On May 28, 2004, a friend was driving me to work and posed an odd question. "Shontay," he said, "do you think that Adventism is all there is?"

I had just moved into my first apartment a few years later and was living what I thought was a "good life". I was working, had nice step foot inside another church unless God showed up at my door! I had heard of Adventism once before, but I was not sure what it was. My boyfriend and I decided to go together to the meetings. The seminar (to say the least) was the church people, not the idea of Jesus, that upset me so much. I walked away from regular Jesus since forever. It was the church people, not the idea of Jesus, that became a Christian when I was 13 and have been in love with God's people grew and swelled again to great proportions. On May 28, 2004, a friend was driving me to work and posed an odd question. "Shontay," he said, "do you think that Adventism is all there is?"

I was baffled. I had been frustrated that my growth was limited and had been earnestly seeking God's direction for the past five months. The Lord had been dealing with my heart about leaving Him exclusively. I was not shocked by the question, I was shocked by who was asking it—a friend who had been an Adventist pastor but who was himself struggling with the things he was learning above me in religion.

Over the span of 15 minutes, he began to convey information he had found. He had been praying about it and said that the Lord had awakened him that morning and had told him to give the information he had found to me. When we reached my job, he handed me several stapled sets of paper. During the day, in the time I had between the phone calls and people-greeting that define my work, I read those documents. I began searching websites and devoured the information I was finding about Ellen White and Adventism. God led me to the sites, especially www.truthorfables.com, and by the time I left for home, I knew I had to leave Adventism.

I have not been the same since. I am now a non-denominational Christian and am building my life again. I still have a few Adventist friends who don't badger me for leaving but are more inclined to ask, "Why?" I am praying for direction and guidance for each of them and also for myself.

I pray that my life brings God honor and glory. I do not intend to berate and bash Adventists, but I intend to speak truth as it is in the holy Word of God.

May each of you be blessed as you continue on your journey home.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

NEW, IMPROVED INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT PAGE 6

The investigative judgment: Your questions finally answered

CHRIS BADENHORST

I have ever dismissed your thoughts about the Investigative Judgment and the Adventist doctrine of the Sanctuary because they seemed too confusing to grasp, this article might help you understand them. The Investigative Judgment is a major component of Adventism's 1844 Sanctuary theology as based on the denomination's interpretation of Daniel 8:14. Adventist Sanctuary theology is completely unique, and it is non-negotiable. No matter how much Adventists ignore or reinterpret it, I knew I had to leave Adventism.

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The freedom from falsehood

COLEEN TINKER

I was the middle of the night. Fear squeezed my 15-year-old heart. I knew a storm was brewing.

“Dear Jesus,” I begged, “please forgive all my sins, even the ones I can’t remember. And please help me not to commit the un Forgivable sin. Please, please, please.”

When would my name come up in the Investigative Judgment? I wondered. I knew if I hadn’t even one unconfessed, accidental sin, I would be lost.

Despairingly I thought of all the times my name came up for judgment.

“Please just make me good!!” I begged—no avail.

Fourteen years later I was teaching at Gern State Academy in Idaho. The word was out, Desmond Ford had presented his scholarly evidence to church leaders proving that the Investigative Judgment as Ellen White (EGW) had vividly described it in The Great Controversy had no biblical support. Somehow, I got my hands on a copy of his defense, and I read it with the book of Daniel opened beside it. When I finished I knew Ford was right: the Investigative Judgment was not in the Bible.

I still believed I needed to eliminate sin from my life in order to be saved, but at least I no longer lay awake wondering if one forgotten transgression would keep me out of heaven.

Oddly enough, discovering that the foundational doctrine of Adventism—the one most dependent on Ellen White’s revelations—was false did not destroy my confidence in her prophetic gift. Instead I rationalized the church founders had “misused” her; she grew in her understanding of truth—progressive revelation, we called it. Yet even those latter messages contained error.

I lived with the cognitive dissonance of denying Biblical truth while simultaneously embracing Adventism for another sixteen years. One day in June, 1996, I opened William Miller’s mistaken calculation that Jesus would return in 1843. God, she said, “was in the proclamation” of that erroneous date. He used Miller’s false predictions to “test the people” to the point of accepting “truth” (Early Writings, p. 232). Not only was God supposedly “in” the false prediction, but also she said God held “his hands...over and had a mistake in some of Miller’s figures, so that none could see it” (Review and Herald, 1850-01-11).

In other words, EGW claimed God purposely lied or deceived people in order to accomplish spiritual awakening. The end justified the means.

That day my cognitive dissonance began to resolve. God would not lie in order to manipulate people to respond to Him, nor would His prophets “credit” Him with lies.

I had to admit it; Ellen White was not misused or confused. Further, she wasn’t merely “not a prophet.” She claimed to be God’s messenger, and she claimed God showed her the “views” she delivered. She was clearly a prophet—a false prophet.

Admitting Ellen White was a false prophet was the most significant factor—besides praying for the Holy Spirit’s teaching—in clarifying Scripture for me.

Ministry has blessed us

After reading through the last proclamation! I wanted to write to you and thank you for the invaluable support with new clarity. We have provided for my husband and I. I contacted you a little over a year ago, and we are still mark of the beast, and the Doctrine and Sabbath in Christ after I had started studying my Adventist roots. The past year has been of some confusion about God and His grace to us, as well as the all-too-usual pain that comes with extracting oneself from a false religion. We had several times talked with people who like you have gone before and offer support for the way I know that Adventists (like couple) can be cruel and shameful and that those who find that aimed your direction all too often. I want to know that you remember and your ministry to God in our prayers. We pray you will keep strong and shielded. We are re-reading Cultic Doctrine and impatiently await each and every edition of Proclamation! Your ministry has blessed us tremendously.

Righteousness of Christ

I read with interest the letter responding to Desmond Ford’s article. The writer stated that Mrs. White’s main message was “righteousness by faith” and that Adventist pastors are preaching the same. I was surprised to find that Adventists have started preaching righteousness in Christ. I have adventist friends who have also stated that they are preaching righteousness in Christ, by faith alone? All of a sudden it becomes keep the Sabbath plus believe in Jesus to be saved.

I have walked through the confusion of attempting to define the meaning of the Sabbath. Jesus. Hallelujah. We both ache for family and friends who maintain their Adventist beliefs, even when it is shown that the word of God is in opposition to their beliefs.

Thank you, Life Assurance Ministries, for your great work, without you we would be so alone. Please pray that the Spirit of truth will permeate the Adventist churches in Australia. God bless.

Di Fennell

Studied myself out

I was a third generation Adventist and studied myself out of the church over 25 years ago. Dale Ratzlaff’s books and Life Assurance Ministries have been a real inspiration to me. Proclamation! just seems to get better with each issue. I have many relatives and friends who are still in bondage to the Adventist system and am praying for them. Being lukewarm toward the Adventist system, I have looked at the reinterpreted version of the doctrine that exalted Jesus and His death and resurrection. The falsehoods I had learned were increasingly clear; they did not honor the all-sufficiency of Jesus and His shed blood.

In this issue Chris Badenhorst explains the church’s Investigative Judgment doctrine and its implications for an Adventist’s understanding of salvation. We also look at the reinterpretation version of the doctrine that says God is vindicating Himself to the universe. Dirk Anderson presents a question every Adventist should ask himself/herself, and Dale Ratzlaff explains true pro-gressive revelation.Janine Brantley and Shontay Gpsom share their stories of faith.

As you read, it is our prayer that you will see Jesus clearly, and keep repeating, “We pray you will understand the miracle of the cross and know the cleansing of His blood atoning for your sin. We pray you will experience the new birth and know the assurance that nothing can ever separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:28).

*References quoted in Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists, Dale Ratzlaff, 1996, p. 84, 85)
duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God... Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important then that every [believer] contemplate often the solemn scene [as given to Mrs. White in vision] when the Investigative Judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when... every [believer] must stand in his [own] lot [before God] at the end of the day [of his probation]” (GC 488).

Attention must be drawn to three important points here: a) At the end of the Investigative Judgment, Christ can blot out the believer’s sin record because Satan the scapegoat will finally pay the penalty. In other words, until the payment of the penalty of sin is ensured, the record of sin cannot be blotted out. b) Christ did not pay the penalty for the sins of humanity on the cross. He was only the sacrifice providing the blood for the atonement that he would subsequently be making in the heavenly sanctuary. c) This atonement which Christ makes in heaven is not for the payment of sin’s penalty. It is only for the transfer of sin—in the provisional (first) phase, from the penitent sinner to Christ; in the final (second) phase, from Christ to Satan who will pay the penalty. Those who did not qualify for Christ’s final phase ministry will have to pay the penalty for their own sins which will be transferred from Christ back onto them.

To Summarize
1. Christ’s First Phase Ministration: a) Christ makes a provisional atonement for believers who yields a) a provisional pardon from God. c) Their guilt (penalty) is not cancelled but transferred from themselves to Christ in heaven. d) The record of their sins is not blotted out. e) Believers therefore remain under condemnation. f) Believers are placed on probation (i.e., a suspended sentence.) g) The heavenly Sanctuary is defiled by the record of believers’ sins and by their guilt which Christ carries into the sanctuary.

2. Christ’s Second Phase Ministration: a) God conducts an Investigative Judgment of professed believers’ lives. b) Believers who pass receive Christ’s ‘final’ atonement for all men. c) The result of one act of righteousness by Christ on the cross was justification that brings life to all men” (Romans 5:18). Clearly, God’s verdict of justification cancels His verdict of condemnation “for those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness” (Romans 5:17). So Paul could say, “all have sinned and are justified freely by [God’s] grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23, 24).

In view of these assurances, Romans 8:1 stands like a clear beacon above the murky waters of Adventism’s 1844 Sanctuary doctrine and its Gospel-denying Investigative Judgment doctrine: “There is therefore NOW no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Later Paul asks, “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (See Eph. 1:3).” Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of God that is Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:31-39).

In the clear light of God’s Word, Adventism’s 1844 Sanctuary doctrine and the Investigative Judgment crumble; they are not founded upon clear Scriptural exegesis but upon an exege- sis of the worst kind. In direct contrast to this doctrine, the Bible is clear that Jesus completed His atonement on the cross; believers have already been judged in Christ, and they can know for certain that they are saved now.

Praise the Lord!

