brought civil charges against the church, and the church was placed into an investigative financial receivership for one year.

The group of dissidents also gained the attention of Mike Wallace who investigated the church in a report for the TV program *60 Minutes*. Using documentary evidence obtained, Wallace brought to light lavish secret expenditures, conflict of interest insider deals, posh homes and lifestyles in the higher ranks, and the heavy involvement of Stanley Rader in financial manipulation.

Wallace invited Rader to appear on *60 Minutes* April 15, 1979. Wallace showed Rader a secret tape recording in which Herbert Armstrong had alleged Rader was attempting to take over the church after Armstrong's death, reasoning that the donated tithe money might be quite a "magnet" to some evangelists. Rader abruptly ended the interview.

Rader, with the approval of Herbert Armstrong, was spending millions to fend off any financial audit or examination of the Church's income and expenditures by litigating the issue all the way to the United States Supreme Court, several times, unsuccessfully. Having lost in the courts, Rader lobbied the California legislature to force the California Attorney General to drop the charges against the church and him. Under Rader's lobbying, the California State Legislature passed legislation known as the Petris Bill, signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown, which changed the applicable law of California so that the Attorney General had no authority over churches in such circumstances.

## **THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT COVER-UP**

It was her habit to take a doctrine introduced by someone else and report that God had shown her in a vision that it was the truth. It was Ellen White who, in this manner, chose the doctrines she wanted for her new Church and "gave" them God's seal of approval. Her greatest triumph was her adoption and promotion of the Doctrine of the Investigative Judgment. This remarkable feat of theological gymnastics rescued the Adventist Movement from the jaws of defeat and turned it into the biggest little money making church there has ever been.

The Great Disappointment of 1883-1844 was based on William Miller's poorly conceived concept of what he thought were prophetic time periods that all came together to "prove" that Jesus would return at that time. Later we will study the convoluted calculations that led to his prophetic blunder. Ellen White claimed that God had shown her that He didn't want anything changed on Miller's charts and said that God had placed His hand over the errors to create a set of circumstances that would test His people. His conclusion that Jesus would return in 1843 (and then 1844) was based on a single word, mistranslated by the team that produced the King James Bible, rendered as "cleansed." Miller concluded that the sanctuary that was to be "cleansed" was Earth, which would mean that Christ would come and destroy the world with the brightness of His coming. When Christ did not return in 1844, an Advent believer by the name of Hiram Edson had a sudden epiphany while walking through a cornfield. He "saw" that the sanctuary cleansed in 1844 was the sanctuary in Heaven. The Advent believers then studied the earthy sanctuary services and determined that in 1844 Jesus passed from the Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary into the Most Holy Place. Drawing a parallel with the operations of the earthy sanctuary, the Advent believers concluded that a judgment process began in Heaven in 1844. An Advent Movement preacher by the name of O. R. L. Crosier was the one who actually articulated the Doctrine of the Investigative Judgment in its complete form. Ellen was "shown" in vision that Crosier's concept was correct. Not much later, Crosier renounced his own teaching, denouncing it as just a crazy idea that had come into his head.

This judgment, according to Ellen White, started with the dead in 1844, and at some point unknown to anyone but God, the judgment of the living begins after the last dead person has been judged. When the judgment gets to the name of a living person, that person doesn't know it, and his or her eternal fate is sealed at that very moment. For logistical reasons, the concept of the Investigative Judgment requires that the dead be truly unconscious, which necessitates the Adventist doctrine of soul sleep.



Down through the history of the Church, many an Adventist leader has questioned this doctrine and lost his Church employment. The Doctrine makes no sense in light of the Gospel, and as the Gospel of salvation by Grace began to make small inroads into Adventism, more and more perceptive Adventists began to see that there was no possible way to reconcile the two. No one had ever been able to suggest a good reason why the sanctuary in Heaven would need to be cleansed. With Jesus' death on the cross as the ultimate sacrifice, why would the temple service continue in Heaven when it ceased for Christians on Earth?

In the year 2002, the most respected Seventh-day Adventist theologian of all time, **Dr. Raymond F. Cottrell**, published a complete expose of the Church's cover-up of its problems with the Sanctuary Doctrine after he retired from Church employment. This essay, "***The 'Sanctuary Doctrine'— Asset or Liability***" (2002), is the written version of a speech he presented before the Adventist Forum in San Diego. In it he dismantled the single most important doctrine of Adventism— the **Doctrine of the Investigative Judgment**— which is also known as the **Sanctuary Doctrine**. Dr. Cottrell demonstrated to the point of over-kill that there is no biblical support for it— a highly significant development since for nearly two decades he had chaired the top secret committee that the General Conference president had formed to try to find biblical evidence *for* the doctrine.

Ironically this top secret and entirely unsuccessful Sanctuary Doctrine Committee had disbanded only a few years before the Church defrocked **Dr. Desmond Ford** at Glacier View Ranch in 1980 for voicing his reservations about the Investigative Judgment at a forum at Pacific Union College. The General Conference president at the time, Neal C. Wilson, knew, of course, that the secret sanctuary committee had not been able to find any biblical support for the doctrine before he flew out to Colorado to preside over the proceedings at Glacier View. Dr. Cottrell had chaired the committee. We will have more to say about Wilson's behavior surrounding this situation shortly.

**Dr. Raymond F. Cottrell** is widely recognized both inside and outside of Adventism as the greatest of all SDA theologians. That he rejected the Sanctuary Doctrine is bad news for Adventists. It means that the Great Disappointment of 1844 was a huge theological joke rather than the inaugural event God ordained to bring the Seventh-day Adventist Church into existence for the express purpose of warning the world about the beginning of the so-called Investigative Judgment in 1844 and the consequences of Sabbath breaking. Worse yet, the total lack of biblical support for this doctrine makes Ellen White's claim that God used deception to test the faith of the Millerites appear blasphemous. As we mentioned earlier, she alleged that God held His hand over certain parts of William Miller's prophetic charts so His people would not see their own errors:

[\*"I have seen that the 1843 chart was directed by the hand of the Lord, and that it should not be altered; that the figures were as He wanted them; that His hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures, so that none could see it, until His hand was removed."\*](#)  
(*Early Writings*, p. 74.)