Confessions of a pastor’s daughter

Janice Brantley was born exactly seven minutes before my identical twin sister, and thirteen months after my older sister. My parents, of West-Indian descent, were careful to instill within us middle-class American values and also the assumption that because we were Seventh-day Adventists we were more fortunate than others. My father was a devout Seventh-day Adventist minister and educator, and we were reared in a traditional Adventist lifestyle including daily doses of the Testimonies or other compilations that were supposed to have been divinely inspired and written by Ellen G. White, our church’s prophet. As children who were naturally compliant and submissive, my twin and I believed and accepted everything that we were taught. My older sister, however, was free-spirited, inquisitive, and had a mind of her own. Only later did I realize that my passive acceptance of our belief system had resulted in my inability to decipher clearly truth from error, thus giving me a false sense of security.

I was home-schooled for two years, baptized at the tender age of eight, and attended Adventist elementary schools in Virginia, Ohio, and New Jersey before enrolling at Pine Forge Academy in Pennsylvania. After graduation I entered Columbia Union College where I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. I was employed at Washington Adventist Hospital for nearly seven years, during which time I married a handsome and charming Adventist gentleman. Within days I was shocked into the realization that I had made a tragic mistake. In spite of our toxic union, we were blessed with two beautiful children, a daughter and a son. Because of my strong commitment to Christ and to the counsel of Ellen White, however, I felt obligated to remain in my marital bondage for fourteen long, traumatic years. Yet I felt the presence of God through it all, and I emerged from it more determined than ever to follow Him wherever He might lead.

As a single mom I faced many unanticipated challenges, but with the miraculous assistance of my heavenly Father, I was able to raise my children into adulthood with reasonably sound minds and bodies. During one of my occasional visits with my parents, who resided in Huntsville, Alabama, I was introduced to a recently baptized Adventist gentleman to whom my father had given Bible studies. After several months of getting to know each other via long distance phone calls, and a few visits that he made to my home in Columbia, Maryland, he asked me to become his wife and the mother of his sons, ages ten and eleven. After...
EGW explains this further by stating that “it is impossible that the sins of [believers] should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated” (GC 485). She sums it up by saying: “The work of examination of character is never at an end. While the judges are reconstructing Christ’s ‘final’ atonement, having one’s record of sins blotted out. If not, they will remain on record witnessing against one’s eternal destiny has been decided yet. This is why Mrs. White issued the warning: “Those who accept the Savior should never be taught to say or to feel that they are saved” until after they have passed the scrutiny of the Investigative Judgment.

Another being upon the earth” (GC 490). “In the [investigative] judgment the use made of every talent will be scrutinized. How have we [believers] employed the capital lent us of heaven? … Have we improved the powers entrusted to us, in hand and heart and brain, to the glory of God and the blessing of the world? How have we used our time, our pen, our voice, our money, our influence? What have we done for Christ in the person of the poor, the afflicted, the orphan or the widow?” (GC 487).

Because of the severity and solemnity of the Investigative Judgment that awaits every believer, EGW has given many serious warnings against frivolous attitudes. For example: “Those who would share the benefits of the Second [apostasy] movement should permit nothing to interfere with their posthumous declaration of guilt” (GC 487).
still under the condemnation of the law, he is placed on probation until his name comes up for consideration in the Investigative Judgment. If he passes, he will benefit by Christ’s final phase ministration.

Adventism’s atonement theology

A basic fact about Adventism’s atonement theology needs clarifying at this point. The sanctuary doctrine states that Christ makes the atonement in heaven, not on the cross. The pioneers made a clear distinction between Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross and his making the atonement in heaven by the operation of the Sanctuary Ministry.

Adventists state that Christ did not make the atonement by His sacrificial death upon the cross; rather, He makes it in the heavenly sanctuary, by the operation of the Sanctuary Ministry.

The pioneers stated that the atonement had been fulfilled, and all necessary cleansing had taken place. The condition of the atonement—an atonement that would be made in heaven afterwards—remained on record and would witness against them. As a result they would be judged and have their sins remitted. They would be paraded before God, and have the sanctuary cleansed from their sins. They would be justified and receive pardon and justification “full and complete” (GC 484). With Adventism’s typological hermeneutic in mind—as is the case in the typology above—EGW explains that the heavenly reality of the earthly type—Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross—was not the atonement as such; it was merely the preparation for the atonement to be made in heaven.

Referring to Christ’s death on the cross, she states: “Christ’s sacrifice in behalf of man was full and complete. The condition of the atonement—an atonement that would be made in heaven afterwards—remained on record and would witness against them. As a result they would be judged and have their sins remitted. They would be paraded before God, and have the sanctuary cleansed from their sins. They would be justified and receive pardon and justification “full and complete” (GC 484). With Adventism’s typological hermeneutic in mind—as is the case in the typology above—EGW explains that the heavenly reality of the earthly type—Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross—was not the atonement as such; it was merely the preparation for the atonement to be made in heaven afterwards.

Referring to the atonement made in heaven, she states: “The atonement was fulfilled. After asking the Lord to give me the courage and wisdom to accept God’s Word, even if it meant changing my beliefs, I decided it was my better option. In desperation I sought divine intervention. The possibility that I could have been mistaken about the integral role of Ellen G. White in the theology of our church, and the doctrines of Adventism for all of my life was almost too traumatizing for me to deal with, yet I knew I had to get to the bottom of it all. I was compelled to probe more deeply into the life of Sister White and decided to borrow a few of those books from my husband’s library. I read White Washed by Sydney Cameron, and then The Life of Mrs. E. G. White, Seventh-day Adventist Prophet, Her False Claims Refuted by D. M. Canright, a contemporary of Mrs. White.

The Life of Mrs. Ellen G. White

I was tempted to hide those hated books every time I opened them. I was not only the least bit interested. I interpreted Ken’s efforts as a play of Satan to deceive me and was too afraid to look or listen. One day, however, I made the “mistake” of looking at some of the material he had copied from the internet. It prompted me to ask him if he had a copy of White Out by Dirk Anderson, a former defender of Ellen White. I was absolutely horrified by what I discovered!

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In the Investigative Judgment during Christ’s final phase ministration, God decides who of believers are entitled to the benefits of Christ’s final atonement and who are not. Those who have complied with the prerequisites will qualify and have the sanctuary cleansed from their sins. They will be saved when Jesus comes again and will enter the heavenly sanctuary. Those who have not complied with the prerequisites will be disqualified. Their sins will remain on record and will witness against them. As a result they will be cut off and lost when Jesus comes again. EGW explains that for those who enter the most holy place, all Israel were required to gather about the sanctuary and in the most solemn manner humble their souls before God, that they might receive the pardon of their sins and not be cut off from the congregation. How much more essential in this antitypical Day of Atonement that we understand the work of our High Priest and know what duties are required of us! (GC 430. See also GC 489-490, 1 SM 124, 125). When I first discovered in 1 John 5:11-13 that God actually wants us to know that we have eternal life if we “believe on the name of the Son of God” I wanted to shout! Even though I had read that passage many times, I had always filtered out this most important truth. I am thankful that White had admonished us to never say we are saved. As I began understanding what the gospel was all about, I wanted to share the books with everyone but, I was not the least bit interested. I interpreted Ken’s efforts as a play of Satan to deceive me and was too afraid to look or listen. One day, however, I made the “mistake” of looking at some of the material he had copied from the internet. It prompted me to ask him if he had a copy of White Out by Dirk Anderson, a former defender of Ellen White. I was absolutely horrified by what I discovered!

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visions confirmed the Investigative Judgment (Seventh-day Adventist Church. This group included Ellen White, many of whom eventually founded the group of visionaries, many of whom eventually founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The doctrine followed the discarded Shut Door theory and proposed an explanation of an event which supposedly transpired on that day, thus restoring equilibrium to a small circle of visionaries, many of whom eventually founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This group included Ellen White whom many accepted as having a prophetic gift. Her visions confirmed the Investigative Judgment (Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1, p. 158-159) and lent what her peers considered divine authority to the idea which eventually became the unique doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

While many Seventh-day Adventists today claim little knowledge of the Investigative Judgment and further assert they don’t consider it very important, General Conference president Jan Paulsen holds a very different opinion. In his address “The Theological Landscape: Colloquial Implications of the Investigative Judgment” at the Theological Landscape Perspectives on Issues Facing the World Seventh-day Adventist Church” delivered to a group of 45 church leaders assembled in Greece in the spring of 2002 and later reprint ed in the Adventist Review, Paulsen said:

The historic sanctuary message [of which the Investigative Judgment is the central event], based on Scripture and supported by the writings of Ellen White, continues to be held to unequivocally. And the inspired authors on which these and other doctrines are based, namely the Bible supported by the writings of Ellen White, continue to be the hermeneutical foundation on which we as a church place all matters of faith and conduct. Let no one think that there has been a change in position in regard to this. (italics mine)

Paulsen’s statement underlines all attempts by others in the church to make this difficult, unique, identifying doctrine of Seventh-day Adventism palatable.

Subjective Atonement

Perhaps because of discomfort born of the lack of Biblical support for the Investigative Judgment—perhaps because of several liberal theologians’ discomfort with the idea that God would stage a judgment for the purpose of meting out condemnation to people, the Investigative Judgment has received a new face in some circles during the past two or three decades.

Instead of focusing on the pioneers’ original idea of God pouring over the names of those who claim to be Christians to see who deserves salvation, this new interpretation says instead that God’s review of the heavenly books of records is for the purpose of vindicating His character to the watching universe. In the words of Dennis Priebe (an Adventist pastor who spent 11 years on the faculty of Pacific Union College and is currently affiliated with Amazing Facts, an Adventist evangelistic ministry) in the Investigative Judgment, people are judged as they would have been if they had lived up to the standard of God’s law, and only those who failed to do so are condemned.

In the new understanding of the Investigative Judgment, the believer is judged for his or her works. If the believer fails to meet the standard, then he or she is condemned. But if the believer meets the standard, then he or she is saved. This new interpretation of the Investigative Judgment has been embraced by many Seventh-day Adventists, and it has helped to make the doctrine more palatable for those who were previously uncomfortable with it.

However, there are some who continue to disagree with this approach to the Investigative Judgment. They believe that the doctrine should be based on the Bible alone, without relying on the writings of Ellen White. They also believe that the doctrine should be presented in a way that is consistent with the teachings of the Bible. They argue that the new interpretation of the Investigative Judgment is not supported by the Bible, and that it is not consistent with the teachings of the Bible.

Your questions finally answered

1) The Provisional Phase. When a sinner repents, Christ makes a provisional atonement for him by applying His blood in the heavenly sanctuary. This atonement accomplishes two things for the penitent sinner: a) He is granted a provisional pardon. b) The guilt (penalty) of his sins is not cancelled but transferred from himself onto Christ who now bears it in the heavenly sanctuary.

Ellen White (EWG) explains the provisional nature of Christ’s first phase (apartment) ministration as follows: “For eighteen centuries [from Christ’s ascension to 1844] this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the [heavenly] sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father; yet their sins still remained upon the books of record” (GC 421).

The Type

To understand this statement we need to note what EGW says about the typical service [the Old Testament sanctuary service which was a shadow, or type, of the true work of God] on which this statement is based: “Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner’s stead; but the sin (its guilt or penalty) was not cancelled by the blood of the victim. A means was therefore provided for the sin was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of the blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; but he was not entirely released from the condemnation of the law” (GC 420).

Because the daily atonement of the sanctuary services did not cancel the Israelite’s guilt but only transferred it to the holy place of the sanctuary, the Adventist pioneers concluded, “the blood of the victim had not made full atonement for the sin” (Patriarchs and Prophets [PP] 355). The sacrifices only atoned for sin provisionally. As a result the sinner was forgiven only provisionally; he was not released from the condemnation of the law until their penalty is fully paid. 6) They are therefore placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary” (GC 421). “[Christ] stands in the presence of God, saying, ‘Father, I take upon Myself the guilt (or penalty) of that soul. It means death to him if he is left to bear it’” (Review and Herald, Feb. 27, 1900. Quoted in Questions on Doctrine, 668). Therefore, as long as Christ bears the guilt of confessed and forgiven sins, the heavenly sanctuary is defiled and in need of cleansing.

3) As a result believers are not entirely released from the condemnation of the law until their penalty is fully paid. 6) They are therefore placed on probation until Christ makes the final atonement for them during his second phase (apartment) ministration during which He cleanses the sanctuary from their sins.

Three aspects mentioned above need to be stressed for clarity. 1) The blood of Christ does not cancel the believer’s guilt on confession but instead transfers it onto Christ. 2) Because the believer’s guilt is not cancelled and his record is not blotted out on confession, he is not released from the condemnation of the law at this point. 3) Because the believer is...
would think this exclusion must include William Miller who openly and humbly admitted his mistake. He wrote, “We expected the personal coming of Christ at that time, and now to contend that we were not mistaken, is dishonorable. We should never be ashamed frankly to confess our errors. I point out that by so doing, they would have been, according to Ellen White, shutting off any possibility of their own salvation. It is much more elusive for Mrs. White’s message of doom when it condemns people who lived in 1844 than it would be to overlook it if it condemned oneself. If a person puts himself in the shoes of one of the honest Christians Mrs. White message condemned, he must start asking, was there a valid basis for a door of salvation to be shut in 1844?”

Ellen White “saw that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843.”

Is this how God operates? Does God lead a man to set a definite date for the end of the world even through Christ forbade that practice in Matthew 24:37: Does God close the door of probation on Christians who refused to be deluded by the false prophet of 1843-44 delusion? No! It is a slander upon the character of God to charge Him with responsible for the 1843-44 delusion. A true prophet of God does not receive untrue revelations from Him God does not trick people into accepting a falsehood in order to manipulate them into obedience.

Even though Mrs. White later amended her message and “opened” the shut door of salvation, her original words opposed the clear teaching of Jesus and credited God with deception. God does not inspire His messengers with untruth at any time. He cannot lie, and His prophets’ messages likewise cannot be lies.

Perhaps the question all Adventists should face is this: “If you had known the four principles listed above, would you have accepted William Miller’s teaching?” If the answer is “No,” then they must ask themselves how they can excuse Ellen White’s endorsement of it and her condemnation of all who rejected it. A true prophet of God will not receive visions denying the Bible or representing the Almighty as a trickster.

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

Endnotes
5. Mark 13:1. Only the Father knows the time of Christ’s return. Jesus further told His disciples, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath set in His own power.” Matthew 24:14.
6. William Miller, 10th proof, as quoted in History of the Second Advent Believers, p.689 “It can be proved by the numbers in Rev. 13:18” He is wise to do the same thing, as the text shows the number of years that would end with the presentation in heaven of the second, and it was connected with the people of God by league; beginning B.C. 1558, and ending in A.D. 508, when the last sacrifice was done away. Then Daniel, xii. 133 to 508, makes the year 1843. Note: After the 1843 failure, this proof was recalculated to point to 1844.
7. See for example, Charles Fitch’s comment, as quoted in Jonathan Butler, The Disappointed, p. 197 “ or you are a Christian, out of Babylon. If you intend to be found a Christian when Christ appears, out of Babylon, and out come now.”
8. Ellen White, Early Writings, p. 235.
9. Ibid., p. 249.
14. Ibid., p. 231. Apparently the “great light” on Revelation Miller supposedly received (reputedly received from Jesus, as He had revealed it to Maria White, which was a person who had seen the vision) was not the great light we are looking for in 1843. According to the vision, God held up the Bible and proclaimed the millennial period before the War of the Lord’s Righteousness. The text shows that the Lord’s confidence in the Bible as a means of salvation was not the great light He gave in 1843, but a true light that is meant to be a lamp to our feet, and a lamp to our path, as it will direct us in our path and guide our way. The vision was not seen in the Bible, but it was seen in the Bible.
15. Ibid., p. 232.
16. Ibid., p. 256. The only other biblical account of a door of salvation being shut is one week prior to the Flood when the flood was the great delusion. The text shows that the flood of 1843 was not the great light God is looking for, but the great light He gave in 1843 was a light that would be a lamp to our feet, and a lamp to our path, as it will direct us in our path and guide our way. The vision was not seen in the Bible, but it was seen in the Bible.
17. Ibid., p. 252.
18. Ibid., p. 232.
19. Ibid., p. 252.
20. Ibid., p. 252.
21. Ibid., p. 252.
22. Ibid., p. 235.
23. Ibid., p. 252.
24. Ibid., p. 252.
Christ came to the earth...but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 68-69).

He concludes with this summary: “That the Sovereign of the universe, who has the power to run His creation universe the way He wishes, should humbly choose to win our agreement on the basis of adequate evidence is unbelievable—but true... How could a God like this fail to win His case—at least with me and you?”

Maxwell’s view that the cross of Jesus was primarily for convincing God’s creatures that God is loving and just, that it is not for paying the penalty for sin which God demanded, has permeated Adventism during the past 30 years. This interpretation of the atonement has laid the foundation for the corresponding reinterpretation of the Investigative Judgment (now often called the “pre-advent judgment”) which states that God paves over the heavenly records in order to subject them to His creatures’ critical scrutiny that they may see for themselves the validity of His decisions.

Attempts to merge objective atonement with Investigative Judgment

Edward Heppenstall was a professor of theology at La Sierra University and Loma Linda University, and he also taught at Andrews Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan. In spite of his comparatively objective view of the atonement, he nonetheless loyal to the prophetic voice of Ellen White and the Adventist doctrine of the Investigative Judgment. In his 1972 book Our High Priest, he deals with this judgment in chapter 6. Heppenstall realized that he had to acknowledge texts such as John 5:24 which states that a person who has placed trust in Jesus “does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” (NASB). At the same time, he had to make sense of the church’s defining doctrine.

In a rather convoluted defense, Heppenstall makes the case that when, as described in Daniel 7, the church’s defining doctrine of the Investigative Judgment was set into play by the holy ones of heaven, it was understood that their unchristian lives would not stand the test, for they were not walking in the humble path marked out by Him.”

Many shepherds of the flock, who professed to love Jesus, said that they had no opposition to the preaching of Christ’s coming, but they objected to the definite time. God’s all-seeing eye read their hearts. They did not love Jesus near. They knew that their unchristian lives would not stand the test, for they were not walking in the humble path marked out by Him.”

Mrs. White even says that angels were sent to lead people out of the churches that rejected Miller’s time setting:

“I saw Jesus turn His face from those who rejected and despised His coming, and then He bade angels lead His people out from among the unclean, lest they should be defiled.”

To those like Ellen (Harman) White who embraced the delusion of Christ’s return in 1844, anyone fighting against Miller’s message must be fighting against God. Ellen White apparently could not fathom the fact that there were very real reasons for not believing in Miller’s date. In her mind, the righteous accepted Miller’s delusion while the ungodly rejected it: “The most devoted gladly received the message. They knew that it was from God.”

One can only wonder how Ellen White could say, “they knew it was from God,” but later could write that those preaching the same time were “advancing infidelity rather than Christianity.”

Probation’s Door Slams Shut

After the disappointment of 1844, William Miller confessed his mistake, but Joseph Bates and the Whites believed and taught that a door of probation closed on Oct. 22, 1844. At first, the Whites taught the door was shut to all who had not joined the Millenite movement, but later they modified their view so that only those people that specifically rejected the message of Christ’s imminent return in 1844 (referred to as the 1st angel’s message) and/or rejected the call to leave the churches of “Babylon” (referred to as the 2nd angel’s message) had a door of probation shut upon them. Ellen White, writing in 1883, explains how the door of salva- tion was shut in 1844:

“I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door in 1844. All who saw the light of the first and second angels’ messages and rejected that light, were left in darkness. And those who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit who attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and proclaimed their experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them.

“Those who did not see the light, had not the guilt of its rejection. It was only the class who had despised the light from heaven that the Spirit of God could not reach. And this class included, as I have stated, both those who refused to accept the message when it was presented to them, and also those who, having received it, afterward renounced their faith. These might have a form of godliness, and profess to be followers of Christ; but having no living connection with God, they would be taken captive by the delusions of Satan. These two classes are brought to view in the vision—those who declared the light which they had followed a delusion, and the wicked of the world who, having rejected the light, had been rejected of God. No reference is made to those who had not seen the light, and therefore were not guilty of its rejection.”

According to Ellen White, the door of mercy shut on these Christians solely because they did not believe William Miller and leave their churches to follow him. Their crime was that they were correct. They failed to be deluded. Now follow this line of reasoning: if Miller was wrong, and the Christians churches were right, why did God close a door of probation upon them?