Then she alleges that God played another joke on His people later by "un-fooling" them:

[\*"The hand of the Lord was removed from the figures, and the mistake was explained. They saw that the same prophetic periods reached to 1844, and that that same evidence which they had presented to show that the prophetic periods closed in 1843, proved they would terminate in 1844."\*](#) (*Early Writings* p. 236)

Ellen White's brilliant shifting of the blunders of the prophetic calculations of William Miller to God and



the shifting of the cleansing of the sanctuary on Earth to the sanctuary in Heaven were very successful, but the price she paid for this feat was committing the “White Collar” crime of blasphemy—charging God with using deception in dealing with His own people.

We will trace the history of the Church’s cover-up of the problems with the Investigative Judgment doctrine in subsequent sections, along with the problems of the Sabbath and Ellen White. Many thousands of hours of research over ten years have brought us to the following conclusions, for which we will offer abundant support in the pages of our formal study. Please withhold your judgment until you have read the entire book. The Adventist version of Sabbatarianism is much more complex than that of other Sabbath-keeping churches. Rome was not built in a day. Neither will the Adventist concept that Rome changed the Sabbath be easily refuted, since this concept has become part of the DNA of Adventism. Here is what we see:

1. The more evident it became to leaders of the Movement that the Sabbath doctrine is biblically and historically impossible, the louder the propaganda from the Church— in particular the fantastic, fairy-tale story of how the Roman Catholic Church supposedly "changed the Sabbath" from Saturday to Sunday as the result of a diabolical conspiracy.
2. As the factual basis for Adventism was destroyed by a series of block-buster revelations about the Church's cover-up of Ellen White and the weaknesses of the Sabbath doctrine in the 1970's and 1980's, the Seventh-day Adventist leadership became more corrupt than any other Christian denomination of comparable size. There are two relatively recent large-scale scandals at the General Conference level that subsequent leadership has refused to investigate and prosecute. One example will suffice. There is no sign that the new General Conference president (as of June 2010), Ted Wilson, plans to clean up the mess created by *The David Dennis Affair* which surfaced previous to the administration of the General Conference president who preceded him. (Note that David Dennis is the innocent party here, and that he was the whistleblower who called attention to a host of illegal activities at the General Conference, including the buying of General Conference positions of leadership and the ADRA financial scandal.) It is also interesting to note that Ted Wilson is the son of former General Conference President, Neal C. Wilson, who shamelessly lied about the proceedings at the 1980 Investigative Judgment “trial” of Dr. Desmond Ford at Glacier View Ranch. Neal C. Wilson flew back to GC Headquarters in Washington after the trial and announced that the committee unanimously rejected Dr. Ford’s ideas when in fact the committee unanimously agreed with Dr. Ford on six of his eight major tenets and partially agreed with him on the other two points. The following year Wilson received a public written rebuke for his lying which was signed by around 40 SDA scholars who witnessed what really happened at the trial. This document is known as the ***Atlanta Affirmation***.
3. The single most important reason why Seventh-day Adventist Sabbatarians are unwilling to give up their belief in the Sabbath is their non-biblical view of the nature of the 10 Commandments. The Scriptures explain that the set of 10 Commandments represented a covenant between God and Israel. The Bible does not teach that they represent a complete moral code in and of themselves, and God proved this fact Himself by giving Moses additional laws, not written in stone, which have equal moral value, such as laws against the non-adultery sin of fornication (sex between a man and a woman, neither of whom are married), bestiality, and homosexual relationships. The sins of adultery and fornication are strongly differentiated in Jewish law and culture. Nor are sins of the heart included. By contrast, St. Paul listed a number of sins of the heart

that will keep a person out of Heaven. The New Covenant, then, provides a far more complete picture of what a life lived according to the influence of the Spirit of God is like.

4. The reason for the development of this non-biblical view of the 10 Commandments seems to be the failure of Sabbatarian leaders— and in the case of Adventism, specifically the pioneers of the Advent Movement— to use good Bible study methods. Sabbatarianism is a pleasing theory because it gives the believer a wider role in the working out of his or her own salvation. Adventism was not strongly confronted with the Gospel of Grace until 1888 when Wagner and Jones presented the concept of salvation by faith alone at the Minneapolis General Conference session. The True Gospel message was rejected by the Church at that time, and it is widely acknowledged that Seventh-day Adventists maintained a strong legalistic approach to Christianity for almost the next 100 years largely as a rejection of their message. It seems to us that when someone is confronted with Scripture they do not wish to believe, they alter it in order to get Scripture to conform to their beliefs. William Hohmann has spent a significant amount of time analyzing the errors of logic that have created the Sabbatarian belief model, including inference, assumption, drawn out conclusions, proof-texting, altering or redefining words and terms, and the violation of the rules of Critical Thinking. See Bill Hohmann's presentation of logic and Bible study methods in his chapter, "Does Religion Have To Make Sense?"

We believe the evidence we have provided regarding the specific Sabbatarian theology of the Seventh-day Adventists, as well as Adventist theology in general, demonstrates very serious flaws, not only in regard to the theology and methodology of Sabbatarianism, but also explains the resultant abuses of power and position that the flawed theology has produced. It is also interesting to note that the official salvation doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists, or Progressive Sanctification, is suspiciously very much like the Roman Catholic view of how a person is saved, or a combination of faith and works.