It’s Right to be Wrong and Wrong to be Right

Mrs. White claimed God’s Spirit let them and went with those who accepted the delusion of a false teaching. In effect, Mrs. White was saying it was right to be wrong, and wrong to be right. As noted above, Ellen White said when the Millenites ‘pro- nounced their experience a delusion,’ they thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them. One
Is it wrong to be right?

Dirk Anderson spent 33 years in the Seventh-day Adventist Church before uncovering the truth about Ellen White. Determined that others should not be deceived the way he was, in 1998 Dirk founded a web site dedicated to telling the truth about the SDA prophetess: www.ellenwhite.org

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he dining room table was littered with books, calendars, and notes scribbled on paper. My uncle had an air of confidence about him. He had checked and rechecked his calculations of the Jubilee and could hardly contain his excitement. He knew the day that Jesus would return to the earth! It was all going to be over in a matter of months. In the subsequent weeks, he began fasting and seeking God as never before. He began sharing his discoveries with his friends, family, and his brethren at the local Seventh-day Adventist Church in Florida. He told all who would listen about Jesus’ return on the “Day of Jubilee” in 1994.

Few believed him. Some shook their heads and walked off. Others tried to reason with him, saying we cannot know the “day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh,” and reminding him not all of Revelation’s signs had been fulfilled. All was to no avail. Not only was he convinced he was right, he was生成 as others would not accept his findings. How could they not see what he saw?

A Look Back

Step back in time with me to 1844. Let’s look at one of the most profound and disturbing teachings to emerge from the pioneers who eventually founded the Adventist church. It is the fall of 1844 William Miller’s first prediction about the return of Christ in 1843 had failed, but the leading Millerite brethren had worked out a new date. They could hardly contain their excitement! They began visiting churches, and the advent movement started to regained some of the momentum it had lost after the 1843 debacle.

By this point, however, many of the churches were no longer willing to accept Miller or his associates. A number ofable Protestant scholars had written tracts and books showing the errors of William Miller’s 15 proofs, and the majority of churches were convinced that while Miller may have had good intentions, his scholarship missed the mark widely. The major Protestant churches in America presented four reasons why Miller was wrong.

The Four Reasons Miller was Wrong

1) Date-setting is dangerous. Protestant pastors and scholars knew that time-setting leads to false revivals, and the bitter disappointment which follows often results in destroyng the faith of those involved. Later in life, even Ellen White acknowledged the danger of setting dates and times:

“Those who so presumptuously preach definite time, in so doing gratify the adversity of souls; for they are advancing infidelity rather than Christianity. They produce Scripture and by false interpretation show a chain of argument which apparently proves their position. But their failures show that they are false prophets, that they do not rightly interpret the language of inspiration.”

2) Date-setting was in direct contradiction to the words of Jesus who said:

“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”

3) Not all the pre-advent prophecies of the Bible had been fulfilled in 1844. For example, Christ predicted the gospel would be preached in the entire world before He returned:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

There were literally thousands of languages and dialects that had never heard the gospel in 1844. For example, the great missionary David Livingstone had not yet opened up the heart of Africa to the good news. Clearly Christ could not come in 1844 in opposition to His own word:

4) William Miller’s “15 proofs” of Christ’s return in 1844 were the result of poor Biblical exegesis. Some of the texts he used to develop his theory were not prophetic passages, and others were badly mistranslated. For example, in his 15th proof, Miller added the 1335 days of Daniel 12 with the number 666 from Revelation 13 and somehow managed to end up with 1844. The Protestant churches in New England had the same reaction to Miller in 1844 that the little Adventist church in Florida had to my uncle 150 years later. But some in 1844, like according to Adventist theology, God is not satisfied to be right. He will not rest on “Because I’m God” as the answer to questions raised by human reasoning. Instead, He has promised that until He has brought in His kingdom, every human question has been answered to our satisfaction. . .Most importantly, (the Investigative Judgment) is a crucial element in God’s plan to reveal himself and make himself accountable even to us for how he runs the universe.

What’s wrong here?

In spite of its kinder, gentler face, this “reinterpreted Investigative Judgment” is no more faithful to the Bible than is the official doctrine. In some ways, it is even more demoralizing. While it neglects to stress the incomplete atonement and the lack of security inherent in the original doctrine, thus superficially relieving Adventists of their continual sense of guilt and failure, it still fails to teach the all-sufficiency of Jesus’ atonement, thus depriving them of believers’ security. This reinterpreted version also deprives them of the reassurance that God is fully sovereign.

A truly sovereign God does not have to “earn” the right to rule, nor does He have to answer to His creations regarding His decisions. A God who is truly God of all does not have to prove to anyone that He is fair and Satan is lying. A truly sovereign God is not locked in a battle with Satan whose outcome is yet to be seen.

First, the outcome of Satan’s struggle against God has already been decided. Colossians 2:15 clearly says, “And hav- ing disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”


Second, the Bible clarifies that we are not to suppose we can expect Him to explain Himself to us so we fully under- stand His reasoning. Neither does the Bible suggest that God does any sort of accounting to justify Himself to the universe.

The Bible clearly states God’s sovereign authority. At the end of the book of Job, after Job and all his friends had expressed their understanding of themselves and of God, God spoke. “Who is this that黑暗的 my counsel with words, and the work of my hands with yours?” (Job 40:2). God asks Job, “And have you any merit to question you, and you shall answer me” (Job 39:2). Then, following a series of rhetorical questions and challenges no human could answer, God said, “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accusses God answer him?” (Job 40:4) Again God questions Job, and finally Job realizes that he, the “righteous man” he believed himself to be, had no answer for God, nor did he have any merit to recommend him to God for special treatment or knowl- edge. Job, the “righteous man”, ultimately realizes he must bow to God and repent in dust and ashes (Job 42:6).

Without ever having his questions answered or under- standing what is formed say to us of Jesus—the mystery of God—changed history by open- ing a “new and living way” (Hebrews 10:20) to the Father with His shed blood (Hebrews 9:12) and by sending the Holy Spirit—God Himself—to indwell everyone who surren- dered to Jesus as His Savior (Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:27). Ancient Israel never imagined the reality of God becoming man, paying for sins with His blood, and making rebellious children born of God through the Holy Spirit (John 1:12-13; 3:1-8; Romans 8:15-17).

Ultimately, God has the last word in the universe. He never promises that He will answer all our questions on this side of eternity, nor does He seek to justify Himself to us. On the contrary, God “works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will” (Ephesians 1:11).

God’s Wisdom Revealed

To be sure, God reveals His wisdom to the “rulers and authorities in the heavens” (Ephesians 1:10). But true revelation, though, is not a self-absolving “proof” that He is trustworthy or just, as so many of us have been taught. Neither is it attached to an “Investigative Judgment.” What God reveals to His human agents is an lesson for mankind and the effect of salvation on humanity: the mystery of God’s Spirit indwelling Christ-followers and bringing them to new life and to unity. This is not a unity of “tolerance” but of sharing the presence of the Eternal God through the mir- acle of new birth.

In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul explains that God gave him the work of explaining to everyone “the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.” Paul identifies this mystery hidden in God for ages past as “Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:2,3) who now lives in us who believe and know that we are “the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

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The mystery of Christ, however, extends beyond the person and work of Jesus. It is also through His work in the church that God reveals His multifaceted wisdom “to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 3:10). God is glorifying Himself through all those who, through faith in Jesus and His completed work on the cross, are brought to life and unity of purpose through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Nowhere does the Bible suggest God “proves” Himself just and trustworthy by opening the books of record and displaying His righteous judgments to the universe. God is never on trial. On the contrary, He is the righteous judge, (2 Timothy 4:8) and He will judge the world (Acts 17:31; Romans 3:5-6). It is not records of facts which bring glory to God. Rather, by placing His presence in the world by means of new creations born of God, He reveals His unimaginable wisdom.

This revelation of God’s wisdom through us, the church, is possible only because when we are in Christ, our judgment is completed at the cross. As creatures born of the Spirit, we share in Christ’s death and resurrection (Romans 6:5). We are no longer condemned, and we pass from death to life (John 3:16-18; 5:24). We are not subject to any ongoing Investigative Judgment; our future is secure.

Mythical Judgment

In summary, the idea of the Investigative Judgment is fatally flawed. No matter how it is explained, the Investigative Judgment has not changed, and, as Paulsen confirmed, it will not change. Any variations one hears on this theme are simply attempts to make it more palatable. To borrow a quotation from Dale Ratzlaff, “Black is now white, but the color has not changed.”

The original, authentic doctrine of the Investigative Judgment is flawed not only because it has no sound Biblical basis but also because it denies that Jesus completed His work of atonement on the cross. True Christ-followers are not awaiting judgment or final atonement; they have “crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24), are seated with Jesus being all He needs and filling His heart with God’s glory.

A person living in the shadow of the Investigative Judgment cannot experience these things because it hides the real Jesus and His finished work.

In spite of its difficulties, however, the doctrine persists. No matter how pastors, theologians, or teachers reinterpret it, the Investigative Judgment remains the church’s only unique doctrine, and it underlies all of Adventist theology. Even those who attempt to force it to conform more closely to Evangelical theology know they cannot let it go. The Investigative Judgment must remain if Adventism is to remain. General Conference president Jan Paulsen’s words leave no room for doubt: “The historic sanctuary message, based on Scripture and supported by the writings of Ellen White, continues to be held by the church. Yet...let no one think that there has been a change of position in regard to this.”

Yet the Biblical truth remains: in Jesus our judgment is past. In Jesus our eternity is certain. In Jesus our hearts rest. Because Jesus was so, every knee will bow before Him; every tongue will confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise! To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!” (Revelation 5:12; Amen.

Progressive revelation:
what is it?

In the writings of Ellen White there are numerous statements that are clearly erroneous. Many of these were later changed or reinterpreted. Also, we often find that her early statements stand in direct contradiction to her later statements. Many Adventists explain this phenomenon by calling it “progressive revelation.”

What progressive revelation is

Progressive revelation has two nuances of meaning. First, a specific truth may be relevant when it is first revealed but later may have no more application. For example, in Noah’s day, truth was, “A flood is coming get into the ark.” While the record of the story remains true today, it is not applicable truth today. Two things must be said about this first nuance of meaning: 1) the truth involved was applicable to specific circumstances, and 2) under those specific circumstances, the truth was indeed truth and not error.

The second nuance of meaning in progressive revelation is that not all truths given in one time but are revealed in incremental steps. The important thing to recognize is that the additional increments do not contradict the former truth. For instance, many Old Testament prophecies point forward to the coming of Christ. By themselves, these prophecies are only hints of reality. When the full reality comes, however, these prophecies are still truth and become a part of a larger truth. It is important to recognize that this part of truth is still truth and not error. In other words, progressive truth is an unfolding of truth, not a progression from error to truth.

What progressive revelation is not

Too often error has gone undetected because it is wearing a garment labeled “progressive truth.” Are the following illustrations truth or error?

If told you clearly that I was going to purchase a new, green Dodge in two days and then came home with a used gray Ford in ten days, would I have told the truth? I hope you will say, “No, you did not.”

Now let’s suppose I argue that I really did tell you the truth because the Ford is a greenish-gray (a form of green, right?), and when I said I’d buy a “new” car, I meant “new to me” not “brand new.” Further, the Ford is only slightly used (it’s almost new!), and it looks much like the Dodge (so what’s the difference, really?). Additionally, I really did buy the car in two days as I said I would—just I didn’t actually fill out all the paperwork and write a check for it until ten days later. But I’d picked it out! What would your response be to me? I hope you would say, “No, you still did not tell me the truth, and you’re trying to deceive or manipulate me into thinking you are telling the truth.”

Now picture a continuum from black to white with varying shades of gray between the two. Black is almost the same as the darkest gray, which is almost the same as the next lighter shade of gray. At the other end of the continuum, we see that the lightest shades of gray are almost white. When moving from one end of the continuum to the other in small incremental steps, there is very little perception of change. Does this gradual change, however, make black white, or white black?

It is important to recognize that this part of truth is still truth and not error. In other words, progressive truth is an unfolding of truth, not a progression from error to truth.

If you say, “No,” we will understand each other. If, however, you say, “Because the black on the continuum changes into white without sharp lines of demarcation between the two, then black must be the same as white, because this is progressive revelation,” we are again in trouble. This would not be progressive “truth” but deceptive error.

Even if error and truth are connected by a number of intermediate graduations, the gradual change does not make error into truth. Evaluating truth and error requires clear and precise thinking, especially so when the two are connected by a number of intermediate or contrary positions.

Ellen White’s contradictory statements cannot be excused by calling them “progressive revelation.” God’s revelation never begins with error and ends in truth or vice versa. He does not tell us in truth to teach truth.

We ground our lives in the reality of God.
This revelation of God's wisdom through us, the church, is possible only because when we are in Christ, our judgment was completed on the cross.

The mystery of Christ, however, extends beyond the person and work of Jesus. It is also through His work in the church that God reveals His multifaceted wisdom “to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 3:10). God is glorifying Himself through all those who, through faith in Jesus and His completed work on the cross, are brought to life and unity of purpose through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Nowhere does the Bible suggest God “proves” Himself just and trustworthy by opening the books of record and displaying His righteous judgments to the universe. God is never on trial. On the contrary, He is the righteous judge, (2 Timothy 4:8) and He will judge the world (Acts 17:31; Romans 3:5-6). It is not records of facts which bring glory to God. Rather, by placing His presence in the world by means of new creations born of God, He reveals His unimaginable wisdom.

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DIRK ANDERSON

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brethren had worked out a new date. They could hardly con-
tain their excitement! They began visiting churches, and the
advent movement started to regain some of the momentum it
had lost after the 1843 debacle.

By this point, however, many of the churches were no longer willing to accept Miller or his associates. A number of able Protestant scholars had written tracts and books showing the errors
of William Miller’s 15 proofs, and the majority of churches were convinced that while Miller may
have had good intentions, his scholarship missed the mark
widely. The major Protestant churches in America presented
four reasons why Miller was wrong.

The Four Reasons Miller was Wrong

1) Date-setting is dangerous. Protestant pastors and
scholars knew that time-setting leads to false ravels, and
the bitter disappointment which follows often results in destroy-
ing the faith of those involved. Later in life, even Ellen White
acknowledged the danger of setting dates and times:
“Those who so presumptuously preach definite time, in so
doing greatly the adversary of souls; for they are advancing infi-
delity rather than Christianity. They produce Scripture and by
false interpretation show a chain of argument which apparent-
ly proves their position. But their failures show that they are
false prophets, that they do not rightly interpret the language
of inspiration.”

2) Date-setting was in direct contradiction to the words
of Jesus who said:
“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour
wherein the Son of man cometh.”

“Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the
angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”

3) Not all the pre-advent prophecies of the Bible had
been fulfilled in 1844. For example, Christ predicted the
gospel would be preached in the entire world before He
returned:
“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the
donations unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

4) William Miller’s 15 proofs of Christ’s return in 1844
were the result of poor Biblical exegesis. Some of the texts
he used to develop his theory were not prophetic passages, and
other texts were badly mistranslated. For example, in his 15th proof, Miller
added the 1335 days of Daniel 12 with the number 666 from
Revelation 13 and somehow managed to end up with 1844.
The Protestant churches in New England had the same
reaction to Miller in 1844 that the little Adventist church in
Florida had to my uncle 150 years later. But some in 1844, like

According to Adventist theology, God is not satisfied to
be right. He will not rest on “Because I’m God” as the answer
to questions raised by human reasoning. Instead, he has
promised that eternity will not begin until every human
question has been answered to our satisfaction. …Most
importantly, (the Investigative Judgment) is a crucial ele-
ment in God’s plan to reveal himself and make himself
accountable even to us for how he runs the universe.

What’s wrong here?

In spite of its kinder, gentler face, this “reinterpreted
Investigative Judgment” is no more faithful to the Bible
than is the official doctrine. In some ways, it is even more
demoralizing. While it neglects to stress the importance
of atonement and the lack of security inherent in the original
doctrine, thus superficially relieving Adventists of their
con-
tinual sense of guilt and failure, it still fails to teach the all-
sufficiency of Jesus’ atonement, thus depriving them of
believers’ security. This reinterpreted version also deprives
them of the reassurance that God is fully sovereign.

A truly sovereign God does not have to “earn” the right
to rule, nor does He have to answer to His creations regard-
ing His decisions. A God who is truly God of all does not
have to prove to anyone that He is fair and Satan is lying. A
truly sovereign God is not locked in a battle with Satan
whose outcome is yet to be seen.

First, the outcome of Satan’s struggle against God has already
already been decided. Colossians 2:15 clearly says, “And hav-

ing disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public
spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”
Jesus’ victory over Satan, who has exposed himself as the
enemy of God and man, is also demonstrated in Matthew

Second, the Bible clarifies that we are not to suppose we
can expect Him to explain Himself to us so we fully under-
stand His reasoning. Neither does the Bible suggest that
God does any sort of accounting to justify Himself to the
universe.

The Bible clearly states God’s sovereign authority. At the end
of the book of Job, after Job and all his friends had
expressed their understanding of themselves and of God,
God spoke: “Who is this that darkens my counsel with
words and makes many words?

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the
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Florida had to my uncle 150 years later. But some in 1844, like

As a result of the “Investigative Judgment,” the Holy Spirit
betrayed to us the two greatest secrets in the Bible:

1) God’s Wisdom Revealed

To be sure, God reveals His wisdom to the “rulers and
authorities in the heavenly places,” with the purpose of
clarifying our understanding of who the Holy Spirit—God—
“is” (Colossians 2:2, 3). Ultimately, God has the last word in the universe. He never promises that He will answer all our questions on this
side of eternity, nor does He seek to justify Himself to us.

On the contrary, God “works out everything in conformity with the
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side of eternity, nor does He seek to justify Himself to us.

On the contrary, God “works out everything in conformity with the
purpose of His will” (Ephesians 1:11).
Christ came to the earth... but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe... that it is not for paying the penalty for sin which God demanded, but for sanctifying the people in the power to run. His creation universe... way He wishes, should humbly choose to win our agreement on the basis of adequate evidence is unbelievable... but true... How could a God like this fail to win His case—at least with me and you?

Maxwell’s view of the cress of Jesus was primarily for convincing God’s creatures that God is loving and just, that it is not for paying the penalty for sin which God demanded, but for sanctifying the people in the power to run. His creation universe... way He wishes, should humbly choose to win our agreement on the basis of adequate evidence is unbelievable— but true... How could a God like this fail to win His case—at least with me and you?

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Ellen White later acknowledged the opposition to this theme in the Thursday lessons... emphasized the importance of Jesus’ shed blood as atonement for sin and fails to

God vindicates Himself

In 2000, the Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath School Quarterly dedicated the week of June 17-23 to the study of the Investigative Judgment. Without explaining that the historic (and still current) doctrine of the Investigative Judgment is about delayed atonement and an uncertain future for professed believers, the Quarterly emphasized the vindication of God as the main purpose of the judgment. In the study for June 21 the lesson says, “The evil forces have been passing judgment on God, accusing Him of being precisely the opposite of what He claims to be. God cleared up this distortion on the cross through the sacrificial death of His Son as our substitute. He has also allowed His creatures to be involved in the final judgment in order to witness the justice of His decisions. According to Daniel 7:10, during the Investigative Judgment ‘A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened... [Satan] had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government before the angels, claiming that God was actuated by wrong motives upon the inhabitants of heaven.... Therefore it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of heaven, as well as of all the worlds, that God’s government was just, His law perfect’” (The Great Controversy, p. 314).

The Quarterly continues this theme in the Thursday lesson where it says, “The God who cannot be judged by the universe is willing to allow the universe to witness the wonderful way in which He dealt with the sin problem, thus demonstrating once and for all that the accusations of the evil powers were false. In the final judgment God vindicates Himself.”

This idea that the Investigative Judgment is mainly for the purpose of God defending Himself against Satan’s accusations is articularized clearly by John McCarty. McCarty pastors the North Hills Christian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, and he is the editor of Adventist Today. In an article entitled “Why I Like the Investigative Judgment” in the September/October, 1998 edition of Adventist Today, McCarty says,

Someone with the power of God could have all of us singing his praise even if he were the devil himself. He could hoodwink or coerce all of us into paying obedience. The great value of the Investigative Judgment is its role in the process which will expose to human scrutiny every detail of God’s interaction with His creation. God will ultimately have no secrets beyond the mystery of his tenacious love. Our final worship will be based on perfect knowledge, not on blind faith.

The result of Heppenstall’s need to mesh the Investigative Judgment with Biblical statements of believers’ security yielded an interpretation that veils the significance of Jesus’ shed blood as atonement for sin and fails to

reckon with God’s justice and wrath against sin. Instead of emphasizing God’s investigation of believers’ qualifications as the authentic doctrinal stance, Heppenstall argues that this investigation is an opportunity for God to defend His decisions to a watching universe.

Conflict Erupts

When churches shut their doors to Miller and scoffed at his predictions, the situation deteriorated. The Millenarians responded by denouncing the churches as “Babylon” and the “Synagogue of Satan.” Ellen White later acknowledged the opposition to Miller, but interpreted that opposition as hypocrisy:

“The preaching of definite time called forth great opposition from all classes, from the minister in the pulpit down to the most reckless, heaven-daring sinner. No man knew the day nor the hour; was heard from the hypocritical minister and the bold scoffer.”

Those pastors who objected to the setting of time were denounced as unchristian:

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

Mrs. White even says that angels were sent to lead people out of the churches that rejected Miller’s time setting:

“I saw Jesus turn His face from those who rejected and despised His coming, and then He bade angels lead His people out from among the unchristian, lest they should be defiled.”

To those like Ellen (Harman) White who embraced the delusion of Christ’s return in 1844, anyone fighting against Miller’s message must be fighting against God. Ellen White apparently could not fathom the fact that there were very real reasons for not believing in Miller’s date. In her mind, the righteous accepted Miller’s delusion while the unrighteous rejected it:

“The most devoted gladly received the message. They knew that it was from God.”

One can only wonder how Ellen White could say, “they knew it was from God,” but later could write that those preaching against the definite time were “advancing infidelity rather than Christianity.”

Proclamation’s Door Slams Shut

After the disappointments of 1844, William Miller confessed his mistake, but Joseph Bates and the Whites believed and taught that a door of probation closed on Oct. 22, 1844. At first, the Whites taught the door was shut to all who had not joined the Millenite movement, but later they modified their view so that only those people that specifically rejected the message of Christ’s imminent return in 1844 (referred to as the 1st angel’s message) were involved. The call to leave the churches of “Babylon” (referred to as the 2nd angel’s message) had a door of probation shut upon them.

Ellen White, writing in 1883, explains how the door of salvation was shut in 1844:

“...I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door in 1844. All who saw the light of the first and second angels’ messages and rejected that light, were left in darkness. And those who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and pronounced that experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them. Those who did not see the light, had not the guilt of its rejection. It was only the class who had despised the light from heaven that the Spirit of God could not reach. And this class included, as I have stated, both those who refused to accept the message when it was presented to them, and also those who, having received it, afterward renounced their faith. These might have a form of godliness, and profess to be followers of Christ; but having no living connection with God, they would be taken captive by the delusions of Satan. These two classes are brought to view in the vision—those who declared the light which they had followed a delusion, and the wicked of the world who, having rejected the light, had been rejected of God. No reference is made to those who had not seen the light, and therefore were not guilty of its rejection.”

According to Ellen White, the door of mercy shut on these Christians solely because they did not believe William Miller and leave their churches to follow Him. Their crime was that they were correct. They failed to be deluded. Now follow this line of reasoning. If Miller was wrong, and the Christians churches were right, why did God close a door of probation upon them?

It’s Right to Be Wrong and Wrong to be Right

Mrs. White claims God’s Spirit let them and went with those who accepted the delusion of a false teaching. In effect, Mrs. White was saying it was right to be wrong, and wrong to be right.

As noted above, Ellen White said when the Millenarians “pro- nounced their experience a delusion,” they had “rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them.” One
would think this exclusion must include William Miller who openly and humbly admitted his mistake. “We expected the personal coming of Christ at that time, and now to contend that we were not mistaken, is dishonest. We should never be ashamed frankly to confess our errors, I have no confidence in any of the new theories that grew out of that movement, namely, that Christ then came as the Bridegroom, that the door of mercy was closed; that there is no salvation for sinners, that the seventh trumpet then sounded, or that it was a fulfillment of prophecy in any sense.”

However, Mrs. White could not so easily consign to perdition her former leader, a man she equated with no less than John the Baptist: “As John the Baptist heralded the first advent of Jesus and prepared the way for His coming, so William Miller and those who joined him proclaimed the second advent of the Son of God.”

How could the door of salvation be shut upon one whose mind, according to Mrs. White, was so divinely inspired? “God directed the mind of William Miller to the prophecies and gave him great light upon the book of Revelation.”

And of God who repeatedly visited that chosen one (Miller), to guide his mind and open to his understanding prophecies which had ever been dark to God’s people. Mrs. White solved the dilemma by claiming Miller was not really responsible for “…suffering his influence to go against the truth. Others led him to this; others must account for it. But angels watch the precious dust of this servant of God, and he will come forth at the sound of the last trump.”

Cognitive Dissonance

When I ask Adventists what they would have done had they been alive in 1844 and known the four principles discussed above, they invariably admit they would have rejected Miller also. I point out that by so doing, they would have been, according to Ellen White, shutting off any possibility of their own salvation. It is much more excuse to Mrs. White’s message of doom when millions of people who lived in 1844 than it would be to overlook it if it condemned oneself. If a person puts himself in the shoes of one of the honest Christians Mrs. White’s message condemned, he must start asking, was there a valid basis for a door of salvation to be shut in 1844?

Ellen White “saw that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843.”

Is this how God operates? Does God lead a man to set a definition for his own life? If so, even though Christ forbade that practice in Matthew 25:13, God does close the door of probation on Christians who refused to be deflected by the false advices and prophetic theory?

No it is a slander upon the character of God to charge Him with being responsible for the 1844-46 delusion. A true prophet of God does not receive untrue revelations from Him. God does not trick people into accepting a false hood in order to manipulate them into obedience.

Even though Mrs. White later amended her message and “opened” the shut door of salvation, her original words opposed the clear teaching of Jesus and credited God with deception. God does not inspire His messengers with untruth at any time. He cannot lie, and His prophets’ messages likewise cannot be lies.

Perhaps the question all Adventists should face is: “If you had known the four principles listed above, would you have accepted William Miller’s teaching?” If the answer is “No,” then they must ask themselves how can they excuse Ellen White’s endorsement of it and her condemnation of all who rejected it. A true prophet of God will not receive visions denying the Bible or representing the Almighty as a trickster.

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

Endnotes

2. E.g., John Dowling, An Exposition of the Prophecies, Supposed by William Miller to Predict the Second Coming of Christ, in 1844. STOCKER & BREWSTER, BOSTON. (1940), and A. Croomsopser, Miller Overthrown: Or the False Prophet Confounded. (ABD, TOPPINS: BOSTON, 1940).
5. Mark 13:1—“Only the Father knows the time of Christ’s return. Jesus further told his disciples,” it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath fixed.”
7. William Miller, 15th proof, as quoted in History of the Second Advent Believers, p. 669. “It can be proved by the numbers in Rev. x. 18: Here is wisdom. Let him that understand the number of these beast, let him understand. For it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred threescore and six: con- nected with Daniel xi. 22, as before quoted. This text shows the number of years that fraud would exist until the appearance of Jesus, after it was connected with the people of God by league, beginning B C. 158, 1664 years, will bring his number, when the fortieth day of the blood sacrifice was done away. Then add, Daniel xi. 12, to 508, make the year 1843.” Note: After the 1843 failure, this proof was recalculated to point to 1844.
8. See for example, Charles Fitch’s comment, as quoted in Jonathan Butler, The Disappeared, p. 197, “If you are a Christian, come out of Babylon. If you intend to be found a Christian when Christ appears, come out of Babylon, and come out now.”
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 240.
13. Ellen G. White, Ms. 4, 1883 in Selected Messages, book 1, pp 65, 64.
15. Ellen G. White, Early Writings, p. 229.
16. Ibid., p. 231. Apparently this “great light” on Revelation Miller supposedly received from Jesus included his 15th proof, which said the number 1986 of Rev. 13:18 ended in 1843. 
17. Ibid., p. 232.
18. Ibid., p. 236.
19. The only other biblical account of a door of salvation being shut is one week prior to the Flood. What was the basis of God shutting the door of salvation before Noah’s flood? “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Genesis 6:5
22. Judgment “God is opening Himself up for evaluation; in a very real sense He is the One being judged... Remember that the primary issue at stake... is not the destiny of individual persons but the character and methods of the Judge Himself.” An Exposition of the Prophecies Miller Overthrown: Or the False Prophet Confounded, (ABD, TOPPINS: BOSTON, 1940).
23. Ellen White’s endorsement of it and her condemnation of all who rejected it. A true prophet of God will not receive visions denying the Bible or representing the Almighty as a trickster.

Instead of focusing on the pioneers’ original idea of Jesus poring over the names of those who claim to be Christians to see who deserves salvation, this new interpretation says instead that God’s review of the heavenly books of records is for the purpose of vindicating His character to the watching universe.
Your questions finally answered

1) The Provisional Phase. When a sinner repents, Christ makes a provisional atonement for him by applying His blood in the heavenly sanctuary. This atonement accomplishes two things for the penitent sinner: a) He is granted a provisional pardon. b) The guilt (penalty) of his sins is not cancelled but transferred from himself onto Christ who now bears it in the heavenly sanctuary.

Ellen White (EGW) explains the provisional nature of Christ’s first phase (apartment) ministration as follows: “For eighteen centuries [from Christ’s ascension to 1844] this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the [heavenly] sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleased in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father; yet their sins still remained upon the books of record” (GC 421).

The Type

To understand this statement we need to note what EGW says about the typical service [the Old Testament sanctuary service which was a shadow, or type, of the true work of God] on which this statement is based: “Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service which was a shadow, or type, of the true work of God” (PP 355). The sacrifices only atoned for sins provisionally; as a result the sinner was forgiven only provisionally. As a result the sin was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of the blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come but he was not entirely released from the condemnation of the law” (GC 420).

Because the daily atonement of the sanctuary services did not cancel the Israelites’ guilt but only transferred it to the holy place of the sanctuary, the Adventist pioneers concluded, “the blood of the victim had not made full atonement for the sin” (Patriarchs and Prophets [PP] 355). The sacrifices only atoned for sin provisionally. As a result the sinner was forgiven only provisionally; he was not released from the condemnation of the law until his debt at the end of the year on the Day of Atonement. Until then he was placed on probation. Furthermore, EGW refers to the sins that were transferred into the sanctuary as follows: 1) Jesus is the divine Substitute for guilty man. 2) Those who put their faith in Him are only forgiven provisionally. 3) They do not have the record of their sins blotted out at this point. 4) The guilt and penalty of their sins are not cancelled but transferred onto Jesus their Substitute in the heavenly sanctuary. “As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary” (GC 421). “Christ stands in the presence of God, saying, Father, I take upon Myself the guilt (or penalty) of that soul. It means death to Him”.

...as long as Christ bears the guilt or penalty of confessed and forgiven sins, the heavenly sanctuary is defiled and in need of cleansing. 5) As a result believers are not entirely released from the condemnation of the law until their penalty is fully paid. 6) They are therefore placed on probation...
Adventism states that Christ did not make the atonement by His sacrificial death upon the cross; rather, He makes it in the heavenly sanctuary like the priests did under the Old Covenant Levitical system.

the cross and his making the atonement in heaven by applying His blood on the mercy seat there. This distinction was based on the Old Covenant sanctuary service in ancient Israel. The pioneers differentiated between the slaying of the sin offering (the sacrifice) inside the sanctuary and the subsequent atonement that was made inside the sanctuary where the priest applied the blood.

These two things—sacrifice and atonement—were not synonymous to them as they are in Evangelical theology. This understanding is clearly documented in the early writings of the pioneers including Ellen White (until she began plagiarizing from Evangelical scholars). For example, referring to the Day of Atonement service in ancient Israel, she stated… ‘the sin offering pointed to Christ as a sacrifice…’ (GC 422). Referring to Christ’s death on the cross, she states: “Christ’s sacrifice in behalf of man was full and complete. The condition of sin, upon whom the sins of the truly penitent will finally be placed. When the high priest, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, removed the guilt of sins from the sanctuary, he placed them upon the scapegoat. When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the guilt of sins from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the final atonement (GC 421-422), is thus the heavenly sanctuary cleansed. In Adventist theology the ‘cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary’ is effected by means of Christ’s work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary” (GC 658). Therefore, there can be no comparison between the sanctuary ministration, God decides who of believers are entitled to the benefits of Christ’s ‘final’ atonement and who are not. Those who have complied with the prerequisites will qualify and be cleansed of the heavenly sanctuary from the record and guilt of God’s people’s sins without Christ first making the second phase (apartment) atonement for them with His blood.

The Investigative Judgment

In the Investigative Judgment during Christ’s final phase ministration, God decides who of believers are entitled to the benefits of Christ’s final atonement and who are not. Those who have complied with the prerequisites will qualify and have the sanctuary cleansed from their sins. They will be saved when Jesus comes in glory. The condition of the sanctuary—an atonement which would be made in heaven afterwards.

So, contrary to Evangelical Christianity which states that Christ made the atonement for sin by means of His sacrificial death upon the cross, Adventism states that Christ did not make the atonement by His sacrificial death upon the cross; rather, He makes it in the heavenly sanctuary like the priests did under the Old Covenant Levitical system.

2) The Final Phase. For those who pass the scrutiny of the Investigative Judgment, Christ will make the final atonement. This atonement will accomplish two things for these fortunate believers: a) The record of their sins will be blasted out. b) Their guilt, which Christ has borne up to now as their Substitute, will be transferred onto Satan (the real scapegoat according to Adventism) who will finally pay for it. By this mode operandum the sanctuary in heaven is cleansed from their sins. Only then will the believer be released from the condemnation of the law and receive pardon and justification “full and complete” (GC 484).

With Adventism’s typological hermeneutic in mind—as in type, so in antitype” (GC 420) - EGW explains the heavenly reality by the earthly type: “As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ’s work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin [its record and guilt] from the sanctuary [in heaven]. This is the service that began when the 2300 days [of Daniel 8:14] ended [on October 22, 1844]. At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the most holy [apartment in the heavenly sanctuary] to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary… It was seen, also, that while the sin offering pointed to Christ as a sacrifice, and the high priest represented Christ as Mediator, the scapegoat typified Satan, the author of sin, upon whom the sins of the truly penitent will finally be placed. When the high priest, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, removed the guilt of sins from the sanctuary, he placed them upon the scapegoat. When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the guilt of sins from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the final atonement (GC 421-422), is thus the heavenly sanctuary cleansed. In Adventism’s theology the ‘cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary’ is effected by means of Christ’s work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary” (GC 421-422). Therefore, there can be no comparison between the sanctuary ministration, God decides who of believers are entitled to the benefits of Christ’s ‘final’ atonement and who are not. Those who have complied with the prerequisites will qualify and be cleansed of the heavenly sanctuary from the record and guilt of God’s people’s sins without Christ first making the second phase (apartment) atonement for them with His blood.

The possibility that I could have been mistaken about the integrity of EGW and the doctrines of Adventism for all my life was almost too traumatizing for me to deal with, yet I knew I had to get to the bottom of it all. I was compelled to probe more deeply into the life of Sister White and decided to borrow a few more of those books from my husband’s library. I read White Washed by Sydney Cleveland, and then The Life of Mrs. E. G. White, Seventh-day Adventist Prophet, Her False Claims Refuted by D. M. Canright, a contemporary of Mrs. White. Who would have guessed the very things that I had estimated her husband doing! I was reading, examining, researching, and comparing what appeared to be contradictions between the doctrine of EGW and the truths of Scripture, I was in the midst of prayer, Bible study, and contemplation, I finally came to the conclusion that I had only one option, and that was to accept God’s Word, even if it meant giving up friends, family, and Adventism. The realization that much of what I had believed to be truth of all my life had in fact been a lie was a humbling experience.

Eventually Ken began questioning the validity of the Sabbath, and he suggested that I make a study of the Old Testament in order to better understand the Law and the Sabbath. He encouraged me to study with an open mind, accept God’s Word for what it said, and to try to purge my mind of the things that were in my mind. After asking the Lord to give me the courage and wisdom to embark upon this new study experience, I was reminded of Psalm 119:105 which says, “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”

I felt like a baby Christian, starting all over again, learning about the integrity of EGW and the doctrines of Adventism which I had been studying some of the same material that I had read and had already begun to have serious questions about the Adventist church. After more study, she arrived at the same conclusions that I had, praise God. Her response encour-aged Ken and me in our study and in the knowledge that God is opening blind eyes and closed minds to His word. It’s been almost two years since Ken and I left the Adventist church, and we are closer to God and to each other than ever before. It’s only because of His grace that we have been led out of darkness into His wonderful light. We now have wonderful, God-fearing friends who demonstrate true Christianity by opening their hearts, homes, and lives to us. We are currently attending an inspiring Baptist church and are understanding more and more of God’s magnificent love and sacrifice for us. We are embracing Him in a manner we never could have before.

Thanks be to God for the wonderful gift of His Word. It is so much more precious to me now than ever, and I cannot thank Him enough for the way in which He has freed me from the bondage of deception and ignorance. It is my desire to share the unadulterated truth of God’s Word with my family, friends, and anyone who is willing to stop, look, and listen.

To God be the glory!
...my passive acceptance of our belief system had resulted in my inability to clearly decipher truth from error, thus giving me a false sense of security.

Academy, my husband informed me that he wanted a divorce so that he could remarry his first wife! That revelation hit me like a bombshell! In retrospect, however, I shouldn’t have been surprised. He and I had slowly drifted apart in our religious and spiritual interests. In Adventist and Christian circles, I had grown cold, and my reaction to our differences was to immerse myself even more deeply into the writings of Ellen White and to become more active, more conservative, and more historic in my Adventism. After all, so much of what Mrs. White wrote was indeed comforting, and I was desperate for anything that would fill the void in my life and bring comfort to my aching soul.

After giving up my career, my home, and most of my earthly possessions and devoting eight years of my life and my love to my husband and his sons, only to be told that I was no longer wanted or needed, seemed more than I could bear. What was I to do, and where was I to go? In desperation I fell on my knees and poured out my heart to Jesus Christ, my friend who promised never to leave me or forsake me. I also decided that I should never trust another man on this planet who asked for my hand in marriage. My desire was only to please God and to become absolutely perfect for Him.

After moving out of the beautiful home in which I had invested so much love, time, and energy, I joined a group of “historic” Adventists, living in my assigned, old, single-wide mobile home in the communal country setting in the back hills of Tennessee. This self-supporting Adventist ministry named “Missionary Educational and Evangelistic Training” (MET) emphasizes health and dress reform and perfectionism. I felt God wanted me to promote the health message. After all, I had been taught that it was the right hand of the gospel. In my effort to please God, I became fanatical in practically every facet of my life, wearing only long dresses, becoming a vegan, refraining from all make-up and jewelry, not eating between meals, and trying desperately to be sure that I had no sin in my life. Like most members of the commune, I also pulled away from traditional Adventism after being convinced that most Adventists were in apostasy. I eagerly accepted these beliefs and felt sorry for those who were not living up to what I perceived as the standards of the kingdom of God, that is of the investigatory judgment, the closing work in the sanctuary above” (GC 428).

Therefore, the nature of this judgment is clearly that of an investigation into the lives and characters of believers to determine who of them are entitled to Christ’s second apartment ministration – the final atonement resulting in the blotting out of their sins and the transfer of their guilt onto Satan. This atonement would cleanse the sanctuary from their sins and constitute them ready for Christ’s second coming. Only those of God’s people who pass the scrutiny of the Investigative Judgment will finally be saved when Christ comes again because only they have received “the benefits of Christ’s final atonement” (EW 260) and “befriended by His mediation” (EW 253).

Its Subjects
It is important to clearly understand who are the subjects in this Investigative Judgment. It is clearly stated in Adventism that only believers are considered. Says EGW: “So, in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God.” (GC 486)

Mrs. White penned these words: “The [investigative] judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years [i.e. since October 22, 1844] this work has been in progress (with believers who have died). Soon—one, none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living, in the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review” (GC 490).

As far as could be ascertained at the time I left Adventism in 1980, Jesus was still busy investigating believers who have died. Everybody was fairly certain He had not yet begun with believers who are alive. This simply meant that no living believer could ever be processes until after he has paid for them himself! Thus will he be eternally lost (GC 486-488).
duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God... Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great judge face to face. How important then that every [believer] contemplate that solemn scene (as given to Mrs. White in vision) when the Investigative Judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when... every [believer] must stand in his own lot [before God] at the end of the day [of his probation]" (GC 488).

Attention must be drawn to three important points here: a) At the end of the Investigative Judgment, Christ can blot out the believer's sin record because Satan the scapegoat will finally pay the penalty. In other words, until the payment of the penalty of sin is ensured, the record of sin cannot be blotted out. b) Christ did not pay the penalty for the sins of humanity on the cross. He was only the sacrifice providing the blood for the atonement that he would subsequently be making in the heavenly sanctuary. c) This atonement which Christ makes in heaven is not for the payment of sin's penalty. It is only for the transfer of sin—in the provisional (first) phase, from the penitent sinner to Christ; in the final (second) phase, from Christ to Satan who will pay the penalty. Those who did not qualify for Christ's final phase ministry will have to pay the penalty for their own sins which will be transferred from Christ back onto them.

To Summarize

1. Christ's First Phase Ministration: a) Christ makes a provisional atonement for living believers who yields a) a provisional pardon from God. c) Their guilt (penalty) is not cancelled but transferred from themselves to Christ in heaven. d) The record of their sins is not blotted out. e) Believers therefore remain under condemnation. f) Believers are placed on probation, i.e. a suspended sentence. g) The heavenly Sanctuary is defiled by the record of believer's sins and by their guilt which Christ carries into the sanctuary.

2. Christ's Second Phase Ministration: a) God conducts an Investigative Judgment of professed believers' lives. b) Believers who pass receive Christ's 'final' atonement made with His blood, therefore c) blotting out the record of their sins. d) Their penalty is transferred from Christ to Satan—the real scapegoat (according to Adventism)—who will pay in the end. e) Believers are now cleared of condemnation in the court of heaven. f) Christ now asks... for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne" (GC 484. Read full passage on pp. 483-485). g) This ministration cleanses the sanctuary, clears believers, and transfers their guilt from Christ to Satan.

The Implications

Believers who have not yet passed the Investigative Judgment have only the benefits of Christ's first (provisional) phase ministration. They are therefore on probation with a provisional pardon from God. During this time when their names will be called for their trial. No one knows when this will be or what the outcome will be. This belief has traditionally bred unbearable insecurity amongst Adventists, resulting in utter despair. It is not surprising that Adventist scholars have sought to reinterpret it so as to bring relief to the oppressed. If EGW is upheld as a doctrinal authority as Adventism claims she is, Adventists must face up to her teaching about this doctrine. No one has the right to change it because they don't agree with it anymore. This doctrine is part and parcel of being an Adventist.

Scriptural Reality

Scripture, however, teaches us that we can be certain of our standing with God. Jesus said, “…whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24). "Whoever believes in him [God’s Son] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (John 3:18). And Paul also assures us: “Consequently, just as the result of one trespass [by Adam] was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness [by Christ on the cross] was justification that brings life for all men” (Romans 5:18). Clearly, God's verdict of justification cancels His verdict of condemnation "for those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness” (Romans 5:17). So Paul could say, “all have sinned and are justified freely by [God’s] grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23, 24).

In view of these assurances, Romans 6:1 stands like a clear beacon above the murky waters of Adventism's 1844 Sanctuary doctrine and its Gospel-denying Investigative Judgment doctrine: “there is therefore NOW no condemnation for those who are in Christ.”

Later Paul asks, “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (See Eph. 1:3). Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? Jesus Christ, who died...” (Romans 8:31-39).

In the clear light of God's Word, Adventism's 1844 Sanctuary theology and the Investigative Judgment crumble; they are not founded upon clear Scriptural exegesis but upon an eisegesis of the worst kind. In direct contrast to this doctrine, the Bible is clear that Jesus completed His atonement on the cross; believers have already been judged in Christ, and they can know for certain that they are saved now.

Praise the Lord!
Admitting Ellen White was a false prophet was the most significant factor—besides praying for the Holy Spirit’s teaching—in clarifying Scripture for me.

COLLEEN TINKER

The freedom from falsehood was the middle of the night. Fear squeezed my 15-year-old heart; sleep was a stranger. “Dear Jesus,” I begged, “please forgive all my sins, even the ones I can’t remember. And please help me not to commit the unpronounceable sin. Please, please, please.”

When would my name come up in the Investigative Judgment? I wondered. I knew if I had even one unconfessed, accidental sin, I would be lost. Despairingly I thought of all the times my Adventism for another sixteen years. One day in June, 1991, I read about William Miller’s mistaken calculation that Jesus would return in 1843. God, she said, “was in the proclamation” of that erroneous date. He used Miller’s false prediction to prove the people “to the point of accepting ‘truth’” (Early Writings, p. 232). Not only was God supposedly “in” the false prediction, but she also said God held “his hand...over and had a mistake in some of [Miller’s] figures, so that none could see it” (Review and Herald, 1850-1811-03). In other words, EGW claimed God purposely lied or deceived people in order to accomplish spiritual awakening. The end justified the means.

That day my cognitive dissonance began to resolve. God would not lie in order to manipulate people to respond to Him, nor would His prophets “credit” Him with lies.

I had to admit it: Ellen White was not misused or confused. Further, she wasn’t merely “not a prophet.” She claimed to be God’s messenger, and she claimed God showed her the “views” she delivered. She was clearly a prophet—a false prophet. Admitting Ellen White was a false prophet was the most significant factor—besides praying for the Holy Spirit’s teaching—in clarifying Scripture for me. Passages I had previously had to ignore made sense, and the Bible became a verified book that exalted Jesus and His death and resurrection. The falsehoods I had learned were increasingly clear; they did not honor the all-sufficiency of Jesus and His shed blood.

In this issue Chris Badenhorst explains the church’s Investigative Judgment doctrine and its implications for an Adventist’s understanding of salvation. We also look at the reinterpreted version of the doctrine that says God is vindicating Himself to the universe. Dirk Anderson presents a question every Adventist should ask himself/herself, and Dale Ratzlaff explains true “pro-gressive revelation.” Janice Brantley and Shontay Gipson share their stories of faith.

As you read, it is our prayer that you will see Jesus Christ in all these writings. We pray you will understand the miracle of the cross and know the cleansing of His blood atoning for your sins. We pray you will experience the new birth and know the assurance of being part of “man” is made in the image of God. Instead just seems to get better with each issue. I have many relatives and friends who are still in bondage to the Adventist system and am praying for them. Being lukewarm toward the word of God along with the social and family aspects of Adventism seem to be the biggest hurdles. Also the cultic qualities keep them from searching for the truth. I find it thrilling to see Adventist pastors such as Greg Taylor and Clay Peck find the truth of Jesus with new clarity. We pray you will understand that you find those aimed your direction all too often. I want you to know that we remember you and your ministry to God in our prayers. We pray you will experience the new birth and know the assurance of being equal with Scripture. Scripture testifies of Jesus (John 5:39) and is all we need to teach us truth and to throw Jesus out with the bath water— and the will experience a close walk with God. To throw Jesus out with the bath water— and the will experience a close walk with God. To throw Jesus out with the bath water— and the will experience a close walk with God.

Ministry has blessed us After reading through the last proclamation, I wanted to write to you and thank you for the invaluable support with new clarity. Who could have understood the meaning of my husband and I. I contacted you a little over a year ago in order to get some feedback on Ellen White’s Doctrine and Sabbath in Christ after I had started studying my Adventist roots. The past year has been one of huge discoveries about God and His grace to us, as well as the all-too-usual pain that comes with extracting oneself from a false religious system. I have been very grateful for Dale and Miller’s are very loyal to the church. But we are fully processed out, having written our resignation letter this spring, though it has not been acknowledged on their end yet. We praise God for what He has done in our lives bringing about our own discovery about God and for people like you who have gone before and offer support for the way. I know that Adventists (like corrected animals) can be cruel and skeptical and that those who find those aimed your direction all too often. I want you to know that we remember you and your ministry to God in our prayers. We pray you will experience the new birth and know the assurance of being Jesus with new clarity. We pray you will understand that you find those aimed your direction all too often. I want you to know that we remember you and your ministry to God in our prayers. We pray you will experience the new birth and know the assurance of being equal with Scripture. Scripture testifies of Jesus (John 5:39) and is all we need to teach us truth and to throw Jesus out with the bath water— and the will experience a close walk with God. To throw Jesus out with the bath water— and the will experience a close walk with God. To throw Jesus out with the bath water— and the will experience a close walk with God.
On May 28, 2004, a friend was driving me to work and posed an odd question. “Shontay,” he said, “do you think that Adventism is all there is?”

I had heard of Adventism once before, but I was not sure what it was. My boyfriend and I decided to go together to the meetings. The seminar (to say the least) was educational and awesome. I really thought I was learning new Bible truths. When I think back on those times, I am in awe of God’s hand on my life—even then.

I was baptized into Adventism on August 19, 2000, along with over 250 other “new converts.” My mother protested vehemently, but I threw myself into the lifestyle. My boyfriend was promptly moved out, and God delivered me from my craving for marijuana. I began keeping the Sabbath, I relearned from punk, and tried really hard to give up all meat. I became a Sabbath School teacher and finally enrolled at Oakwood College.

It was there I was blessed with wonderful relationships that will grow with me until Jesus Christ returns. It was there that my love for God’s people grew and swelled again to great proportions. On May 28, 2004, a friend was driving me to work and posed an odd question. “Shontay,” he said, “do you think that Adventism is all there is?”

I was baffled. I had been frustrated that my growth was limited and had been earnestly seeking God’s direction for the past five months. The Lord had been dealing with my heart about leaving Him exclusively. I was not shocked by the question, I was shocked by who was asking it—a friend who had been an Adventist pastor but who was himself struggling with the things he was learning about the religion.

Over the span of 15 minutes, he began to convey information he had found. He had been praying about it and said that the Lord had awakened him that morning and had told him to give the information he had found to me.

When we reached my job, he handed me several stapled sets of paper. During the day, in the time I had between the phone calls and people-greeting that define my work, I read those documents. I began searching websites and devoured the information I was finding about Ellen White and Adventism. God led me to the sites, especially www.truthorfables.com, and by the time I left for home, I had awakened him that morning and had told him to give the information he had found to me.

The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record.

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